

Examining the Effect of KCPE Ranking on Pupils' Motivation in Selected Public Primary Schools in Eldoret Municipality, Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of pupils' ranking in KCPE on learners' motivation in selected public primary schools in Eldoret municipality. The study was guided by Rogers (1983) theory of Stages in the Innovation Decision Process and it adopted a descriptive survey research design. There being fifty public primary schools in Eldoret Municipality, 30% of these schools were selected through stratified and simple random sampling method. All the head teachers were selected to participate in the study through purposive sampling method. Teachers teaching in upper primary school were also selected through purposive sampling. Out of these, four teachers in each school were selected through simple random sampling. Standard seven pupils were classified into two, males and females through stratified sampling then random sampling was used to select 10% (135) in each category. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data. The questionnaires were administered to the teachers and pupils. Head teachers were interviewed. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques which include frequencies and percentages. Data was presented by use of frequency tables. This was done with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) computer programme. It is hoped that the findings of the study will be useful to the school management and the Ministry of Education in their endeavour to improve school performance in primary schools through formulating and revising various educational policies in the education sector.

Keywords: Influence, Pupils' ranking, Learners' motivation, Public primary schools

1. Introduction

Ranking of schools is not a new phenomenon. Ranking of schools in various countries is done for various academic and professional reasons. According to Leiter (2007), the excellence of the faculty and professional opportunities afforded by an education must surely be two: traditional and central markers of academic excellence in law school or any professional school. Leiter (2007) adds that schools themselves engage in constant self representations on both counts, while professionals and learners tend to have impressions of their own. Ranking in most cases has been used for academic purposes. Ranking of schools is not only limited within ones country, but also in a global dimension where various schools across the globe have been ranked.

Lagos business school (LBS) made history as the first of its kind to sub-Saharan Africa to attain world ranking. According to Chuku (2007) the school was ranked among top 50 business schools worldwide in the area of open environment executive education programmes. The international rankings do not only market Lagos business school but promote the morale of teachers in these schools. At the same time, it shows that teachers are highly performing. Teacher performance can be said to be high based on the rankings or position of schools both nationally and internationally.

Ranking of schools both internationally and globally has and continues to make education competitive in the world. Teachers would do their best to ensure they are recognised as most performing and competitive in the world. Africa has not been left out in the international ranking. According to Chuku (2007) four South African schools were rated among the World's best in the 2008 financial time's business rankings. Lagos Business School (LBS) in Nigeria was the African institute to appear in that year's ranking. LBS was ranked 48th in the open enrolment programme category. Overall the rankings were led by business schools in Europe and North America (Chuku, 2008). It is clear from the rankings that, African schools are not doing well on the global scene. Therefore, ranking, as well as showing competence and performance in various schools and countries also shows lowly performing, incompetent schools and teachers of various schools.

According to News Vision 27 February, (2009) entitled: Uganda: Top Schools dominated final exams, Uganda Martyrs S.S. and Namugongo had emerged the best in previous years' A level exams out of 61 schools across the country. Kings College Budo closely followed Namugongo in that ranking. Private schools like Atlas high school, Gayaza, Turkish Light Academy and Sweta high school, Mukono all were among the best 20 of the ranked schools. The list of top schools in KCPE 2012 results showed that first two best performing primary schools were Newlight Komarock, Makini Ngong Road Academy, Gilgil Hills Academy, Marell Academy, Fred's Academy and Chelsa Academy were in the top 5 schools. It is very evident that competition among schools was high even as private schools struggled for a share of the top 20. Ranking therefore can be seen as a tool of increasing performance of schools and their teachers. Since schools on their own cannot appear top in any country, teachers must put in a lot to ensure that pupils shine in their final exams. When pupils perform well in the exams, the schools emerge top and their respective teachers are recognised as highly performing.

A teacher is charged with the responsibility of causing learning to the learner (Farrant, 1980). The teacher spends most of the time with the learner and through their interaction the learner is expected to exhibit change in behaviour and classroom performance as well as in co-curricular activities. In most cases ranking of schools focuses on the performance of learners in national and international examinations. Since pupils' performance is the product of teachers input, the teacher is well placed to tell if they are performing well or not thus the school performance. However, there were various reasons given for and against ranking of schools. A given section argued that ranking of schools promoted unhealthy competition. "Schools would do anything to appear in the national dailies" (Siringi, 2010). Ranking was blamed for encouraging cheating and top performing students and teachers were not celebrated. The abolishing of the system is perceived to change the teaching instructional methods to improve school performance by eliminating drilling and rote learning and prefacing it with acquisition of relevant skills.

In Kenya, ranking of primary schools in national exams started in 1989 for the 8-4-4 Curriculum (Otieno, 2010). The aim of ranking schools in National Examination was to help individual schools and teachers to know how they fared in the examinations and gauge their performance. Reactions to the release of K.C.P.E results by the ministry were predictable. Others would be

celebrating their top ranked positions nationally and their dominance in the top cream while others would be moaning their poor performance based on their ranked positions. On the other hand, some would feel no difference. Jubilation and sorrow would sweep across the land in equal measure. Teachers’ and learners’ performance is inseparable.

They have been used synonymously. One may think it was the teachers fault for learners not to excel. Learners’ performance boosts the school mean score and every teacher will do all it takes to appear among top schools. According to Muindi (2009) head teachers in many schools paid and pledged to pay Kshs. 1000 for every “A” scored in their subject. Ngala (1997) in support of this postulates that rewards motivate teachers and learners in promoting school performance.

Ranking of schools is blamed for the cheating in National Examinations. According to The Standard Friday, 20th March 2009, “the only advantage of ranking was that schools would use it as a motivation to work hard to stay at the top”. Ranking of schools has also been blamed for only encouraging unhealthy competition. However, based on Eldoret Municipality KCPE results, it was evident that school performance had drastically declined according to educational stakeholders during the period of ranking of schools as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: KCPE analysis 2006-2009 (Eldoret Municipality)

School category	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006 mean (marks, out of 500)	2007mean (marks, out of 500)	2008 mean (marks, out of 500)	2009 mean (marks, out of 500)
Private schools					347	377	342	360.5
Public schools					213	207	210	200
Overall					280	292	276	280.25

From the KCPE 2009 results analysis above, it was observed that only 12 out of 37 public schools had a mean score of over 250 marks and that out of the 51 candidates who scored 400 marks and above, only 6 of them came from public schools. In contrast, 579 candidates from

public schools as compared to 56 from private schools scored below 200 marks (EMC, 2010). This indicates that the academic performance of pupils in public schools is wanting as compared to their counterparts in private schools in Eldoret municipality. The low academic performance in the municipality can be attributed to many factors like free primary education, shortage of teachers and lack of teachers' commitment to their work. However, the present study sought to investigate the influence of pupils' ranking in KCPE on learners' motivation.

Statement of the Problem

There has been increased concern on school performance in the recent times. School ranking especially at K.C.P.E level which used to show top performing schools was abolished in favour of individual candidates ranking. According to Siringi (2010) ranking of schools promoted unhealthy competition since schools could do all it takes to appear in the national dailies. Cheating had replaced hard work amongst teachers and students who wanted their schools to emerge top. A survey by the researcher in Eldoret Municipality indicates that schools performance has declined tremendously since the abolition of schools ranking in favour of individual pupils ranking (see table 1.1). Thus the study sought to investigate the influence of pupils' ranking in KCPE on learners' motivation in selected public primary schools in Eldoret municipality. Data was presented by use of tables.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to assess the influence of pupils' ranking in KCPE on learners' motivation in selected public primary schools in Eldoret municipality.

2. Research Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. This is because this design gathers data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of the existing conditions, identifying the standards against which existing conditions can be compared and determining the relationship that exists between specific events (Orodho, 2005).

A descriptive Survey research design was suitable in this study since the population to be studied was too large to be observed directly. Here, the natural setting was the selected public primary schools which provided the required data. Koul (1992) argues in favour of descriptive survey

research design because it is efficient in collecting a large amount of information within a short time.

The target population for this study were pupils, teachers and headteachers in public primary schools in Eldoret Municipality. Therefore the study targeted 50 headteachers, 600 teachers and 4,500 pupils in the Public primary schools in the Municipality making a total of 5,150 respondents. The sample size comprised 15 head teachers, 60 teachers and 135 standard seven pupils were selected to participate in this study making a total of 210 respondents. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data.

Qualitative data obtained from open ended questions was organized into themes and reported thematically in line with the objectives of the study. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques which include frequencies and percentages. Data was presented by use of frequency tables. This was done with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) computer programme.

3. Results and Discussion

The Respondents were asked to indicate (by ticking appropriately) the extent to which they perceive the effects of pupils' ranking in KCPE on learners' motivation in selected public primary schools in Eldoret municipality. A five-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" (SA) to "strongly disagree" (SD) was used to show the respondents' response, "strongly agree" (SA) and "agree" (A) in some cases were combined to be "agree" (A) and "strongly disagree" (SD) and "disagree" (D) in some cases were combined to be "disagree" (D). "Undecided" (U) did not change.

Analysis of pupils' questionnaires

Influence of pupils' Ranking in KCPE on learners' motivation

Table 2 shows the respondents views on the influence of ranking of pupils in KCPE on learners' motivation.

Table 2: Influence of the Ranking of pupils in KCPE on learners' motivation

Item	SA		A		U		D		SD		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Encourages learners to read areas which examination questions are likely to be set	61	43.1	65	45.8	7	5.2	4	2.6	5	3.3	142	100.0
Makes learners to revise with teachers in preparation for KCPE	54	37.9	54	37.9	15	11.1	14	9.8	5	3.3	142	100.0
Encourages schools to complete syllabus in time	38	26.8	50	35.3	15	10.5	27	19.0	12	8.5	142	100.0
Influences pupils to develop examination tackling skills	62	43.8	57	39.9	11	7.8	5	3.3	7	5.2	142	100.0
Promotes healthy competition amongst schools and pupils.	55	38.6	42	29.4	17	12.4	14	9.8	14	9.8	142	100.0

When respondents were asked if ranking of pupils in KCPE encouraged learners to read areas which examination questions are likely to be set, 61(43.1%) strongly agreed, 65(45.8%)agreed, 7(5.2%) were undecided 4(2.6%) disagreed and 5(3.3%) strongly disagreed. From the table

majority of respondents, 126(88.9%) agree that ranking has led to learners reading areas where examination come from compared to 9(5.9%) who disagreed. This implies that majority of learners are motivated to read areas where exams come from so as to pass national exams.

On whether ranking of pupils in KCPE makes the learners to revise with teachers in preparation for KCPE, 54(37.9%) strongly agreed, 54(37.9%) agreed, 15(11.1%) were undecided, 14(9.8%) disagreed and 5(3.3%) strongly disagreed. This indicates that, majority 108(75.8%) of pupils are motivated to revise with teachers so as to perform well in KCPE. May be, they believe that teachers know every answer to all their question and making good use of their teachers will make them be ranked highly in KCPE.

On whether the ranking of pupils in KCPE Encourages schools to complete syllabus in time, 38(26.8%) strongly agreed, 50(35.3%) agreed, 15(10.5%) were undecided, 27(19.0% disagreed while 12(8.5%) strongly disagreed. This implies that majority of learners believe that teachers complete the syllabus on time as supported by 88(62.1%) who agreed to the statement. There was however a notable section of pupils 39(27.5%) who disagreed indicating that teachers did not complete the syllabus in time as a result of ranking on pupils in KCPE. This implies that in some schools, syllabus coverage isn't motivated by the fact that pupil are ranked in KCPE.

Ranking of pupils in KCPE influences pupils to develop examination tackling skills was supported by 62(43.8%) who strongly agreed, 57(39.9%) who agreed, 11(7.8%) who were undecided, 5(3.3%) who disagreed and 7(5.2%) who strongly disagreed. This is an indication that majority 119(83.7%) of pupils' aim is to be ranked high, thus why they develop examination tackling skill with an aim of being ranked top in national exams. However, almost a similar number 11(7.8%), were undecided and 12(8.5%) disagreed on the statement. This represents a small section of pupils who may be slow learners and who may not be in support of pupils ranking in KCPE.

Lastly, on whether ranking of pupils in KCPE Promotes healthy competition amongst schools and pupils, 55(38.6%) strongly agreed, 42(29.4%) agreed, 17(12.4%) were undecided, 14(9.8%) disagreed while 14(9.8%) strongly disagreed. Majority of the respondents are in the agreement

that ranking of pupils in KCPE promotes healthy competition amongst schools and pupils. This view however popular, is not shared by all. 17(12.4%) are undecided while 28(19.6%) disagree with the statement. This may be views of weak pupils in schools where pupils are competing to be ranked top in the national exams.

4. Analysis of teachers' Questionnaires

Influence of ranking of pupils in KCPE on learner motivation

The table below discusses the influence of ranking pupils in KCPE on learner motivation

Influence of ranking of pupils in KCPE on learner motivation

Table 3

Item	SA		A		U		D		SD		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Challenges the learners to better manage their time	15	27.3	25	45.5	3	5.5	8	14.5	4	7.3	55	100.0
Influences learners to set their own targets in examination	17	30.9	32	58.2	3	5.5	3	5.5	0	0	55	100.0
encourages learners to improve their performance in continuous assessments tests	17	30.9	21	38.2	4	7.3	10	18.2	3	5.5	55	100.0
challenges learners to better prepare for examinations	18	32.7	30	54.5	1	1.8	4	7.3	2	3.6	55	100.0

Influences learners to engage in healthy competition among themselves	19	34.5	29	52.7	3	5.5	3	5.5	1	1.8	55	100.0
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From Table 3 it can be seen that 15 (27.3%) of respondents admitted that ranking of pupils in KCPE challenges the learners to better manage their time, 25 (45.5%) agreed, 3 (5.5%) undecided, 8 (14.5%) disagreed while 4 (7.3%) strongly disagreed. This means that most of students have to manage their time well in grasping all they can so that they can emerge top in the KCPE.

From Table 3, 17 (30.9%) stated strongly agree, 32 (58.2%) agreed, 3 (5.5%) were undecided, 3 (5.5%) disagreed and 0 (0.0%) strongly agreed that ranking of pupils in KCPE influences learners to set their own targets in examination. This reveals the inert desire of every child to emerge top of his or her class in KCPE. From the table, majority of respondents believe that learners set their own targets which motivates them to work hard to achieve them.

The table also shows that 17 (30.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 21 (38.2%) agreed, 4 (7.3%) remained undecided, 10 (18.2%) disagreed and 3 (5.5%) strongly disagreed that ranking of pupils in KCPE encourages learners to improve their performance in continuous assessments tests. KCPE is a terminal assessment, majority of respondents believe that the ranking system makes learners be serious in continuous assessments tests. Maybe the learners want to gauge their performance before their final exams since their teachers set exam related question.

From this table also, 19 (34.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 29 (52.7%) agreed, 3 (5.5%) remained undecided, 3 (5.5%) disagreed and 1 (1.8%) strongly disagreed ranking of pupils in KCPE influences learners to engage in healthy competition among themselves. Majority of respondents are in agreement that students engage in a healthy competition. This leads to hard work amongst learners hence making them perform well in KCPE.

Analysis of Head teacher’s interview schedules.

The positive effect of ranking of pupils in KCPE

The table below shows responses by head teachers on their views on ranking of pupils in KCPE

Table 4: The positive effect of ranking of pupils in KCPE

Item	Responses	
	N	%
Makes learners to work hard in studies	13	100.0
Good publicity to performing school	9	69.2
Encourages competition amongst pupils	9	69.2
Helps in secondary school placement	10	76.9

From the interviews conducted and as recorded in the table above, 13(100%) head teachers interviewed believed that ranking of pupils in KCPE made learners to work hard in studies. This may be informed by the fact that they want to be ranked top in KCPE. From the table, 9(69.2%) head teachers were of the view that ranking of pupils in KCPE was good publicity for performing schools. This implies that, having your pupils’ ranked top, the school could be the choice for many pupils and parents who want a good performing school. From the table also, 9(69.2%) head teachers stated that, ranking of pupils in KCPE encourages competition amongst pupils. This means that, the joy of every child in school is to be better than others in examination achievement. This has introduced winners and losers. Lastly, 10(76.9%) of respondents stated that ranking of pupils in KCPE was important as it helped in secondary school placement. This

implies that ranking provided the secondary school selection pannalist with performance of all candidate and enabled them to select them either in national,provincial or district schools.

The negative effect of ranking of pupils in KCPE

The table below discusses various reeesponses from headteachers on pupils ranking in KCPE

Table 5: The negative effect of ranking of pupils in KCPE

Item	Responses	
	N	%
Discourages slow learners	11	84.6
Discourages learners from schools without good facilities	8	61.5
Leads to schools ignoring extracurricular activities	10	76.9
Some teachers engage in examination cheating	9	69.2
Slow learners do not get peer support	9	69.2
Pupils are drilled by teachers to pass exams	9	69.2
Syllabus are not covered in schools	11	84.6

From the table, the respondents gave views which could be classified as the negative effects of pupils ranking in KCPE.11(84.6%) of respondents stated that it discouraged slow learners since they cannot compete with fast learner, they will never see their names in the dailies.8(61.5%) said the system discouraged learners from schools without good facilities. With a uniform national exams, KCPE, some head teachers felt that learners from schools with no facilities did not stand a good chance to be ranked top in KCPE.Also,10(79.9%) of respondents stated that the system had lead to schools to ignore extra curricular activities. Since learners are only ranked in KCPE, the focus had shifted to inside the class learning alone. From the table,9(69.2%) of the respondents stated that ,the system had led to some teachers engaging in examination cheating. This means that teachers are willing to do anything possible to have their learners ranked top.9(69.2%) of respondents stated that slow learners were not being helped by

their peers. This is a clear indication that the learners are now self centred and all competing selflessly to emerge top. It is also clear that pupils were being drilled by teachers in order to pass exams as stated by 9(69.2%) of respondents. This suggests that rote learning was common in most schools who wanted their learners to emerge top in the exams. Lastly, 11(84.6%) of the respondents stated that syllabus was not covered in most schools. This may be as a result of drilling of learners which was preferred to teaching of pupils as outlined in the objectives of the curriculum.

5. Discussion of Findings

The study sought to investigate teachers' and pupils' perception on the effects of pupils' ranking in K.C.P.E on learners' motivation in selected public primary schools in Eldoret municipality. In order to capture the objectives of the study, discussions were made in consonance with the research question.

The influence of pupils' ranking in KCPE on learners' motivation

To a great extent, findings of the study indicated that majority of the learners are motivated to read areas where exams are likely to come from so as to pass national exams. The finding of this study reveal that majority 116(75.8%) of pupils are motivated to revise with teachers with the reason being to perform well in KCPE. Pupils believe that teachers know every answer to all their question and making good use of their teachers will make them be ranked highly in KCPE. According to Farrant (1980), teachers of early times were sought out by eager learners. Socrates did not have to look for pupils; disciples of Jesus did not stay with him because they had paid their fees and wanted their money's worth. The father who reckons his son is ready to begin to learn the skills of hunting does not order him to accompany him, for the child has long been waiting just such a moment. The desire by pupils to be ranked top has shifted their focus so much on KCPE attainment and will do all that is possible to excel in the national exams and emerge top.

The study reveals that ranking of pupils in KCPE encourages learners to improve their performance in continuous assessments tests. KCPE is a terminal assessment, majority of respondents believe that the ranking system makes learners be serious in continuous assessments tests. May be the learners want to gauge their performance before their final exams since their teachers set exam related question. Summative evaluation aims at giving judgments as to the

value or worth of the completed programme. It is used to provide some terminal judgment regarding the quality of the resorting programme (Shiundu and Omulando, 1992). It is only through continuous assessment tests that learners know their progress and readiness to undertake KCPE which is a summative evaluation. Learners therefore work hard in continuous assessment tests so as to seek more assistance where need be before the KCPE.

On the other hand, the ranking system has led to unfair competition in schools amongst learners. According to the head teachers, in their interviews, 9(69.2%) of respondents stated that slow learners were not being helped by their peers. This means that, there is no cohesiveness and cooperation amongst students. This is contrary to the national goal of education of fostering nationalism, patriotism and promoting national unity. Learners from schools with limited facilities are also discouraged by the ranking system which seems to tilt towards learners in schools which have all the facilities.

6. Conclusion

Ranking of students in KCPE has made learners to be involved more in their own learning process. The desire to be ranked top in KCPE has seen many learner perform well in Continuous Assessment Tests (C.A.Ts) which helps them to gauge their performance. Learners have involved teachers more in their revision. Pupils have been involved in competition amongst themselves so as to be the best in KCPE. Ranking of pupils in KCPE has therefore instilled hard work in students who want to be ranked top. At the same time, the ranking system has demoralized low achievers since they do not get to be ranked in the Dailies.

Recommendations

Ranking of students should be done putting various factors in consideration. Pupils should be ranked based on the type of school they are in such as boarding, private, well equipped schools and ill equipped schools. Girls and boys should be ranked separately. Pupils should also be ranked according to their ages. Pupils should also be ranked based on their geographical locations.

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