

**HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT: AN EXISTENTIAL INTERROGATION INTO
THE KENYAN EDUCATION SYSTEM**

BY

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DECLARATION

DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

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DEDICATION

To my family members; parents, brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces.

Existence precedes essence.

Strive for authenticity, self-realization, self-actualization and wholesomeness.

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ABSTRACT

The philosophy of existentialism holds that human beings first exist and then each individual spends a lifetime changing their essence or nature. This philosophical submission has shaped the understanding of the general purpose of education in the world. The Kenyan education system is also fashioned upon this philosophy. Despite the Ministry of Education's intention to focus on the holistic development of the learners with the 8-4-4 system, the outcome has not been satisfactory leading to public debates and various Commissions mandated to explore the underlying problems and factors that need to be addressed. Any education system that does not lead to holistic development risks graduating students who lack all requisite dimensions of education. Consequently, this study sought to: evaluate the 8-4-4 system of education; to analyse the significance of existentialism philosophy to holistic education in Kenya, and to assess the use of existential education in addressing the problems facing the Kenyan society. The study assumed that existentialism in education contributes to complete holistic transformation of the learner. The significance of the study entailed the fact that existential thoughts equip educational planners, administrators and educators with a progressive vision to formulate adequate educational policies and relevant educational reforms that are in line with the changing times. The study limited itself to the 8-4-4 system of education in Kenya and the existential philosophies of Martin Heidegger, Soren Kierkegaard and Jean Paul Sartre. This study was library based and used critical, analytical, speculative and existential methods of philosophical investigations. The findings of the study show that factors such as inadequate funding, examination malpractices, over enrolment, students' unrest, commercialization of education and curriculum overload have denied the learners holistic development. To remedy the situation, existential educational implications were found to foster holistic education by making the student the subject of learning through proper understanding of educational aims and goals, concept of the school, student, teacher, curriculum and pedagogy. Education stakeholders will find this study a useful resource rich in information about holistic education reform agenda. The study also recommends further research on existential interrogation of the new competency-based curriculum (CBC) and a critique of the Kenyan education system using other schools of philosophy.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This research interrogated holistic education in the Kenya's education system using the philosophy of existentialism. Employing philosophical methods, the research analysed the 8-4-4 system of education in Kenya, assessed the significance of existentialism to holistic education and Kenya and explained the use of existential education in addressing the problems facing the Kenyan society, out of which conclusions were drawn and recommendations made.

1.2 Background to the Study

Philosophical inquest is a very important engagement in the intellectual history of various historical civilizations. Philosophy is a term that originates from the combination of two Greek words, namely *philia* (love) and *Sophia* (wisdom) (Chukwu, 2002). Therefore, philosophy simply means love of wisdom. Wisdom is defined as the study of things in their deepest and most general aspects. However, stemming from this definition, philosophers have given varied definitions to the term philosophy. In his own view, Iroegbu (1995) defines philosophy as a body of natural knowledge, critically and methodically acquired and ordered, which undertakes an investigation of fundamental problems concerning knowledge, being, nature, values and endeavours to attain the fundamental explanation of things. In philosophy, one begins by asking rational questions about existence, universe or things around with an aim of finding a rationally satisfactory answer to them. This means that philosophers engage inquisitive minds to question assumptions and to dig for deeper understanding. The deeper understanding of a phenomenon enunciates a theory and offers

analysis, which leads to an attempt to solve a philosophical problem. Western philosophy began in Europe in the ancient Greece and has developed through the medieval period, modern to the contemporary times.

Existentialism developed as a new movement in the modern philosophy. Existentialism, which has its roots in various nineteenth century ideas, in the twentieth century, became prominent in the continental European thought, especially in France and Germany, and has also received considerable attention in the English-speaking world (Popkin & Stroll, 1993). This philosophy emerged as a revolt against the traditional philosophy, such as rationalism and empiricism, which was seen to be too abstract and remote from concrete human experience. The traditional philosophies were more interested in discovering an ultimate order based on metaphysical principles and the structure of the observed world. Consequently, existentialism emerged as a philosophical movement that claims that individual human beings bear full responsibility for creating meanings of their own lives. Existentialism is a catch-all term used to describe those philosophers who share the belief that philosophical thinking begins with the human subject, not merely as a thinking subject, but the living individual who acts and feels.

Existentialists consider the nature of human condition as a key philosophical problem. Existentialism has many philosophical positions the main one being “existence precedes essence”. This means that for human beings, existence is given and one spends one’s lifetime creating meaning (essence). By creating meaning, a person defines oneself in one’s own subjectivity by confronting choices, freedom and angst.

Existentialism emphasizes action, freedom, personal responsibility, subjectivity and authenticity as fundamental to human existence. The emphasis of action, freedom and decision as fundamental makes the existentialists to reject rationalism and positivism. Existentialists are opposed to the premise that the definitions of human beings are primarily rational. Their focus, therefore, shifts to feelings of, for instance, anxiety and dread that one feels in the face of one's own radical freedom and awareness of death. Existentialism is also associated with dread, anxiety, freedom and awareness of death. Existentialism in its currently recognizable 20th century form is linked prominently with thinkers such as Soren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Jean Paul Sartre, Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, Albert Camus, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Edmund Husserl and Simone de Beauvoir. It is argued that existential themes have been hinted at throughout history. Examples include Socrates and his life, Gautama Buddha's teachings, the Bible in the book of Ecclesiastes and the book of Job, St. Augustine in his *Confessions*, Mulla Sandra's, writings, and Descartes' meditations (<https://www.arielspeaks.com/Philosophy/Existentialism>). Other thinkers who provided a welcoming climate for existentialism include John Locke who advocated for individual autonomy and self-determination against the state ruling over the individual. Existentialism per se is not systematic as compared to scientific method; rather, it is a way of existing so as to enquire into our existence.

Kneller (1971) contends that existentialist philosophers have written little on education as such. Perhaps this is because the main aim of philosophers has not been basically to develop theories of education such as teaching and learning. Philosophers have always analysed theories and arguments by either improving the previous argument or by

raising strong criticisms that may occasion the abandonment or revision of the theory in question. However, existentialism, as one of the most important contemporary schools of philosophy, has helped to study the problems of education in a philosophical perspective. This is because while the subject matter is that of education, the method is that of existential philosophy. Historically, education has been built on theories of philosophies. Every education system is guided by a philosophical thought. In this case, philosophy becomes the foundation while education is the super structure. An education system without a philosophical thought amounts to blind effort.

The philosophy of existentialism developed in opposition to the traditional methods of western philosophy. Consequently, the philosophers of education adopted it as a contemporary educational theory. Kneller (1971) defines a theory as a general synonym for systematic thinking or set of coherent thoughts. On the basis of this understanding, philosophy and philosophies of education, like existentialism, therefore, generally serve the purpose of bringing out clarity and reason. Akinpelu (1981) contends that a system of education is better directed and guided, and can more effectively achieve its objectives, if its philosophical basis is stated in clear terms for everybody to understand. Educational theories have, therefore, provided the general framework of programmes of reform. In fact, the holistic aim and transformative agenda of any education have been based on this philosophical thought. Jean Jacques Rousseau, a western philosopher of education, argued that the major aim of education is that of developing the whole person (Ngaroga, 1996). Other philosophers who advocated for the holistic aims of education include Mahatma Ghandi, Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner.

In general, the holistic aim of education focuses on wholeness and attempts to avoid excluding any important aspect of human experience. It develops a pedagogy that leads to the inter-connectedness of experience and reality yielding to harmony. Holistic education, therefore, differs from the traditional education, which tends to be static, dogmatic and fragmented. Through holistic education, a student can experience a transformative learning, which is the ideal aim of education. Socrates is acknowledged as an existentialist and holistic educator because he encouraged each person to examine his or her own life: “know thyself”.

It is, therefore, against this background that this study sought to investigate the philosophy of the whole round development by engaging an existential interrogation into the Kenyan system of education.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

As a philosophy, existentialism studies existence and the way human beings find themselves existing in the world. Consequently, existentialist philosophers posit that human beings first exist and then each individual spends a lifetime changing their essence or nature. In essence, the philosophy of existentialism has shaped the understanding of the general purpose of education Kenya. Learners, as such, are expected achieve holistic development through education by developing their essences. In the *Sessional Paper No. 14* of 2012 (Republic of Kenya, 2012), the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology outlined that education in Kenya shall focus on the development of the individual

potential in a holistic and integrated manner, while producing individuals who are intellectually, emotionally and physically balanced.

To achieve the above holistic goal, the Kenyan education sector has adopted interventions such as free and compulsory basic education (The Basic Education Act [ROK, 2013]), formulation of broad-based curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2008), and the formulation of child friendly schools' manual (Ministry of Education, 2010). Despite these interventions, the outcome has not been satisfactory, leading to public debates and commissions mandated to explore the underlying problems and factors than need to be addressed. These problems are confirmed by challenges of commercialization of education (Njoroge & Bennars, 1986), prevalence of moral decadence in schools (Mikuro, 2002), half-baked graduates, mismatch of training programmes with the labour market (Saitoti, 2004), substance abuse and students' unrest. Other societal challenges that reflect poor educational foundations in Kenya are rampant corruption involving high ranking government officials and the national police service, legal practitioners defending ills in society for pay, the clergy accepting donations from corrupt politicians and medical practitioners who doctor medical investigations, such as post-mortem results, for monetary gain.

All of the above problems indicate clearly that there are underlying problems with Kenya's education system in its bid to produce holistic graduates. These challenges have slowed down the Kenya's economy, increased poverty and insecurity among many more uncertainties. Any education system that does not embrace holistic development risks graduating students who are inauthentic, oppressed, hopeless,

irresponsible, alienated, inhumane, incapable of defining their identities and who lack proper vision of self-actualization. It is against this background that this research investigated holistic development, with an existential interrogation into the Kenyan education system. Extant literature has dwelt much on existentialism and education but an existential analysis into the Kenyan education system seemingly is lacking. Therefore, the existential approach was used to examine Kenya's 8-4-4 system of education.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose of this study was to show how existentialist philosophy can provide a framework through which an individual learner in Kenya's education system can experience positive transformation to achieve holistic development. In existentialism, this transformation is achieved, among other factors, through subjectivity, freedom, responsible choices, authenticity and personal determination.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

This research was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To evaluate the 8-4-4 system of education
- ii. To analyse the significance of existentialism to holistic education in Kenya
- iii. To assess the use of existential education in addressing the problems facing the Kenyan society

1.6 Significance of the Study

Generally speaking, every education system should be guided by a philosophical thought. In essence, philosophy and education are two sides of the same coin. Therefore, different philosophical schools of thought showcase different facets of education and how education can influence the philosophy of human beings and their essences. Consequently, this study advanced the knowledge of existentialism as a philosophical thought and how it yields insights into education. It also provided a forum for interrogating noticeable gaps between thought and practice in the teaching and learning enterprise, which denies the learners holistic development. This research further point out the neglected importance of existentialism in education in the contemporary world where education is more oriented towards objective at the expense of the subjective dimension.

The findings of this study are useful to the education sector stakeholders. It should help them to understand the problems of education in existential philosophical perspective, which is lacking. It should also help them to understand education with clarity of reason and to get more guided and directed in matters education so as to undertake the required reforms.

The study also provides educational planners, administrators and educators with a progressive vision to formulate more adequate educational polices governing the teaching and learning enterprise. Through such policies, teachers and learners can appraise their progress and their limitations against the aims and objectives of any

given educational programme. The practice will help the educators to know their work and to do it better.

This research also forms the basis for further research on how the views of various proponents of existentialism and the themes they brought out make their philosophy better understood, appreciated and how they can be applied to make education relevant in this dynamic world by transforming individual learners in a holistic way.

1.7 Assumptions of the Study

This study was guided by the following assumptions:

1. Existentialism in education leads to complete holistic transformation of the educand.
2. In existential education, the educands are free, responsible, authentic, determined and are treated as subjects and not objects.
3. Holistic education is a remedy to existential problems facing the Kenyan society such as corruption, tribalism, terrorism, radicalization and unemployment.

1.8 Scope and Limitations

This study limited itself only to the interrogation of the Kenyan 8-4-4 education system using the existential philosophy. Kenya's education system was chosen for the research because, since independence, the education system has undergone several reforms as documented in *The Ominde Commission Report* (Government of Kenya [GOK], 1964), *The Gachathi Commission Report* (GOK, 1976), *The Mackay*

Commission Report (GOK, 1981), *The Kamunge Commission Report* (GOK, 1988) and *The Koech Commission Report* (GOK, 1999). Despite all these reforms, the Kenyan education system still faces the challenge of relevance and Kenyans are still pushing for change in education. The philosophy of existentialism was chosen because it is considered as a contemporary school of philosophy and since it focuses on the question of concrete human existence and the conditions of this existence, which is also an area of interest in education. As such, it brings valuable insights into educational practice and theory.

This study limited itself to the existential philosophy of Martin Heidegger, Soren Kierkegaard and Jean Paul Sartre. This is because studying existentialism in all its shades and aspects is not possible due to time constraints. Secondly, these philosophers were chosen because they are among the key existentialists and they adequately discussed, among other topics, the themes of freedom, personal responsibility, determination, subjectivity, anxiety and authenticity. These themes were chosen in this study as variables for interrogating the Kenyan education system with the aim of achieving the intended purpose of the study. Their varied views on these selected themes complemented and enriched the discussions in the study.

The researcher also found that original works of the main proponents of existentialism are mainly in German and French languages. Having not studied these languages, the researcher, therefore, faced the problem of the possibility of discovering new dimensions of existentialism.

The researcher also recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic affected mostly the education sector and caused much anxiety in society. In hindsight, this study did not consider aspects of pandemic outbreaks and how they could disrupt education. This is only because the study was conceptualised prior to the outbreak of the pandemic. Yet, COVID-19 poses a critical existential crisis. In fact, it is in the time of COVID-19 that the following words of Soren Kierkegaard are more subtle: “Whoever has learnt to be anxious in the right way, has learnt the ultimate.” In light of these words, this study, in addressing how holistic education teaches people to accept suffering and facticity of death as part of life, has slightly touched on how education may also be tailored to help people cope with the existential challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

This research was guided by the existential maxim “Existence precedes essence” as explained by Jean Paul Sartre (Sartre, 1946). What this premise implies is that the fact that *we are* – what existentialists term as existence – is more basic than *what we are*, what existentialists call our essence. Essence basically means what a thing is. That which is definable in a thing is its essence. On the other hand, existence is a fact that it is. There is a real difference between essence and existence. The expression “essence precedes essence”, therefore, means we come into being (existence) and then we make something (essence) out of what we are given. This implies that one first exists, and then through one’s actions, creates one’s essence. In his work, *Existentialism is Humanism*, Sartre (1946) posited that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world and defines himself afterwards. This means that human beings come

into existence with no human nature, that is, without any essential purpose, capacity and direction. Later, one makes oneself by shaping own being through discovering the purposes of what he or she is for coming into existence. In this case, existence is pre-given and essence is not given in a ready-made manner. Man, therefore, exists and makes himself by developing his essence into what he wants to be out of his freedom and historical conditions in which he finds himself. Sartre understood existence as a creative and active process whereby an individual, who is a conscious being actively creates himself. For him, man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. Supporting this line of thought, Heidegger (1962) posited that we are ‘thrown’ into our lives. This means that certain facts of our existence, like our genetic make-up, family circumstances, gender, race, cultures as well as the fact that we are born in the first place, are imposed upon us without any choice. We are also thrown out of our lives in the sense that we do not know when we shall die. On our path through life from birth to death, we start with something we are given, which is neither ours or requested – our individual existence – and our life task is to make it into something that is personal and owned, only to lose it when we die (Adams, 2014). This expression of ‘existence precedes essence’ was, therefore, chosen as a theoretical framework because it generally represents the spirit of the entire existential movement.

Furthermore, it is a revolutionary thought that rejects the universal human essence that reduces all human beings to mere copies of the universal essence. It instead emphasizes on subjectivity, which is also a goal of holistic education. Holistic education incorporates all subjective experiences as a whole, therefore making learning more complete. Expounding on this fact, Owings and Kaplan (2011) argue

that existential education focuses on including the everyday world in education as well as considering individuals' cognitive and affective needs, stressing students' individuality. Such holistic and existential education assists the learners to discover and create their own awareness and understanding of the various best paths to undertake in life.

In a nutshell, Sartre's understanding of essence is that of a blue-print that specifies what a thing in question must be and how it must be produced, that is, what kind of an individual (holistic) education ought to produce. In this research, the maxim "existence precedes essence", being a theory of human development, helped to generate credible philosophical insights into the understanding of the learner, the main subject of education who exists always in the state of 'becoming' through critical consciousness and complete transformation to achieve holistic development.

1.10 Research Methodology

Methodology is an important instrument for generation and development of knowledge. The Oxford Advanced Dictionary defines method as a particular way of doing things. In this connection, every discipline has a method by which things are done. In the discipline of Philosophy, contemplators have developed certain methods of doing philosophy. According to Descartes, philosophical method should be a method of rightly conducting the reason and seeking the truth in sciences. While Science adopts empirical means, that is, observation, description and experimentation, Philosophy employs analytic approaches, deploying reasoning only and aiming to resolve the mystery of existence in its entirety rather than engaging in a partial

observation through the senses. In this case, the philosophical method interprets and explains the conclusions of science while science verifies the speculations of philosophy. Krishnananda (1992) clearly explains that the method of Philosophy in general is not to study things, as physical science does, but to make a comprehensive study of the totality of experience availed to us through all avenues of knowledge. Philosophy handles certain problems and it applies its methods to solve them. Doing philosophy, therefore, is about the journey, the process, the destination and the conclusion. Philosophy, just like the other disciplines, demands that the researcher be committed to being honest as with oneself as possible in regard to personal biases, prejudices and assumptions. Higher reflection is the main task of a philosopher and this distinguishes a philosopher in strict sense from a general thinker. Krishnanada (1992) further explains that the validity of genuine philosophical truths lies in their universality and necessity. This is because the validity of the method is characterized by the immediacy, universality, necessity and perfect veracity of its results. In this connection, a truly philosophical method is not lopsided and not biased in any particular way. Philosophers do not use just one method to answer philosophical questions.

In conducting this study, therefore, philosophical methods were employed. This research adopted a methodology that was library based and qualitative in nature. As a qualitative and library based research, the data was collected from the relevant primary sources, which included extant books related to existentialism, educational philosophy of existentialism, holistic education, journals, reports from the Ministry of Education, and related literatures as per the objectives of the study. All of these were accessed

through libraries and in print and electronic (internet) sources. These data were further evaluated philosophically after detailed analysis using critical, analytical, speculative and existential methods.

1.10.1 Critical Method

The critical method has historically characterized philosophy as an academic discipline. Socrates, in his dialogues, used the critical method, deploying the question and answer technique to arrive at a reasonable answer. The main aim of Socrates was to seek the truth or to gain knowledge. His method is also called the art of intellectual midwifery. Intellectual midwifery implies bringing to light that knowledge that the mind already possesses. In this case, the critical method is concerned with critical assessment of whatever is being studied in light of the increasing stock of knowledge. In using this method, the enquiry proceeds in every step with a critical interrogation of what is already known with the aim of obtaining a more superior and objective solution. This endeavour demonstrates that there is no limit to seeking the truth about reality. According to Njoroge and Bennaars (1986), the critical function of philosophy tends to encourage honesty of thought; it seeks to protect man from fanaticism and hypocrisy, from intolerance and dogmatism, from slogans and ideologies. Therefore, the critical method liberates one from narrow-mindedness, biasness and meanness of vision. In this study, the critical method was used to analyse the historical situatedness of the 8-4-4 system of education with an aim of seeking a clear and distinctive evaluation.

1.10.2 Analytical Method

The analytic method is a twentieth century philosophical movement dominant in Britain and the United States. The main aim of this method is to clarify language and analyse the concepts expressed in it. Analytic and linguistic philosophers agree that the main task of philosophy is to clarify concepts or the language by which those concepts are expressed. In this approach, emphasis is laid on the muddles, mistakes and dead ends that compare the history of philosophy to linguistic confusion. Bertrand Russell (1871-1970) described this method as logical-analytic method of philosophy. Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1995), contributing to this movement, noted that philosophy is linguistic or conceptual analysis. In his work, *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein noted that philosophy is a battle against the fascination of thought.

There exist diverse views among analytic and linguistic philosophers on the nature of conceptual or linguistic analysis. Some are primarily concerned with clarifying the meaning of specific words or phrases to make philosophical assertions clear and unambiguous. Others are concerned with determining the general conditions to be met for any linguistic utterance to be meaningful, hence establish a criterion for distinguishing between meaningful and nonsensical utterances. In recent years, analytic philosophy has come to mean something considerably watered down. The emphasis now falls more generally on precision of terminology, strictness in argumentation, conceptual clarity and critical analysis. This method also breaks down concepts in order to understand, clarify and explain each, hence s achieve a better understanding and clarity of the meanings intended by concepts, statement and the

language used. This method has been used by distinguished educational philosophers such as R.S. Peter, Israel Scheffler and Njoroge and Bennaars.

In this study, the critical analysis method was used to analyse the fundamental discourses and terms such as education, teaching, learning, examinations and discipline through a critical examination of what is already known and held as true with the purpose of obtaining a reasonable answer. This is because the analytical approach assumes that there is no end to seeking the truth about any reality.

1.10.3 Speculative Method

Philosophy is speculative in nature. Its aim is to know or understand. As such, philosophy is not a mere speculation or guesswork or unscientific venture. It is profoundly speculative. The term speculative is derived from Latin word *speculari*, which means to spy out, to investigate, to watch and to observe. Speculative method answers the “why” question by employing rational guessing to ultimate questions that do not require empirical facts or data of sense experience. It involves stretching one’s mental capacity to think beyond the ordinary realm with the aim of obtaining a reasonable answer to a problem. Therefore, to engage in philosophical speculation means to examine, observe, uncover and investigate reality. Speculation involves the use of imagination and logic to derive new possibilities about things. The speculative philosopher raises and tries to answer the most ultimate and far reaching questions of all and to make sense of reality and experiences as a whole. Plato used the speculative method to show how education is instrumental in the construction of the ideal republic when illustrating the nature of pseudo-education in his analogy of the cave. The

speculative approach was, therefore, chosen for this study on the understanding that education per se is intellectual and with moral conversion; therefore, education is not putting sight to the eye but guiding the eye to perceive correctly what is true, good and beautiful, and not mere excitement of appearance of their many kinds. In this connection, the method guided the researcher to make vital suggestions and propose remedies to the problems under study.

1.10.4 Existential Method

In the existential method, the primary object of philosophical reflection is the human beings as concretely existing realities. The philosopher reflects on the sense of urgency and crisis of contemporary human existence and experience. In this method, the philosopher is totally involved in his activity of philosophizing. This implies that one fully participates in shaping one's destiny. This approach advocates for creativity and inventiveness. It was used to interrogate Kenya's 8-4-4 education system using the existential themes of subjectivity, freedom, authenticity, responsibility and anxiety.

By using the above stated methods, the data collected from the mentioned primary sources were scrutinized, critically analysed and interpreted for purposes of drawing relevant conclusions in the study.

1.11 Literature Review

This section undertakes a review of related literature so as to situate the current research within existing knowledge. The literature examined included original and relevant works of various writers, those who have written on these original works,

other related books, government publications on education and journals. Literature review is important because it expands the context and the background of the study. It also helps to further clarify the problem of study and provides the basis for the assumptions or the hypotheses of the study. Literature review also keeps the researcher on track, provides up-to-date information, identifies the knowledge gaps and clarifies the research methodology to be used.

1.11.1 Existentialism in General

1.11.1.1 Definition of Existentialism

Strictly speaking, defining existentialism is a very difficult task because of the diversity of positions associated with it. Just as the word “philosophy” has varied definitions, the various schools of philosophy equally vary on their views of what existentialism philosophy is and what its purpose should be. Seemingly, some view existentialism as an approach to philosophy rather than a system of philosophical thought. Perhaps it is safer to perceive existentialism as a way of philosophizing than as a school of philosophy. The main reason for this argument is that existentialism does not start with any common body of doctrines and each existentialist argues out issues differently without desiring for unity of aims or creating a common doctrine. Consequently, their varied positions should be seen more as constituting the strength and not a limitation of existentialism. It is strength because, as a way of philosophizing, the point of departure for existentialism is the human being and not nature.

Existentialism has been adopted as a catch-all term that is used to describe all those philosophers who share the belief that philosophical thinking begins with the human subject, not merely as a thinking but a living subject who acts and feels. The term existentialism originates from two Latin words *ex* for 'out' and *stare* meaning 'to stand out'. The two Latin words yield to the word *exist are*, which literally means 'to stand out'. Existence, therefore, means "to appear", "to rise", "to become", and "to be". This etymological analysis shows that, generally, existentialism is the study of existence. It is a philosophy centred upon the analysis of existence and of the way human beings find themselves existing in the world.

Macquarrie (1972) describes existentialism as a term applied to the work of a number of 19th Century philosophers who, despite having many differences in their philosophies, focused generally on issues of the condition of human existence, individual emotions, actions, responsibilities and thoughts of meaning and purpose of life. Existentialism encompasses various philosophies that emphasize certain common themes, such as subjectivity, freedom of choice, authenticity, situation anxiety and death. According to Blackham (1961), some of the major existential philosophers are Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Karl Jaspers (1883-1969), Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973) and Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980). Other existentialists include Simone de Beauvoir (1906-1986) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961).

1.11.1.2 Existentialism and its Development

Existentialism developed basically as a European Philosophy. As a philosophical movement, existentialism began as a trend of thought in Europe after World War II (1939-1945). By this time, people's spirit of optimism in society had been destroyed by World War I (1914-1918) and the calamities of the mid-century. Therefore, the effects of World War II deepened the sense of despair and depression among the people. Of great concern was people in Europe felt threatened by material and spiritual destruction witnessed during the Wars. Seemingly, the circumstances of this period made people to be critical of the systems that had guided society up to that point. The material security demonstrated by technological advancement was reducing individuals to rhythms of machines. Consequently, the scientific and industrial revolutions made the society increasingly secular and diminished people's commitment to spirituality. With this kind spiritual death, people soon began to experience a sense of meaninglessness with their existence. Popkin and Stroll (1993) rightly observe that religion has been the traditional source of man's sense of worth. As such, the death of spirituality owing to the critical impact of rational and scientific thought meant the loss of the source of meaning and moral guidance.

The above situation was the genesis of Nietzsche's declaration in the 1960s that God was dead (Bhadra, 1990). Those who supported Nietzsche's view felt that God was no longer relevant to their lives. Lack of faith in God began to gain momentum and led to breakdown of religious traditions in Europe. Philosophy, as a system of thought, was not spared either. During this time, the traditional philosophies preoccupied themselves with technical problems of metaphysics, ethics and epistemology, not in a

specific way but in a general and objective manner. Traditional philosophy was this seen as being too abstract and removed from the concrete experiences of humanity. At this time, traditional philosophy could not address important qualities of human existence such as passion, love, anguish, sickness, despair and death. In line with the view by Kiruki (2014), all these made human beings to lose their human qualities. Persons became pronouns, subjects became objects and 'I' became 'it'. Dehumanization became a new feature in society in all aspects of existence. As a result of all these circumstances, the philosophy of existentialism developed. It recognized and attempted to address the problem of irrelevant and abstract nature of the prevailing philosophical orientations.

Stylistically, existentialism differs from traditional philosophy. Kneller (1971), in support of this view, insists that existentialist philosophy is generally more personal in style than traditional philosophy, being closer, in fact, to literature. Strictly speaking, existentialism should not be seen as another branch of traditional philosophy, such as logic, epistemology, axiology and metaphysics. On the contrary, existentialism is a kind of lens through which these topics can be viewed. The philosophy of existentialism attempts to make human life authentic and possible in a meaningless world. Therefore, the significance of existentialism is that it concerns itself with the kind of existence humans have, which is distinct from that of animals, plants and rocks.

From the above discussion, it would appear that existentialism developed explicitly in the 20th century. However, it should be acknowledged that the problem of existence

preoccupied the works of pre-Socratics. Existential thoughts were also discussed by Catholic Philosophers, mainly Augustine (354-430) and Duns Scots (1266-1308). According to Socrates, the main problem facing humanity was lack of self-examination. This compelled him to say that the unexamined life is not worth living. Self-examination is an existential question. Furthermore, the ethical theory in the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle depicts elements of existential philosophy. In this theory, Aristotle posits that we are essentially rational animals with ethical virtues as sets of dispositions (Aristotle, 2002). In this connection, it can be argued that both Aristotle and contemporary existentialist philosophers agree on the purpose of ethics as being namely that of promoting human flourishing by trying to understand the nature of human existence. The virtue ethics of Aristotle is nonetheless concerned more with the traits that one possesses and that are manifested by his thoughts, feelings, actions and perception. From this discussion, therefore, it can be appreciated that existentialism per se is as old as human kind and that it only got clearer recognition and application in the 20th century. Kaufmann (1956) recognizes this fact when he insists that existentialism is a timeless sensibility that can be discerned here and there in the past; but it is only in recent times that it has hardened into a sustained protest and preoccupation.

1.11.1.3 Typologies of Existentialism

Commentators generally make a distinction between theistic and atheistic existentialists. The theistic existentialist philosophers acknowledge God as the source of one's being, the ground of all being and as one's ultimate concern. These philosophers do not deny the existence of God. They also consider man's relationship

with God as an important philosophical problem. Theistic philosophers include Soren Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel and Martin Buber. Atheistic philosophers are concerned with the same themes as theistic existentialists. However, they exclude any idea of God or any supernatural being in their presuppositions. They deny the existence of God and do not consider it a serious philosophical problem. For atheistic philosophers, either God does not exist or they do not problematize God. They deny any possibility of value or meaning that is transcendental. Atheistic philosophers include Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger and Albert Camus.

Although many scholars make this generally accepted distinction, a critical look shows that this typology can be misleading because of a number following reasons. First, the theists themselves differ on many fundamental issues, including their perception about God. Seemingly, Jaspers and Marcel understand God according to the traditional conception, and the object of faith for them is not absurd. On the other hand, Buber reflects deeply on the humanization of God. Furthermore, Buber and Kierkegaard take different directions in reflecting on the nature of self. The atheists also differ in their reflections. While Nietzsche discusses subjectivism in a radical way, Heidegger talks about inter-subjectivity. Due to such complexity in categorizing existential thinkers, sometimes it may be safe to handle each existentialist individually.

1.11.1.4 Existentialism in Contemporary Society

Existentialism became popular in the years following World War II (1939-1945), and strongly influenced many disciplines besides philosophy, including theology, drama, art and psychology (Guignon & Derk, 2001). Others are of the view that this

philosophy has not had great impact, although individuals or ideas counted within it remain important (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, n.d). However, despite this observation, existentialism is still valid and important in the contemporary society. Flynn (2006), in support of this observation, points out that existentialism continues to defend individual freedom, responsibility and authenticity in the midst of various forms of determinism, conformism, self-deception, technologism and the like, prevalent in our day. Agreeing with this exposition, existentialism still offers many insights to contemporary philosophical treatises and educational issues pertaining holism. It does this by stimulating literary works that reflect on existential themes such as freedom of choice, responsibility determinism and anxiety. Existentialism continues to influence contemporary literature and this justifies why this research interrogated the Kenyan education system using existential philosophy.

1.11.2 Selected Existentialist Philosophers

For the purposes of this study, the postulations of three selected existentialist philosophers were chosen among many others. The selected philosophers are Soren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger and Jean Paul Sartre. Though unique in their reflections, these philosophers were chosen because their thoughts generally represent the views of the entire existentialist philosophers. Secondly, their rich discussions on the themes of subjectivity, freedom, authenticity, responsibility and anxiety offered very relevant variables for interrogating Kenya's education system in view of holism.

1.11.2.1 Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1885)

Soren Kierkegaard is generally considered one of the early existentialists together with Friedrich Nietzsche. He was a brilliant Danish Philosopher and theologian. In fact, Feibleman (1988) regards him as the father of existentialism. He is also the first European Philosopher to bear the existentialist label. He was born in Copenhagen in 1813. He lived most of his life in Copenhagen, wrote a series of books, and died at the age of 42 in 1855. He studied Philosophy and Theology at Copenhagen University. Kierkegaard was a devout Christian, while Nietzsche, his counterpart, was an ardent atheist. While in Copenhagen University, Kierkegaard studied Hegel's philosophy but was not impressed by it. He felt that Hegel, though comical in his philosophy, failed to reflect on the question of existence, which to him was a very important element. His conception was that existence is subjective. He also posited that truth and existence are prior to thinking. In explaining this fact, Kierkegaard was equally critical of Descartes. He criticized Descartes' assertion that thinking precedes essence, *cogito ergo sum*. According to him, the truth is just the opposite of it. We must be before any thinking is possible. Therefore, Kierkegaard restates Descartes' dictum in reverse thus: "I must exist in order to think." In the realm of existence, "I" precedes "thinking". I must exist before there can be any activity of thinking in me (Vatsayayan, 1985). In a nutshell, Kierkegaard's reflection shows that "I" is prior to "thought", which is the basic belief of all existentialists. Therefore, for Kierkegaard, "I think" implies the existence of "I". Descartes position of "I think therefore I am" is a tautology because there is an addition of the proposition "I am" to already confirm "I think". The philosophical mistake committed by Descartes was that of making a blanket attempt to prove his self

while implying that the others are objects and materials for knowing. In reality, everybody is capable of own intimate personal experience of self and there is no formula of knowing the “experience” in another. One’s own experience or similar experience of the other is not empirical and only introspection of it is possible. Following this argumentation, Kierkegaard believed that the term existence was reserved for the individual human being. To exist, therefore, implied a kind of an individual who is capable choosing, deciding, can strive and commit himself. All these thoughts were in fact a departure from Hegel’s philosophy.

Truth for Kierkegaard is subjective. This position actually meant that there is no “out there’s prefabricated truth” for any existing individual who strives, chooses and decides. What is “out there” is seen as a kind of objective uncertainty and therefore a truth that is “out there”. Kierkegaard must have been influenced by Socrates, specifically by Socratic ignorance, which stipulated that external truth is related to the existing individual. In explaining this Socratic ignorance, Popkin and Stroll (1993) aver that Socrates believed that, in learning, one does not actually learn anything that is new but must have all possible knowledge within oneself, and that what we call learning is really nothing but the recollecting of true knowledge that we already have within us.

Kierkegaard also protested against institutionalized Christianity that seeks to understand and make clear what is paradoxical and absurd thence making it outside the possibility of human reason. In this analysis, Kierkegaard perceived the disunity between faith and reason. The current global challenge of terrorism due to religious

radicalization on is possibly a result of what Kierkegaard calls disunity of faith and reason. Blackham (1961) points out clearly that Kierkegaard made it the effort of his life to renew the meaning of Christianity by compelling recognition of the permanent cleavage between faith and reason, Christianity and culture. As a Christian thinker, Kierkegaard argued that a person's essential nature entails his or her personal relationship with God. He also insisted that a personal identity must remain individual and not to be lost in the crowd whether it is the congregation of the church or any other crowd or mob. Agreeing with Kierkegaard to some extent, issues of religion can be complex and prone to abuse. Consequently, there is always a need for faith to seek reason. This should perhaps remedy the challenges of fundamentalism and radicalization. Kierkegaard's reflections were found relevant in evaluating the Kenyan education system since many schools have Christian foundations and are sponsored by Christian denominations as stipulated by the Kenyan Education Act.

Kierkegaard differentiated between man's present state, that is, what he now 'is' and what he 'ought' to be or what he is in essence. What he implies here is that there is a movement in the life of man from his existence to essence. Consequently, man's anxiety is seen as an alienation or estrangement from his essential being. The sensation of his finitude aggravates further problems of guilt, despair and anxiety. Behind Kierkegaard's mind is that man's essential nature entails his relationship with God, who is infinite. In this case, man's existential condition is a consequence of his estrangement from God. Furthermore, Kierkegaard argued that it is not helpful to lose oneself in crowd because, for him, the crowd is untruth. To him, the crowd is untruth because it reduces truth to a fraction and dilutes the self of one's individual leading to

irresponsibility. Kierkegaard concluded that relating oneself to God is the highest thing, compared to relating oneself to one's tribe, other persons, race, church or nation.

Kierkegaard is known for what he calls the three stages of life. These three stages of life include aesthetic stage, ethical stage and religious stage. Accordingly, the movement of an individual from one stage of life to another is facilitated by an act of will and act of choice. The movement to the next stage has to be facilitated not by thinking alone but also by either making decision or by an act of will and commitment. This movement is progressive in nature and it culminates with actualization characterized by a personal commitment. Kierkegaard called the first stage the aesthetic stage. In this stage, a person is guided by his senses and behaves according to his impulses and emotions. A person in this stage is ignorant of universal moral standards and any religious belief. The motivation is therefore the enjoyment of pleasures of the senses. Although existence can be achieved in this level, one rejects the quality of his existence due to what the existentialists call inauthenticity. The discovery of inauthenticity leads to anxiety and despair. When one discovers this inauthenticity, he faces the issue of "either or", that is, he either remains on the aesthetic level, which is fatal, or chooses to move to the next stage.

Kierkegaard called the second stage the ethical stage. In this stage, one adopts and accepts the rules of conduct formulated by reason. For example, once one accepts moral rules; his conduct is then shaped. In this stage, a moral person accepts the limitations of his life imposed by their moral responsibilities. An ethical person considers moral evils as a product of ignorance or weakness of the will. When an

ethical person realizes that he is incapable of fulfilling the moral law, which he deliberately violates, then he becomes conscious of his guilt. The guilt leads to the dialectic element of “either or”. The ethical man either remains in the ethical level or fulfils the moral law or he becomes aware of his finitude and enragement from God who is the source of his strength. His movement to the next stage is not by thinking alone but by a ‘leap of faith’ or an act of commitment. Lastly, Kierkegaard calls the third stage the religious stage. In this level, one is ushered into the presence of reason. To reach religious stage, one requires a leap of faith, which does not bring one to the presence of God who is philosophically absolute but into the presence of a subject. In this religious consciousness, an existing individual cannot pursue God in an objective way. This is because God is a subject and exists only for subjectivity. Man’s relationship with God is, therefore, a subjective experience. An act of faith only assures an existing individual of his relationship with God. This is possible only after one discovers his limitations in the aesthetic and ethical stage. However, for Kierkegaard, the position that God disclosed himself in Jesus is a paradox. Kierkegaard could not comprehend how an infinite (God) could reveal himself in the finite (Jesus). For him, this amounted to an affront to human reason. Kierkegaard viewed religious faith as a subjective matter and a consequence of commitment. Consequently, it is only with faith that an existing individual realizes his true self.

In summary, Kierkegaard’s existentialism posits that each person possesses an essential self that he ought to actualize. However, the actual self has to be related to God. Becoming an authentic self is not only a matter of intellect but also a matter of faith and commitment. This realization has to be a product of continuous process of

choice by an individual under the situation of “either or”. Kierkegaard’s supports an education system that considers the uniqueness of each learner, development of an ethical person, accountability and responsibility of the educators, and the learning environment that is dynamic in contributing to the learner’s holistic development.

1.11.2.2 Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)

Martin was born to a Catholic family on 26th September 1889, in the Southern western part of Germany. His parents prepared him for priesthood and subsequently the church gave him scholarship. He attended his high school studies in Freiburg and developed interest in Philosophy. After completing his high school studies in 1909, Heidegger became a Jesuit novice but left within a month because of health reasons. He proceeded to Freiburg University, but left the seminary in 1911 because of poor health and probably because his discernment to priesthood was not forthcoming. He later studied philosophy, mathematics and natural sciences. During his studies, Heidegger was inspired by Husserl’s work *Logical Investigations* and completed his doctorate in philosophy in 1913. He eventually became an atheist and denied God’s existence.

Heidegger has been described as the most metaphysical and abstruse of all existentialists (Vatsayayan, 1985). Heidegger’s philosophical engagements, especially his dedication to study the nature of being, seem to have been motivated by Aristotle’s philosophical questionings. Aristotle in his work had endeavoured to discover what actually unites all modes of being. Furthermore, Heidegger’s studies on the works of Kant, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Husserl seem to have aided him in formulating his thoughts on Being and Time. Heidegger’s philosophy is also associated with the

contemporary movement of existentialism, although he himself denied any such association (Reinhardt, 1960). He built his work on Kierkegaard's ideas but rejected the latter's religious beliefs and ideas. While Kierkegaard confronted the concept of individual from religious perspective, Heidegger takes the psychological orientation. He was convinced that it was necessary to confront meaninglessness in the world and to try to understand existence itself. He was interested with three main things, that is, *Dasein* (Being-there), Time and Being. These reflections were well articulated in his work, *Being and Time* (1927). In this work, Heidegger transformed the concept of being from a highly abstract and remote concept to a subject of interest for every human being. He argued that between man and things, only man can raise a question about his being or being itself. This was opposed to the traditional philosophy, which thought about man in the same way as we think about things. Consequently, in traditional philosophy man was considered more or less an object rather than being a subject. However, unlike things, man has a relation to his being and since he finds himself into the world, he is therefore able to choose how to be.

Heidegger coined the concept of "*Dasein*", a German word that basically means "being there". In his exposition on the term, Heidegger avers that man develops an understanding of "being", that is, his own existence in the world. Consequently, saying "we ourselves" is a simple logical revelation that we do not know ourselves and we cannot give an adequate analysis of ourselves. He showed different ways by which we human beings become aware of our being (our existence). He posits that we become aware of ourselves by our awareness of our past, present and future; therefore being is time (Heidegger, 1927). As such, men receive their existence by being situated or

thrown into the world and by interacting with other beings. However, the challenge is becoming an authentic individual. We face the challenge of anxiety and guilt and we move into the future, which is unknown, with uncertainty of correctness of our choices. Anxiety comes when one becomes aware of the finitude of death. The awareness of the finitude of death challenges one to become more authentic in life and not to conform to the other beings in the world when making choices. One faces death alone and cannot be accompanied by the other. Heidegger insists that one must make choices within a historic, geographic and cultural background since we are “thrown” into the world. Consequently, the choices one makes in life give meaning to life. Living in time, therefore, can never be separated from being and we always move towards death, which is our future. Refusal of death leads to future inauthenticity.

Heidegger’s reflections contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics and variables that face a learner in a learning situation at whatever level. Learners must engage always in choices that shape their being in school. These choices must be made with a lot of authenticity so that their studies become meaningful to them and create meaning to their lives. As these learners make choices, they also face many challenges in their learning situations that create anxiety. These challenges include a loaded curriculum, high performance expectations from their teachers, parents and guardians, harsh learning environment, too many exams, long hours of study and cutthroat competition in class. The learner must face all these challenges with determination and authenticity or else lose hope and usher meaninglessness into their lives. Therefore, learners who lose hope kill their potentials and their future becomes bleak.

Conversely, those who make the right choices secure an authentic future for themselves.

Heidegger argued that one must remember the past, not as disjointed moments, but as a whole that brought one to the present moment. This thinking reminds us that one has a history, and that history should not imprison us but shape our future by making better choices than those made before. In the school curriculum, the discipline of history teaches learners to acknowledge that their present is as a result of their past.

Heidegger's thoughts, especially about anxiety and meaningfulness, were discussed further by Sartre and Camus. Heidegger refused to be called existentialist, but his writings identify him as one. Worthy of note is that Heidegger supported Nazi ideology in Germany and was also anti-Semitic. In spite of this, his philosophy also had much influence on other schools of philosophy such as deconstructionism and structuralism. Heidegger's ideas about freedom of choice, curriculum, anxiety, authenticity and the concept of human beings relating as subjects and not objects were, therefore, relevant to this study.

1.11.2.3 Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980)

Jean Paul Sartre, a French public intellectual, was a philosopher, teacher, novelist, a playwright and an activist. He studied German Philosophy under Husserl, who was a phenomenologist and who also inspired by Heidegger's work. He was active politically and was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature but turned it down arguing that it was a bourgeois honour that he did not want. Sartre's famous works included

Being and Nothingness (1943) and *Existentialism is Humanism* (1946). In his work, Sartre gave existentialism both its definitive expression and its name. His version of existentialism is a product of Marx's, Husserl's and Heidegger's philosophies. The three philosophers commonly argued that man has an active role in forging his own destiny. Heidegger's thoughts on being seem to have strongly shaped Sartre's philosophy. However, while Heidegger reflected chiefly on Being, Sartre solely preoccupied himself with the existence of the individual.

In his work, *Existentialism is Humanism* (1946), Sartre made his famous declaration of "Existence precedes essence". In saying "Existence precedes essence", Sartre meant that man, first, exists, confronts himself, emerges in the world and defines himself afterwards. This implies that, at first, man simply is. Man does not have nature and he comes into the world without one. This condition is thus understood as existence. As he begins to choose, man begins to create himself and hence becomes what he is (essence). In this case, Sartre draws a contrast between things such as artefacts and human beings. He called the former *being in itself* and the latter, *being for itself*. The main characteristic of things is that their essence precedes their existence while for human beings, their existence precedes their essence. Sartre took this argument as a basis of his denial of God who might have had a plan for human beings. He posited that if God does not exist, there is at least one being in whom existence precedes essence, a being who exists before he can be defined by any concept, and this being is man. Man exists, turns up, appears on the scene, and only afterwards defines himself. Only afterwards, he will be something, and he himself will have made what he will be (Sartre, 1946). Coming to the world without any pre-ordained essence, therefore,

means that man comes to the world without any blueprint and must subsequently act in ways that make him a good human being. This pattern of thought to a large extent sheds light to how learners in educational institutions ought to create their essences by shaping their nature in a manner that will lead to positive transformation and achieve holism in society. In this case, any educational reform should not exclude this transformative agenda of education.

Sartre went further to insist that human beings are not only free to act as they choose but they also have a responsibility to do so. In this case, human beings have no one to blame for what they are or what they may become. This is because man is the one who decides and chooses how he wants to be. When choosing with the aim of making himself, man, therefore, has self-responsibility but also responsibility for others since he is part and parcel of humankind. In this reasoning, Sartre seems to be contradicting himself since he also advocated for subjectivity.

Bad faith is also another important reflection in Sartre's Philosophy. According to him, to argue that we are victims of fate, of some grand passion or of heredity is to be guilty of bad faith. Bad faith is understood to be a kind of self-deception or inauthenticity. It is playing roles or trying to disguise one's actual personality. By attempting to avoid freedom, one puts himself in false freedom. Sartre observes that, in principle, all human beings are guilty of bad faith or inauthenticity. Consequently, any person who tries to express his genuine humanity in all his behaviour avoids self-denial and will become not his ideal but his very being.

Jean Paul Sartre maintained that man is free, man is freedom and man is condemned to be free. We are condemned to be free because we did not request to come into existence; moreover, as soon as we become conscious of ourselves, we become responsible for everything that we do. With no blueprint or essence to guide us, we strive to create ourselves through our actions. However, freedom is difficult. The reason for this observation is that one is only sure of what he can decide to do within a particular day and not what he wishes to do in future; by the time that future arrives, he might have changed his earlier decision. This seemed to have been alluded to by Sartre when he said that the only meaningful project is that of the doing, and not in arriving at a permanent stopping point. It also appears that consequences, even if they are unpleasant, are not important for Sartre. Mistakes in life ought to create life learning opportunities for the individual.

On the concept of facticity, Sartre insisted that conditions that we face such as our physical limitations, our society, our job, or location among many other things, are external to us. Consequently, our approach should be determined by how we react to the givens, how we interpret them and how we make choices regarding the facts.

In a nutshell, Sartre's existentialism seems to suggest that, for things to be better, one should work hard to bring better conditions. Factors like responsibility and freedom, therefore, play a big role in defining what it means to be a human being. The existential philosophy of Sartre advocates for freedom of expression in the learning environment, a culture of independent thinking and self-reliance of learners. Learners should also be assisted by the instructors to explore all possible alternatives, respond

to their individuality and uniqueness; in so doing, learners are facilitated to achieve holistic development.

1.11.3 Selected Existential Philosophical Themes

Existentialism integrates several philosophical themes. These themes include concrete existence, individualism, subjectivity, responsibility, angst, anxiety, freedom, determination authenticity, inauthenticity (bad faith), alienation, facticity, despair, crowd and death. It should be noted that not all themes were discussed by every individual existentialist. Besides, all the existentialists are not entirely consistent with one another. However, the themes that were chosen as variables in this study are: subjectivity, authenticity, anxiety (despair), and freedom. These themes were chosen because they have a bearing on how the individual learner comes to understand the meaning and purpose of his or her existence, which is argued in this study to be the achievement of holistic development.

1.11.3.1 Subjectivity

According to Soren Kierkegaard, truth is subjective, truth is subjectivity: objectivity and abstraction are hallucinations (Bhadra, 1990). From this premise, philosophy is, therefore, a philosophy of subject rather than that of an object. By probing into the depths of one's subjectivity, an individual is able to discover the truth of one's being and to discover his authenticity in life. An individual has to be passionate in deciding questions of truth and morality. Personal experiences and one's own convictions are thus important in achieving the desired truth. This truth cannot be abstracted and it is about how an individual comes to know the truth and how he acts on it in his life.

Truths are individual in nature and, consequently, all truth is subjective. This position actually addresses important questions that cannot be tackled through empirical methods.

For purposes of the study, the clear concept generated and which holds great relevance to holistic education is *that things and events possess a subjective and an objective reality*. The subjective reality means the immediate and personal relationship that all of us develop with nature while the objective reality of things means that of birds, rocks trees etc. since all have their own existence different from us, which science seeks to explain. Critical for this study is the fact that we have our own understanding of reality that depends on own understanding of the nature of being.

1.11.3.2 Freedom

According to Wingo (1975), freedom of man plays an important part in the thought of most existentialist philosophy. Jean Paul Sartre asserts that the lack of essence is actually what constitutes human freedom. For him, freedom is identical with existence. In fact, he puts it well that human beings are not only free, but condemned to be free. The existentialist position, therefore, is that human beings are free to choose and their choices cannot be determined by external conditions. As such, freedom is a human being's raw material because freedom is the basis of one's activity. To be free, therefore, means being free to change and to change the world means to act and to do. The individual has freedom of choice because a human being does not have fixed nature like that of animals and plants. Human beings engage choices to create their own nature. Refusal to choose is also considered a choice. Consequently, freedom of

choice has the cost of commitment and responsibility. Any individual who chooses his path freely should be ready to take risks and accept the consequences of his choices with responsibility and commitment. This observation implies that, for holistic education to be realized, the instructors and learners must be free to seek, expose and fight all forces in society such as tyranny, bad economic laws and policies, tribalism, corruption, terrorism and unemployment, which tend to dehumanize human beings by denying them freedom.

1.11.3.3 Authenticity

Existentialists consider the theme of authentic existence very important. Authentic existence presupposes that one has to create oneself or find oneself and then live in accordance with self. In its philosophical context, the term “authenticity” was first developed by Martin Heidegger in his work *Being and Time* (1927), although it had been alluded to in the works of Soren Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard, in his work, encouraged authentic selfhood, which, for him, must be devoid of aesthetic diversions and distractions. Authenticity, therefore, is “becoming a self”, rather than “being a self”. An individual must choose and remain committed to his own way of existence. Authenticity is a product of one’s own acts and personal commitments. It depends on one’s own freedom and responsibility and the extent to which one acts in accordance with this freedom. According to Soren Kierkegaard, the highest form of commitment is in religious faith, which is subjective and yet objectively uncertain.

Applying this concept to holistic education, learners should be helped to be critically conscious and empowered to face their situations rather than making things worse with

self-deceptive approaches to issues such as morality, religion and science. As such, learners should be challenged to make decisions courageously by being honest to themselves and with one another by accepting their own limitations while acknowledging their potentials.

1.11.3.4 Inauthenticity (Bad Faith)

Inauthenticity or bad faith is basically the opposite of authenticity. Inauthenticity is the failure or refusal to live in accordance with one's freedom. Inauthenticity can take the form of pretending, mimicry or convincing oneself that some form of determinism is true. In this case, the individual fails to see himself as creator of the role which he has chosen, but as a creature. Jean Paul Sartre calls inauthenticity bad faith. He calls this phenomenon a way of escaping from the responsibility of the freedom of choice. In this connection, hiding from the knowledge of our freedom and passing off our responsibility to other persons or institutions to take care of our anxiety and absurdity is tantamount to engaging in bad faith. Therefore, good and holistic education is one that focuses on man in all facets; helps learners to see themselves with their fears, frustrations, hopes, and to explore ways to promote a sense of involvement through action, to be committed and to take their stand.

1.11.3.5 Responsibility

Another important theme of existentialism is the sense of 'responsibility'. Existentialists agree that everyone bears responsibility for own choices. This is based on the premise that in existence, human beings create meaning with the help of their freedom; consequently, this choice must be followed by responsibility. Responsibility

makes one's life meaningful, since no one guides one on what to do and what not. Responsibility is basically a matter of responsibility for self. Existentialists view responsibility as a momentous event, and not just an everyday occurrence. This is because, in every particular moment, one accepts his own life as something emanating from his own choices and actions and not from some form of determinism.

Soren Kierkegaard argued that an individual knows that he is responsible for the quality of his life. Therefore, what matters is how he response to external events, which he cannot assume anyway. For example, if there is leakage of national examination, the student may not be responsible for the leakage. However, he is responsible for how he reacts to this leakage. The position of the existentialists is that human beings find themselves thrown into the world. Consequently, they have no choice about their gender, culture, nationality, race or even family conditions. In a nutshell, an individual is responsible for developing his own unique individuality. Holistic education agrees with this fact, since it advocates for full development of the entire person who makes choices freely on the basis of freedom and takes responsibility for developing his potentials. What the learner becomes is, therefore, his own responsibility.

1.11.3.6 Anxiety

The term anxiety is sometimes called angst or anguish. '*Angst*' is the original German word for anxiety. This term is common to many existential thinkers, although it receives a range of varied treatments by different existentialists. However, all existentialists agree that anxiety is not merely a psychological state depicting the

personality of the individual. Anxiety is a metaphysical experience that reveals deep truths about the nature of human beings. In his work, *Being and Nothingness* (1969), Sartre argued that in anxiety, I comprehend myself at once as totally free and as not being able to derive the meaning of the world except as coming from myself. On his part, Kierkegaard sees anxiety as peculiarly human. This is because animal life is purely sensual. Anxiety, therefore, should compel an individual to confront with his responsibility, false securities, illusions, and to desire to achieve his authentic being. This is because anxiety is often linked to the feelings of insecurity and uncertainty. Anxiety is an internal drama that troubles mostly adolescents in their developmental stages. A young student who is always obsessed with sexual attractiveness may develop the anxiety that he or she may not get a suitable life partner. Another example is a high school student fearing to fail exams because society will regard him as useless. As they mature into adulthood, young students must take control of their lives. The dread of facing life alone and the fear of freedom that invites responsibility may lead to depression. Holistic education, therefore, should promote among the learners the understanding of “anxiety” by making them aware of the tensions of existence.

1.11.4 Existentialism and Education

Etymologically, the term education is derived from the Latin words *educare*, which means to bring up, and *educere*, which implies to bring out, or to bring forth what is within, or to bring out the potential in the learner. The Latin term *educere* means to lead out. Therefore, educating the learner means bringing him out of darkness into the light. The Latin term *educatum* implies the act of training. In this sense, educating a child basically means providing training facilities to the learner for his or her all round

development. From its etymological sense, education is thus any activity that has a formative and transformative effect on the mind, the physical and the character of the educand. In its technical sense, the term education has attracted varied definitions emphasizing holistic development demonstrated by different thinkers.

It should be noted that great philosophers have also been great educationists. Socrates used the method of questioning and cross questioning (the Socratic Method). In his work on the republic, Plato reflected on educational issues. In examining the contribution of existentialism to education, Kneller (1971) argues that existential philosophers have written little on education. Martin Buber is an exception. Gabriel Marcel frequently refers to education in passing. Jean Paul Sartre has defined the educational significance of literature. Karl Jaspers published a book on the idea of the university. Lastly, Friedrich Nietzsche wrote a polemical essay on educational institutions that are radical and caustic enough to be relevant in time. Agreeing with Kneller, existentialists did not take education as their main area of preoccupation. However, the philosophy of existentialism has many contributions to education. The valuable insights of existentialism can be incorporated into educational ideologies, policies and curricula. Existentialism as a school of thought has enriched educational projects and continues to offer values that are intrinsic to educational enterprise. Many recent writings have reflected on the existential perspective of education. For example, Ekanem (2012) wrote on education of the persons, Mayes (2010) reflected on authentic education and Tubbs (2013) explored on the increasing feeling of dehumanization. All these and other writings serve to show the relationship between

existentialism and education and also contributions to the 21st century existential thought.

1.11.5 Existentialism, Education and Holistic Development

Existentialism as a philosophical thought encounters existence in its wholeness with its complexities and paradoxes. It reflects on human reality in its concreteness. Morris (1954) explains this idea well by insisting that a true existentialist will be more interested in developing the effective side of man, his capacity to love, to appreciate, to respond emotionally to the world about him. This aspect of wholeness is in agreement with the sole aim of any true education. In explaining what education ought to be, Mahatma Gandhi posited that by education should be an all-round drawing out of the best in the child and man's body, mind and spirit.

1.11.5.1 Holistic Education

Holistic education is a popular area of discussion in the current education discourses. However, there are conflicting opinions about what holistic education stands for. Therefore, a single definition of holistic education is elusive. To understand precisely what holistic education implies, an etymological review of the words is necessary. The word "holistic" is derived from *holism*. *Hol* is the root word for *whole*, *entire*, and *total*. *Holos* is the Greek word for whole, which leads to the concept of holism or holistic. Holism relates to the 'whole'. It is 'whole', in the sense that it does not avoid any significant aspect of human experience. Johnson (2019) argues that holism implies that our lives and selves must be viewed as interconnected. This means that matters concerning life should not be broken down into smaller parts while discarding some

parts. Putting the etymology of these words into consideration, holistic education, therefore, is concerned with the entire being of a person.

On his part, Forbes (2003) describes holistic education as a group of beliefs, feelings, principles and general ideas that share a family of resemblance. This implies that education in the holistic sense does not limit itself to a passage within a text book, but brings out an integrated person. Such education integrates the learner with their fellow classmates, the teacher and the world outside the classroom environment. Any education system that treats the learner as a whole person will definitely produce a graduate who is integrated, well balanced and capable of making valuable contributions to society. Holistic education develops the spiritual, intellectual, physical and emotional dimensions of the learner. This is because holistic education acknowledges that the body, mind and soul are integral aspects of human nature and are, therefore, interconnected, interrelated and interdependent.

Miller (1997) describes holistic education as a philosophy based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world and to the spiritual values such as compassion and peace. Applying this existential philosophical thought, the learner's connection to the world, therefore, should begin with a concrete person (learner) who has feelings, passions, ideas, dreams, fears and hopes. The learner should also be critical, open-minded, analytical, curious, creative and sensitive to the dynamics of the world he is growing into. This position recommends that holistic education should aim at preparing the learners to meet their daily challenges of living and the challenges

related to their academic careers. Holistic education should also be democratic and should uphold the learner's freedom and responsibility. Holistic education is justified by the existential belief that our lives ought to give meaning and purpose that is beyond mechanical laws that are designed empirically for value based and quality life. For this to be realized, the holistic educator should be competent, mentally healthy and of high integrity so as to function both as a teacher and a healer by integrating learning with the learners' lives. When the holistic educator becomes a guide, a role model and a facilitator, education becomes personally transformative for students and heals the existential chasm that may be present between education and life. Consequently, holism aims at preparing the learners to live a life with a clear purpose, which allows creativity and also embraces the normative domain in a precarious and complex world.

Just like existentialism, holistic education developed as a revolt against the mechanistic, reductionistic and materialistic orientations that dominated the popular thinking in education in the last century. Consequently, Miller (2000) and Schreiner and Oxy (2005) agree that holistic education developed mainly to challenge the fragmented, mechanistic, materialistic and reductionistic assumptions in education. Holistic education challenges the present approach in education, which places much emphasis on cognitive development of the learner at the expense of the other dimensions that Njoroge and Bennars (1986) call dialogical, normative and the creative. The present education system is obsessed with passing of exams and certification. This trend has reduced schooling to training individuals to become marketable commodities for the global job market place. Both holism and existentialism are directed towards developing education products of 21st century who

are able to shape and give meaning to their lives for quality living. Agreeing with Forbes (2003), the goal of holistic education is ultimacy. Ultimacy is understood to mean the highest stage of development or the highest state a human being can aspire to achieve. This highest state of development is similar to what Abraham Maslow calls self-actualization.

1.11.6 The Banking System of Education: An Obstacle to Holistic Education

In his work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (1971) criticized the traditional model of education that he called the “banking model of education”. He argued that the banking education mirrors the oppression of learners and society through the following attitudes and practices:

- The teacher teaches and the students are taught;
- The teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
- The teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
- The teacher talks and the students listen – meekly;
- The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
- The teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
- The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
- The teacher chooses the programme content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;

- The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of students;
- The teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.

The banking model of education, which is associated with the traditional model, therefore, reduces education to an act of depositing where the students become depositories and the teacher is the depositor. In this scenario, the teacher issues communiques to the learners instead of communicating; the learners patiently listen, memorize, repeat and cram the content (rote learning). The students are seen as lesser voices or store houses while the teachers are the store owners whose work is to pour the content into the store houses. The teachers know everything and the learners know nothing. During examinations, the student reproduces, without any addition, what was taught in the class. Any education employing this model dehumanizes, enslaves and denies the learners room for liberation. It kills creativity and reduces learners to passive observers. Because banking education objectifies the learner, then it cannot promote holistic education.

1.11.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has provided the main introductory part of the entire thesis. It has given a blueprint of how this research was conducted. It covered the main parts of the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, its significance, the assumptions, the scope and the theoretical framework. This

section has also discussed the methodology of the study and concluded with a presentation of literature review. The literature review sub-section elaborates the value of existentialism to Kenya's education system. It also identified the gaps that this study sought to fill. It further shows that principally, holistic education ought to be rooted in the fundamental realities of existence.

CHAPTER TWO

EVALUATION OF 8-4-4 SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

2.1 Overview

This chapter examines the 8-4-4 system of education with the purpose of understanding its genesis, rationale and its implementation. The chapter also examines the debates advanced against the 8-4-4 system, which have led to the proposal of a new system education in Kenya.

2.2 History of the 8-4-4 System of Education in Kenya

The 8-4-4 system of education was introduced in January 1985 following the recommendations of Mackay report of 1981. According to King and McGrath (2002), the 8-4-4 system of education arose out of the concern that the basic education might be lacking the necessary content to promote widespread sustainable (self) development. The guiding philosophy of this education system was thus the need to promote self-reliance. The 8-4-4 system was implemented with the assumption that it would equip learners with the necessary employable skills and, therefore, school leavers across all levels would get employment in the informal sector option for self-employment.

2.2.1 Education System before Introduction of 8-4-4

Prior to the introduction of 8-4-4 system of education in Kenya, the government experimented on a number of education systems. Kenya's first education system after independence was introduced by the British colonialists. These systems were either problematic in themselves or were deemed irrelevant to the country. Eshiwani (1993)

notes that up to 1956, Kenya's primary extended to form two, that is, standard one to six and forms one and two. This covered a period of eight years with a fairly comprehensive curriculum. After the completion of the eight years, the learner qualified to sit for the Kenya African Preliminary Education Examinations (KAPE). The secondary level had forms three and four in a period of two years. At the end of form two, the students sat for the Kenya African Secondary School Examinations (KASSE). At the end of form four, the students sat for the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate Examinations (COSCE). These examinations also incorporated the general Certificate of Education. In 1956, primary education was extended to standard eight and secondary became forms one to four, without any change in examinations except the abolition of the KASSE. In 1961, form five and six were introduced to constitute the high school section. In 1965 and 1966, the Kenya Primary Education (KPE) was changed to Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) and done in standard seven. The main objective of these sweeping reforms was to have an education system that supported national unity and to serve the needs of the newly formed nation.

Although the new system helped to prepare skilled personnel who would fill the positions initially held by the British, it was soon criticized for being designed after the British system and for thus perpetuating British mentality of white-collar jobs. Sifuna (1990) further notes that the system was considered too short and not rigorous enough to give learners sufficient practical education. Critics also claimed that the system was too rigid and lacked the flexibility and capacity to meet the changing aspirations of Kenyans and the labour market. Besides, there was an increase in schools, high enrolment rates with very limited and scarce resources leading to compromises in the

effectiveness and efficiency of the education system. The expansion of the education opportunities led to the production of many educated school leavers who could not secure employment. Consequently, the 8-4-4 system of education was introduced and this saw the abolishment of CPE and the six-year duration.

2.2.2 The Development of the 8-4-4 System of Education

Muya (2000) points out that the 8-4-4 system of education was introduced in January 1985. The inception of this system came because of the recommendation by the Mackay Commission (1981), which was a presidential working party formed to investigate and to recommend the establishment of the second university in Kenya. The 8-4-4 system of education comprised 8 years in primary, 4 years in secondary and 4 years in university (or college). According to the Ministry of Education (1984), the 8-4-4 system of education was designed to equip the learners with skills that would enable the school leavers, including dropouts, to secure employment in the formal sector or become more self-reliant and better oriented towards self-employment. D'Souza (1987) contends that the crisis of unemployment among school leavers in Kenya had remained evident. Consequently, the new system was mooted to remedy this crisis. Under the new system, the learners were to be empowered with practical skills to either enhance their employability or make them self-employed and self-reliant. In this connection, the 8-4-4 system of education was considered visionary and able to secure the aspirations of the national long-term development agenda of Kenya, aimed at transforming Kenya into a newly industrialized country.

To achieve this purpose, several interventions were put in place under the 8-4-4 system. First and foremost, the curriculum was broadened at both primary and secondary levels. Strong emphasis was put on practical subjects alongside the traditional academic subjects. Business education was introduced in upper primary with the aim of equipping learners with the basic knowledge and skills such as record keeping. This phenomenon was targeted at encouraging self-employment.

The new curriculum also allowed for more options on technical and vocational subjects. Pre-vocational subjects such as art and craft, agriculture and home economics were introduced at primary level. Similarly, pre-technical subjects such as agriculture, computer studies, home science, building and construction, electricity, metal work, drawing and design, power mechanics, wood work and aviation technology were introduced in secondary schools. The main purpose of vocationalizing the curriculum in formal schools was to equip the learners with skills necessary for employment. However, this development experienced serious shortages or lack of resources (Simiyu, 2001). The cost of education increased because classrooms for home science and workshops were required. Few teachers also had the capacity to teach vocational subjects. In fact, Kerre (1997) posits that there was no human resource who could competently teach in the new system, especially the added subjects. Eventually, most schools dropped vocational subjects, retaining them mainly as elective subjects.

By 1993, the three national polytechnics, Kenya Polytechnic, Mombasa Polytechnic and Eldoret Polytechnic, together with other technical institutes, had admitted significant number of students to undertake skill-based studies in different fields.

Furthermore, by this time, Kenya had four public universities, namely University of Nairobi, Moi University, Kenyatta University and Egerton University, together with the two university colleges of Jomo Kenyatta University College of Agriculture and Technology, a constituent college of Kenyatta University, and Maseno University, a constituent college of Moi University. Currently, Kenya has 22 public universities, 14 chartered private universities and 13 universities with letter of interim authority. Furthermore, since July 2014, all governments and private institutions offering technical and vocational education were put under technical and Vocational Education and Training (TIVET).

2.2.3 Debates on the 8-4-4 System

Since its inception, the 8-4-4 system of education has been a subject of much discussion. The criticisms directed at this education system resulted in the formation of several commissions to explore ways of improving it. Among these commissions include The Wanjigi Commission (GoK, 1983), The Kamunge Commission (GoK, 1985), The Mungai Commission (Gok 1995); The Ndegwa Commission (GoK 1991), Koech Commission (GoK, 1999). Some of the recommendations of the reports from these commissions were either partially implemented or rejected. The implemented reports from the commissions definitely made profound contributions to various aspects of the education system, but also raised more issues sparking more debates. For example, Amutabi (2003) observes that the 8-4-4 system has been implicated with the worst student strikes pitting several schools over time.

There is a general agreement that the 8-4-4 system of education was hurriedly implemented without proper preparation. Several serious issues faced the introduction and implementation of the 8-4-4 system of education. First, there was lack of proper framework to prepare quality technical teachers, textbooks, workshops and equipped laboratories for primary and secondary schools. Second, the commission that designed the system failed to provide transition framework from 7-4-3-3 to 8-4-4. Thirdly, the rolling out process was spearheaded by sycophant politicians who championed the speedy implementation of the system.

Despite the above criticism, the 8-4-4 system of education has also had some positive impact. Some of the identified strengths include introduction of practical skills that equipped learners with life skills and positive attitudes towards the dignity of manual work. Besides, the addition of one year at primary level gave learners adequate time to mature before transitioning to higher levels of education. Additionally, the system offered opportunities for students to compete for university places compared to the former system of 7-4-2-3 that narrowed only the chances to pre-selected A-level groups.

2.3 Introduction of the New Competency Based Curriculum (CBC)

In 2017, the Ministry of Education launched a new education system in Kenya designed by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) team to replace the 8-4-4 system of education. According to KICD (2017), the new CBC reforms are aimed at enabling every Kenyans to become engaged, empowered and ethical citizens by equipping learners with world-class standards of skills and knowledge in order to

thrive in the 21st century. Therefore, this curriculum emphasizes significant development of skills and knowledge among the learners and applying those competencies in real life situations. CBC has three main pillars, namely; values, theoretical approaches and guiding principles. This new system of education takes a framework of 2-6-6-3, which comprises three levels of early years education, middle school education and senior school. In this system, classes are referred to as grades, the subject areas are offered as learning areas and the topics and sub-topics are called strands and sub-strands, respectively. The learning outcomes replace the learning objectives and the teaching aids are replaced by learning resources.

The CBC emphasizes the following key areas of competencies: communication and collaboration; critical thinking and problem solving; imagination and creativity; citizenship; learning to learn; self-efficacy, and digital literacy. Learners are also to be moulded with the values of love, responsibility, respect, unity, peace, patriotism and integrity.

As indicated, CBC takes the structure of 2-6-6-3. The pre-primary school, which replaces the early childhood development education (ECDE), takes a period of two years. It has two levels, namely pre-primary 1 and 2, abbreviated as PP1 and PP2, respectively. The lower primary education, which replaces the former classes 1, 2 and 3, takes three years comprising grades 1, 2 and 3. The learners from pre-primary join lower primary in grade 1 at the age of about 6 years, after which the pupils join the middle school. The upper primary, which is the middle school, takes 3 years comprising grades 4, 5, and 6. The upper primary replaces the former class 4, 5 and 6.

During this period, pupils are exposed to the broad curriculum and are given opportunities to explore and experiment. The secondary school level is organized into 2 levels, lower secondary and upper secondary. After the upper primary, the lower secondary follows for the next 3 years constituting grades 7, 8 and 9. The upper secondary or the senior school takes the next 3 years comprising grades 10, 11 and 12. This level of education lays foundation for further education and training at tertiary level and the world of work. The higher education and especially universities will take at least 3 years depending on the course one is studying.

The Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) education system is still in its early implementation process. Its champions hope that it will remedy the inadequacies of the 8-4-4 system of education. However, although the philosophy of its introduction is seemingly visionary and revolutionary, it is already generating much debate, which is healthy, as well as facing many challenges, especially those relating to infrastructure and human resources.

2.4 Challenges Facing the 8-4-4 System of Education

While the proposed education system tries to depart from the shortcomings of the 8-4-4 education system, the following drawbacks of the 8-4-4 system of education are examined critically within the lens of existential philosophy for purposes of identifying how the achievement of holistic education in Kenya has been challenged:

- a. Universal access at the expense of holistic education.
- b. Students' unrest
- c. Examination malpractices

- d. Commercialization of education
- e. Curriculum overload
- f. Education for employment
- g. Examination oriented system
- h. Inadequate funding

2.4.1 Universal Access at the Expense of Holistic Education

In the recent past, the government of Kenya, through the 2010 constitution, made basic education free and compulsory. Article 53 (1) (b) states that every child has a right to free and compulsory basic education. This provision is in line with the Kenya vision 2030, which stipulates that the Kenya government envisages reducing illiteracy by increasing access to education, improving the transition rate from primary to secondary schools and raising the quality and relevance of education (Government of Kenya, 2007). Consequently, the Kenya government has expanded access to primary and secondary schools, creating opportunities for many children, especially from poor backgrounds, to enjoy the right to basic education. Statistical evidence reports significant increase in enrolment, completion and transition rates at all respective levels of education following the introduction of free primary education.

Existentialism in education supports universal access to education. This is because access to education equips learners with skills and knowledge to deal ably with existential challenges of life. Therefore, education helps individuals to pursue authenticity, self-realization, uniqueness, responsibility, power of choice and to face challenges and the tragic situations of life positively and meaningfully. Learners are

also empowered to develop creative abilities, critical thinking, subjectivity, self-reliance, self-directedness, individual ability and potential and self-actualization to help them lead quality and holistic lives. Learning that leads to a meaningful and purposeful life is, therefore, a product of education that equips one with skills to confront tragic situations of life such as inauthenticity, absurdity, anxiety, alienation, despair, dread, nothingness and facticity. These situations engender meaninglessness in life, exposing people to self-destructive temptations such as suicide and depression.

Authentic universal education also helps the learner to prepare to face death. This is important since a healthy awareness of one's own death neutralizes one's extreme emotions of both happiness and sorrow. Consequently, through spiritual development, individual learners get education on death that translates into a better understanding of good life and one's obligation to it.

Despite its good intentions, the 8-4-4 system seems to have been compromised from achieving holistic education by a number of challenges. Government funding to all basic education institutions has not been adequate. What complicated further the running of these institutions was that the government set a ceiling on the secondary school fees. The state promised to provide free tuition, therefore making secondary education affordable for parents. While this move was commendable, delays in disbursement of government subsidies to schools coupled with poor payment of school fees by parents' have subjected many schools to unwarranted challenges. Furthermore, the 100% transition infrastructure fund provided by the government has been inadequate. The introduction of FPE, which led to increased enrolment also led to

overcrowding of learners in basic education schools. Consequently, teachers have not been able to provide individualised attention to learners, which is an important facet of holistic education. Overcrowding also denies the learners the chance for active participation; it encourages many to be passive observers in the learning process and such environment does not facilitate holistic learning. Moreover, overcrowding in classes also reduces the teaching enterprise to “mass” education and the class becomes a “crowd”. According to Soren Kierkegaard, “the crowd” breeds tension in an individual since it cuts off the individual from true self and deprives him the chance for quiet contemplation. The crowd instead forces the individual to absorb passively the ideals of others. In this case, a crowded classroom environment is a recipe for untruth and inauthenticity. All these challenges have affected the quality of education provided in schools under the 8-4-4 system.

On their part, teachers are overstrained and demoralised by the overwhelming learner numbers. To remedy the situation, some teachers may opt to cover many lessons at once leading to poor teaching. Student overloads oppress the teachers, increase their stress, bring anxiety, which may drive some to tragic decisions such as alcoholism and drug abuse. Over enrolment of learners also denies the teacher the opportunity to deliver optimally since there is no room or time for the application of diverse teaching methodologies, assess and evaluate, monitor, mentor, facilitate, observe and inspire the learners adequately. On the basis of the above examinations, the good intentions of universal access to education under the 8-4-4 system have led to compromises in the quality of education and shortfalls in the holistic development of learners.

2.4.2 Student Unrests

School strikes culminating in burning of schools and loss of lives has been a common phenomenon in Kenya. Some of the memorable incidences since the 1980s when 8-4-4 began include raping of girls and the death of 19 students at St. Kizito Mixed Secondary School in July 1991, the death of students in a tragic act of arson in Bombolulu Girls Secondary School in May 1997, Nyeri Boys High School in March 1999 and the fires of Kyanguli Secondary School March in 2001 in which 68 students lost their lives (Republic of Kenya, 2001). In 2018, a total of 107 out 1800 private secondary schools were affected by various forms of student unrest (Opere, Kamere & Wawire, 2019). According to Wangai Report, the period from 1980s through to 2000s saw an increase in both the frequency and intensity of student protest. Student protests became acts of deadly violence targeting other students rather than more generalized protests against school conditions (Republic of Kenya, 2001; Opere *et al.*, 2019).

Several commissions have been formed to investigate the incidences of student unrests in Kenya. Despite the implementations of these commissions' findings, the incidence of student unrest still persist. The causes of these unrests mentioned in the report include unchecked student freedom due to loss of value systems, peer pressure (students acting as a group due to common interests/expression of solidarity), exam pressure (multiplicity of exams, fear of exams, exam-oriented curriculum or tensions), high handed school management, sabotage, among others.

The prevalence of different types of student unrests in Kenya is a manifestation of existential crises in the country's education system. Student unrests are usually marked

by various degrees of violence. These scenarios also contribute to insecurity, tension, fear, anxiety, despair and depression within and outside the school environment. As already mentioned, various factors cause student strikes or unrests, including poor food, inadequate accommodation, poor teaching, shortage of staff, poor sanitary conditions, high handedness of school management, pressure of work, exam pressure, very loaded academic programmes, night, morning and weekend extra tuitions, disregard for student clubs, movements and societies, and limited leisure time. An existential learning institution environment of such nature is reduced to a “prison” where the learners feel dehumanized, depersonalized, oppressed, and enslaved. Learners who engage in the unrests have reached breaking points and can no longer bear the unfavourable situations in the school. For the perpetrators, strikes become the only way to release tensions, frustrations, fight for their rights, confirm their reduced identity and a communication channels to those responsible.

From an existential point of view, such learning environment is not suitable for holistic development of individuals. This existential situation threatens the learner’s endeavour to self-realization, self-actualization and holistic development by inhibiting their self-worth, learner’s self-awareness, self-consciousness. It also kills their creativity, demotivates and limits the individual’s freedom to make the right choices in life and to flourish. This situation also challenges the authentic approach of dialogue to issues by glorifying violence as an “effective” channel. In existentialism, dialogue enhances effectiveness of confluent education, heightens student’s awareness of themselves as unique individuals who can participate in dialogical relationships to emerge as self-actualized persons. According to Buber (1947), authenticity can only be

gained between two individuals, which he called I-Thou and I-It relationship. However the use of violence has hindered the achievement of the holistic goal of education in Kenya.

2.4.3 Examination Malpractices

Kenya's 8-4-4 education system has been marred by examination malpractices in schools, colleges and universities. According to Balogun (1999), examination is a process through which students are evaluated or tested to find out the quality of knowledge they have acquired within a specific period. Adow, Alio and Thinguri (2015) further emphasize that the innermost purpose of national examination is to improve intelligibility, efficiency and effectiveness in making decisions about people. Examination results, therefore, guide decisions such as job placement, training programs and selection for advanced training (Balogun, 1999). In 2011, in his speech of releasing KCSE, Kenya's minister for education acknowledged the prevalence of examination malpractices and noted that examination irregularities are a threat to credibility of our national examination and is a major concern to the ministry of education.

Philemon (2007) defines examination malpractice as a deliberate act of wrongdoing contrary to official rules and is designed to place a candidate at unfair advantage or disadvantage; it is a careless, illegal or unacceptable behaviour by a candidate in a formal test of his knowledge or ability in a particular subject. Kibler (1993) further explains that examination malpractices are forms of cheating and plagiarism that involves students giving or receiving unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise

or receiving a credit for work that is not their own. Some of the notable examination malpractices in Kenya's learning institutions include examination leakage, assistance by teachers and foreigners, sneaking into examination room's foreign materials like books or pages of text books and calculators, impersonation, collusion, notes in the palms shirts and thighs, swapping of scripts (*mwakenya*) and forgery or doctoring of results. Parents have also been found to be aiding and abetting examination malpractices implicitly or explicitly.

Examination cheating in essence is a sign of inauthenticity on the part of the perpetrator. The examination cheater denies living in accordance to his freedom by convincing one-self to some form of determinism which treats the vice as normal and therefore true. This escape from "freedom" is self-defeating since it leads to falseness and fallenness. According to Soren Kierkegaard, freedom is man's greatness and grandeur. Man's freedom involves a 'life of toil and much suffering and many dangers' whether we like or not. Toil, suffering and danger are our lot. Men have strived throughout history to free themselves from danger and from loneliness, anxiety and anguish by seeking recourse in supernatural or in social collective. Man has tried the religious escape, the cultural escape, and all manner of escape, but if he wants freedom, he must not escape from himself. Buried in the social collective, the individual rarely is able to extricate himself and thus loses the very freedom which is the essence of man's behaviour (Kneller, 1958). From this line of thinking, examination cheating therefore is a form of escapism from one's freedom of authenticity. It is what Jean Paul Sartre calls a project of bad faith. The examination cheater assumes the mode of being in-itself and discards his real nature of for-itself. In

this case, the freedom of for-itself (characterized by transcendence) is a precondition for the project of bad faith (exam cheating), which denies it. Examination cheating therefore is self-deceit based on inadequate representation of what one is and is capable of. An examination cheater should be assisted to have a leap and realize that genuine results represent his authenticity and what he is capable of, an important factor towards self-realization and holistic education.

Examination cheating can also be interpreted as a product of fear of imminent nothingness. Nothingness in this case is based on the thinking that in failing exam, one becomes “nothing” or useless in the society. Therefore, an examination cheater engages in examination cheating because he is afraid of this nothingness or uselessness. Heidegger, in explaining the same concept, talks of emptiness of life. He argues that man is always haunted by emptiness of life symbolized by “whistling in the dark”. In this case, nothingness or uselessness is the darkness and life are the whistle. The situation of his nothingness, or what he is not, exposes one’s character. Examination cheating in this connection exposes the cheater as dishonest, inauthentic, irresponsible and in a fallen state of humanity. The result of engaging in the vice of examination cheating is self-estrangement of human-existence which spoils one’s possibilities leading to irrelevancy of everyday life.

From this observation, a holistic education system should empower the learners to desist the temptation cheating in examination. This is because an individual exists authentically when his original possibilities characterizing his being as human are exploited. An examination cheater remains inauthentic when his possibilities are based

on something that is alien to himself and therefore his authentic self is lost. From this line of thought, examination cheating is tragedy and an affront to holistic education.

2.4.4 Commercialization of Education

Borgohain (2016) opines that commercialization of education is a tendency which gives emphasis on to make education profitable as well as business oriented. Arguing on same line, Ezepeue and Chukwu (2018) observe that commercialization of education has made the running of schools a profit-making venture not only in private schools but also in the government aided schools where parents contribute the biggest part of the budget. As such, commercialization of education implies that “knowledge” becomes economized for purposes of making it a valuable commodity that is subject to commercial transactions. This means that education becomes an object of business. Using the business language, education becomes a product (school, college, university) that has to be marketed or advertised in a manner that appeals to the consumer (student and parents). When education takes this direction, then the traditional function of the dissemination of knowledge is threatened. Fooshay (1991) clearly explains that the continuing purpose of education since ancient times has been to bring people to as full a realization as possible to what it is to be a human being and also to develop an intellect to serve the social needs, to contribute to the economy, to create an effective workforce, to prepare students for job or career and to promote a particular social or political system.

From extant evidence, Kenya’s education system has been a victim of this challenge of commercialization. Its manifestations include holiday tuitions in basic institution

(which has been banned), weekend remedial lessons, examination coaching before national examinations, home coaching by contracted teachers, buying of the purported national examination materials by rogue parents and candidates and big monetary rewards for performing schools and teachers by politicians and parents. While those who defend the legitimacy of the practices argue that all is done with the intention of motivating schools and teachers and championing healthy competition among schools, still the reality is that all these activities are motivated by “money”. Parents pay additional money for purpose of achieving good results for their children and the perpetrators, on the other hand, who are employed and paid by the state or private schools demand to be motivated to deliver. In this way, these crooks in the education sector subject the parents and students to believe that without extra monetary motivation given the educators, their children will not be assisted to learn well and to pass exams. While acknowledging the contributions of private schools in Kenya and good academic performance, most of these schools, especially the primary schools, are actually owned by entrepreneurs who are “business” oriented and driven by profit and not “education” oriented.

In basic schools, commercialization has also been manifested through spending money on non-priorities, such as school buses for boarding schools and expensive recreational facilities such as swimming pools and fancy building (Chukwu & Ezepeue, 2018). Authentically speaking, such ventures increase costs on the parents whom majority of them struggle to make life meet. Furthermore, the culture of “visiting days” in boarding schools whose original intention was to give room to parents to follow up and track their children’s academic development end up being an opportunity of

showcasing particular parent's financial might through expensive goodies to their children.

In some situations, some shrewd school managers poach bright students from other schools and even offer them bursaries and gifts for purposes of posting excellent results in KCPE and KCSE examinations. In reality, such bursaries are implicitly paid by the parents of the so called not- so-bright students.

In tertiary and university levels, commercialization of education has been manifested through the appetite for public prominence and media recognition. Consequently, such institutions driven by this motive get tempted to use hook and crook methods to get high enrolment of students, which will eventually lead to financial benefits for institution owners and managers. In most cases, these institutions and especially the private institutions adopt fancy names mainly to attract unsuspecting students. Such students are also given high marks and rarely failed so as to attract many students but in reality, for economic gains. The most worrying act of education commercialization that is evident is sex for grades. In some cases, male lecturers have been accused of soliciting sex from female students and after gratifying themselves, doctor the results of the concerned students and even give them money to silence them.

As articulated in this study, commercialization per se changes the whole concept of education especially in terms of purposes of education, attitudes towards education and teacher student relationship. It reduces the whole concept of education to an activity of commerce where the ultimate end is making it a product which is

commercially successful. In this case, students' personhood and human hood is reduced to a marketable commodity. Education becomes a business where the teachers are seen as service providers whose sole responsibility is to offer services to business clients (learners) in return for money. In this case, the value of financial profit is prioritized above every other agenda in the teaching and learning enterprise.

The commercial dehumanization of instructors and learners has many undesirable outcomes in the education sector and in society at large. First, the instructor's role is reduced to that of an employee who is no longer an important participant in making of critical decisions that advocate for the best interest of the learner. The interest shifts from the holistic development of the learner, where human dimensions such as normative, physical, spiritual, cognitive, dialogical and creative are the priority, to money and profit. Secondly, subjects such as mathematics and sciences are given more attention than humanities because of the perceived belief that they these subjects lead to qualification for superior courses such as medicine and engineering which promises very high remuneration in the job market. In essence, even those who study science-oriented courses like engineering should learn courses in the humanities and social sciences, since these disciplines play a critical role in humanizing and socializing the learners irrespective of their specializations. This categorization disregards the learner's interests and abilities and curtails his freedom to choose and condemns them to be victims of a market driven enterprise.

Thirdly, teachers' creativity is killed since they are directed to use sophisticated programmes and methods to sell the marketable commodity called education instead

of using learner-centred approaches to guide and make best judgements that respect every learner's individuality and uniqueness. Fourthly, an education system that is market-driven risks placing commerce and businesses as key determinants of conceptualizing the concept of education, the content, the pedagogy and the curriculum of education. This scenario alienates the students, teachers and parents by reducing them to marketable commodities and token participants; yet, their essential role in the teaching and learning enterprise is critical. Lastly, in the existential crisis of absence of financial motivation, the teaching and learning enterprise suffers alienation in terms of their demotivation. This scenario leads to the erosion of the nobility of the teaching profession and subjects the learners to a situation where they feel cheated.

In essence, existentialism in education advocates for a holistic education system that is sensitive to the interests of the individual learner for purposes of developing his or her potential and wholesome personality. Commercialization of education in Kenya, as it has been discussed, has thus hindered the achievement of holistic education in Kenya.

2.4.5 Curriculum Overload

According to Levin (2008), curriculum is an official statement of what students are expected to know and are able to do. On his part, Kelly (1999) opines that curriculum is all learning which is planned and guided by the school whether it is carried on in groups or individually, inside or outside school. From these definitions, curriculum can, therefore, be described as whatever is taught in school in a set of subjects with specific content and objectives to be achieved by students. It includes both curricula

and co-curricular activities that encompass knowledge, skills, norms and cultural aspects aimed at developing the learner holistically.

Kaviti (2018) points out that the 8-4-4 system curriculum for primary schools was overloaded with content geared at only passing national examinations. Kenya's 8-4-4 overload was too voluminous and therefore teaching and learning became quantitative rather than qualitative. The curriculum is too broad, the syllabus contains too many items, the lesson content is sometimes repeated and the teaching and learning depends overly on text books. This overstretched curriculum made the system very expensive in terms of provisions of learning resources and teaching workforce and also burdensome to the learners, teachers and parents.

In a nutshell, curriculum overload exerts a lot of pressure on both the teachers and the learners because it provides inadequate time to cover the syllabus, revise and to prepare for examinations. The situation could be made worst in institutions facing shortage of personnel to deliver the curriculum. This is because the lessons are numerous, the content comes in big sizes and text books bring additional learning content. Too much content makes it difficult for the learners to grasp and learning becomes boring; meanwhile, in such scenarios, the slow learners may despair. In this case, education departs from the holistic objective and becomes oppressive and dehumanizing.

Overloaded curriculum requires a lot of time in a week that may not be enough for teachers to teach certain subjects adequately. Consequently, teaching and learning

becomes shallow and the teachers will be unable to attend to the unique needs of individual learners, inculcate values such as responsibility, authenticity, subjectivity, right sense of freedom, and to facilitate them unleash learners' innate capabilities and potential in an integrated and holistic manner.

In rushing to finish the topic or the syllabus, the teacher may end up teaching more theory than practice, with less regard for contextual and practical learning that serve to foster authentic individual and self-realization. As a convenient approach, teachers end up using traditional teaching styles such as the lecture method, without giving room for creativity or application activities that are meant to enhance the learner's understanding of a subject. This scenario reduces education to teaching students only for examination performance and not to equip them to develop the essences of their existence.

Furthermore, overloaded curriculum tends to neglect minor subjects such life skills, physical education and engagement in co-curricular activities such as clubs, societies and movements and community activities such as charity works which are meant to foster holism in order to fully focus on examination subjects. In this connection, the education system is reduced to examination subjects. Such unbalanced curriculum denies the teacher the opportunity to further develop their teaching talent to realize himself fully and become what he is capable of. It also deprives the learners the concrete all-round education needed to assist them establish a firm foundation for their individual creative effort to face the tragic situations of life and to realize their own nature in full.

From this line of reasoning, with an overload curriculum, the aims and objectives of education system cannot be achieved. This is because the products of such system are unarguably unbalanced. The overload curriculum has, therefore, rendered the 8-4-4 system of education limited in fulfilling its intended goals of facilitating the learner's holistic development.

2.4.6 Education for Employment

Many Kenyans think that education is only for employment. Ideally speaking, the aims of education go beyond securing employment for the learner. Challenging this position, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere (1968), in his work, *Education for Self-Reliance*, argued that the colonial education in Tanzania, which had this challenge, advanced the notion that education is synonymous with formal schooling, and people are judged and employed on the basis of their ability to pass examinations and acquire paper qualifications. This trend reduces education to be “white-collar job” oriented and “salaries” oriented. Subsequently, the mentality of many Kenyans is that education is exclusively for employment, which seems to be a challenge that has been inherited from the colonial education. Consequently, learners get obsessed with acquisition of paper certificates, diplomas, degrees and PhDs for purposes of getting important jobs and feeling “educated” for having mastered all knowledge in the world. This perception has plunged Kenya into high unemployment crisis. Critiquing such education, Nyerere observed that this type of education divorces its graduates from the society. Arguing on the same line, Kassam (1995) opines that such a system does not involve its students in productive work. It also deprives society of the much-needed

contribution to increase the national economic output and also breeds contempt for manual work among students.

Existentially speaking, the role of education goes beyond the utilitarian benefit of formal employment. It advocates for an education which helps the individual to live an existential life characterized by development of authenticity, self-realization, responsibility, the power of choice, ability to face the tragic situations of life, enhance social adjustability and the uniqueness of the educand. Such education should cultivate in the learner creative abilities, subjectivity, self-awareness, critical thinking, consciousness, spirituality, integrity, individual potential and self-actualization. From this discussion, therefore, formal employment is not the only avenue to this existential aim of education.

Education in the existential sense offers the option of not only training for career in the corporate world but also for growing as individual, gaining knowledge and as a distinct member of the society. In this case, learners achieve the freedom of enjoying the acquisition of knowledge without being confronted by worries of unemployment and retrenchment.

The freedom of not studying solely for employment enables the learner to choose courses that may not be directly linked to a specific job. These courses include philosophy, music, theology, anthropology and history. History, for example, enables an individual to understand who we are, address injustices and make better decisions in the present for a better future. Philosophy provides an expression of human

curiosity and the drive to investigate, understand ourselves and the world in which we live.

In summary, education for employment mentality in Kenya requires serious existential interrogation. Education per se ought to disseminate knowledge as a human need and for a worthwhile goal in itself. Of great importance is that education and knowledge should lead to a complete search of the truth in a way that develops the human existence and the related human conditions in authentic and holistic way.

2.4.7 Examination Oriented System

Mackatiani (2017) observes that the Kenyan education system has three segments: primary (8 years), secondary (4 years) and university (4 years). There is an examination at every educational segment to warrant promotion to the next level. At end of the primary segment, Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) is undertaken. Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education is done after secondary segment. Consequently, Mackatiani points out that the 8-4-4 system of education follows the exam-oriented model. In connection to this view, Adow, Alio and Thinguri (2015) argue that the innermost purpose of national examinations is to improve intelligibility, efficiency and effectiveness in making decisions about people. Sofenwa (1977) observes that examination is used to measure the effectiveness of teaching strategy. Examinations are also used by the teachers to evaluate the extent to which the learners have achieved the desired objectives of the syllabus. The Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC), a state corporation under the State Department of Education, administers examinations with its functions being setting and maintaining

examination standards, conducting public academic, technical and other national examinations within Kenya at basic and tertiary levels, and awarding certificates or diplomas to the respective candidates.

However, with all the above positive justifications for examinations, the 8-4-4 system of education has been observed to be too much exam-oriented to the detriment of the learners themselves and to the real essence of holistic education. This orientation is evidenced by too much obsession with attainment of high mean scores and glory in high performances, forced repetition of classes for the poor performers, teaching only examination material for purposes of passing exams, cutthroat competition among the learners, classes, schools and teachers and temptation to cheat.

From existential philosophical interrogation, exam-centric education reduces the whole purpose of education to an enterprise of teaching to test. This distorts the essence of curriculum as well as threatening the validity and reliability of examinations. In reality, examinations ought to be a clear statement of standards required, especially bringing out the abilities and the potential of the learner. It also serves as a paradigm of quality feedback about the talents of the teachers and way of judging the transparency of a system for purposes of making informed reforms and improvements. In this case, examinations will also serve as a way of motivating both the learners and the teachers.

Nevertheless, increased emphasis on examination is a threat to holistic development of the learner since the control of the curriculum is dictated by the demands of the

examinations. Consequently, non-examinable aspects such as moral developments and acquisition of virtues such as responsibility, maturity, spirituality and physical and emotional development are ignored. This scenario perpetuates existential crises of oppression and dehumanization.

In existentialism, education is meant to develop students' disposition to study by themselves so as to inculcate aspects that create meanings to their lives and promote self-worth. However, due to the demands of examinations teachers subject the learners to excessive private tutoring from early childhood and to imitate what others do instead of developing their own study plans guided by their individual needs, interests and uniqueness. In order to prepare for exams, students are more likely to study past test examinations and explore possibilities of expected questions instead of sharpening and employing their critical thinking and creative abilities. Students also tend to reproduce the lecturer's notes during examination and those who do so are highly rewarded while those who seek answers outside the lecturer's notes are penalized. In such education, the examination candidate does not appreciate other beneficial epistemological sources such as mass media. This is rote learning that kills the reading culture. A holistic education system ought to expose the learners to a flood of information, cultivate in them the culture of acquiring and assimilating information for themselves and to promote autonomous and free learning ability.

Examination-centric education systems also tend to promote unhealthy competition among the learners, schools, counties and regions. Anxious parents arrange for private tuitions for their children so as to compete and secure admission to reputed schools.

This competition is done in bad faith and leads to inauthenticity of the learners, since the friendly relations between the students themselves are reduced to academic enmity and rivalry. Too many exams also distort learning opportunities such as social life, which is key in promoting the learners' identity and self-worth. It robs the learners of creative play, playmates and social skills. This scenario also denies the children their childhood enjoyment since their leisure time is utilized for forced and uncomfortable tuitions to pass examinations. When the learners get opportunities to engage in physical exercises, they develop competencies required for authentic existential living such as personality development.

Examination emphasis, furthermore, leads to reduced subject choices in the curriculum for individual learners since the motivation is to pass exam. Elective subjects are chosen not because the learner loves the subject but because one sees in those subjects the opportunity to get better overall grades and to be celebrated for having passed the general examination. In this case, the perceived examination difficulty, not the learner's potentiality, interest and uniqueness, guides the subject choice. This system increases the alienation of low achievers since they are not catered for.

Existentialism advocates for a holistic educational system that imparts the desired knowledge to bestow in an individual the potential to self-realization and self-actualization and holistic development, and not only passing examinations. Holistic life is more than examinations.

2.4.8 Inadequate Funding

The Kenya government committed itself to provide free primary education and complete free day secondary school starting from January 2018. In a cabinet meeting chaired by the president in 2018, the government resolved that requisite infrastructure would be provided through government initiative and would lead to 100 percent transition from primary to secondary school (Kaviti, 2018). Despite this commendable commitment towards achievement of holistic education, it is evident that schools in Kenya still face serious challenges of inadequate funding. With free primary, free secondary school tuition and the 100% transition rate from primary to secondary schools, a huge growth in student population both in primary schools and secondary schools has been experienced across the country. With limited resources, the government cannot still hire enough teaching workforce in all levels of education. In March 2021, the Teachers Service Commission Executive, Nancy Macharia, reported that the teacher shortage in secondary was at 95,258 while the primary shortfall stood at 30,357 totalling 125,615 (Awich, 2021).

The Technical Vocational and training Institutions (TVET) and universities are also faced with similar challenges. Every year, the government has been slow in releasing capitation funds for ongoing school infrastructural development programmes and other money related to the support of free primary and secondary education. The delay in cash remissions to schools has led to difficulties in paying some suppliers of foodstuffs, textbooks, teachers under board of management payrolls and other important related materials. Many public schools, especially those in marginalized areas, lack proper classrooms, inadequate playground space, inadequate science

laboratories, dignified toilets, electricity and water provision. Government funding does not also cater for hidden costs such as maintenance expenses.

In light of the challenge of inadequate funding towards education in Kenya, the general and the existential aims and objectives of education of enabling individuals to develop their fullest potential for their holistic development remains unachieved. This challenge compromises holistic education by taking away the pathways towards learners' individual achievement of integral development.

The above argument is supported by the following critical threats and effects to holistic education in Kenya's learning institutions: Underfunding leads to increase in tuition fees, introduction of new levies to learner's payments and temptations by teachers to undertake illegal private tutorials purely motivated by the commercial philosophy and receiving gifts to prepare the learners to pass examinations. This practice in turn subjects the low economically endowed parents to pay schools fees timely. The challenge becomes further complicated because the affected learners are more likely to experience late reporting to schools or late registration of courses and therefore missing lessons and sometimes pertinent examinations. The affected learners end up experiencing existential academic crises such as anxiety, confusion, stress and sometimes despair because of the imminent uncertainty of their academic performance. Those who despair and develop feelings of meaninglessness or nothingness and worthlessness may resort to violent strikes that often result in destruction of school property, injuries and even loss of lives. These outcomes effects cannot guarantee holism in education.

Another challenge of inadequate funding of education is that learners with serious problems of school fees are likely to defer, suspend learning or drop out of school or colleges before finishing. This is because they may be unable to bear the burdens of purchase of textbooks, payment of extra-departmental statutory levies, uniforms, examination fees and to cater for accommodation and food expenses. Therefore, school fees could also be out of reach even if the tuition is free. As such, learners who face these challenges miss out on opportunities to be empowered by education, to discover their talents and potentials, acquire virtues and values that add meaning to their lives to live ethical and authentic lives and competencies that support their achievement of self-realization and holism.

Furthermore, inadequate funding of education leads to further challenges such as late or even non-payment of staff salaries, especially in private institutions. In public institutions, the teaching staffs are more likely to agitate for salary increment, promotion and allowances. If not handled, such agitation lead to strikes, which further pose other challenges like disruption of academic programmes, extension of semesters, incomplete academic calendars, drop in academic performance, increase in school drop outs and possible increase in crime and delinquencies among the learners. The affected staffs also face existential crises such as anxiety, stress, tension and even depression arising from lack of money to cater for their families and personal needs that serve to offer security and worth in life. Consequently, the affected staffs are more likely to exhibit habits such as lateness in reporting duty, meeting, lectures, and conferences since they may not afford to report early to work or attend to other financial needs to free their minds to work. A tutor who faces such challenges is not

able to deliver the curriculum, motivate the learners, do their best work according to their ability and to facilitate the learners to achieve the intended purpose of holistic education where they are empowered to make free choices, appreciate their individuality, uniqueness and subjectivity and to discover and work on their weaknesses and to unleash their innate abilities to exploit their potential.

Inadequate financing of education also leads to compromises on the quality of teaching and research especially in institution of higher learning. Diminished educational resources has meant loss of value for academic qualification, appreciation of honest work and merit. Consequently, this has given the vices of opportunism, mediocrity, corruption and politicization to thrive. The challenge also denies the tutors opportunities for professional development and improvement to acquire better and up-to-date skills for helping learners to achieve education's ultimate goal of knowing the truth, becoming integrated, holistic and self-actualized. The outcome of this is a crowd of teachers, tutors and lecturers who are without the above stated competencies.

Lastly, underfunding leads to learning environments uncondusive for both the learners and the instructors. Learning institutions may not be able to maintain dilapidated school facilities, for example worn out paintings, leaking roof, windowless and door less classrooms and broken-down institutional vehicles. Such learning institutions will also lack science and technical equipment, electricity and modern teaching and learning aids. Offices will also be uncondusive, for example congested staff rooms or even offices without fan, air conditioners adequate lighting. These situations are more

likely impact negatively on the learners' and teachers' school attendance rates since their desire to engage in instructional activities and their ability to focus are impaired. Furthermore, the unbearable institutional environment can affect the behaviour of the learners. Lack of instructional materials, chairs, science equipment, relevant books and struggle of limited materials and space can easily trigger undesirable indiscipline cases in the institution. In such uncondusive school environments, the learners are denied techniques and learning opportunities and experiences that serve to help them to be more human and develop significant essences or meanings to their existence. On the other hand, the instructors may end up developing poor attitude towards work, lack of commitment and poor productivity. Such instructors are incapable of delivering the curriculum authentically and to expose the learners to achieve the ultimate objective of holistic education.

In essence, budgeting for education finance in Kenya should reflect what the learners truly need, that is, realization of the learner's holistic development; not through political lens that serves to benefit inauthentic utilitarian motives of a political group at the expense of the main subjects of the education enterprise, the learners. Education financing should also focus on the quality of the education system and the quality of every learning institution from the quality of the instructions to the delivery of both implicit and explicit curriculum. It is, therefore, plausible to conclude that adequate funding addresses the above articulated decays, reverses the situation and leads to the holistic development of the learners.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has covered the education systems Kenya preceding the introduction of the 8-4-4 system by pointing out their inadequacies. The introduction of 8-4-4 was seen to be a revolutionary paradigm shift that would see Kenya's problems getting solved through quality education and quality human resources. The rationale of its introduction was indeed very good but the system has suffered many setbacks. The system has faced many challenges that have hindered holistic development of the learners making it inappropriate for the 21st century. The criticisms of the 8-4-4 system informed the introduction of the new Competency Based Curriculum, which is currently in its early stages of implementation.

CHAPTER THREE

SIGNIFICANCE OF EXISTENTIALISM TO HOLISTIC EDUCATION IN KENYA

3.1 Overview

As far as the significance of existentialism to education in Kenya is concerned, it is evident that no such discourse has been written extensively and formally. In essence, existentialist philosophy does not display any particular concern in education. However, the existential concept in education, as advocated in this research, has been deduced from the main premises of existential philosophers. As indicated previously, these variables include subjectivity, freedom, authenticity/ inauthenticity, responsibility and anxiety. It should be noted that existentialism emerged as a rejection of the traditional approach to education. Due to this background, existentialism rejects the existence of any source of objective, authoritative truth about metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. Instead, individuals are responsible for determining for themselves what is “true”, or “false” “right” or “wrong”, “beautiful” or “ugly”. For the existentialist, there exist no universal form of human nature; each of us has the free will to develop as we see fit (Maheshwari, 2011). This chapter, therefore, interrogates the significance of existential philosophy to holistic education in Kenya.

3.2 Significance of Existentialism to Holistic Education in Kenya

3.2.1 Existentialism and Aims and Objectives of Education

The existentialist view is to educate the “whole person” and not just the cognitive dimension at the expense of other important dimensions such as the normative aspect.

Maheshwari (2011) opines that, in this dynamic of educating the whole person, existentialists propose a more individualistic notion, that is, the unfolding of the individual as a whole in a situation in which he finds himself. Embracing this existentialist view, education in Kenya focuses on the integration and holistic development of the learners (Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, 2012). As argued in the preceding chapter, Kenya's education systems face many challenges that have hindered the achievement of holistic education in terms of its aims and objectives. The philosophy of existentialism can therefore foster holistic education in Kenya through the dynamic discussed in the subsequent paragraphs below.

A good education should encourage persons to ask questions such as 'who am I?' 'where am I going'? 'why am I here'? These questions guide educators to foster the holistic aim of education by exposing individual learners to scenarios where they can assume responsible self-hood, realize the best they are capable of, optimize their potential, grow up, face the worldly challenges and to be able to a holistic life through knowledge. Training the whole person requires that education trains the learners to be aware of the fact that they are becoming human persons who live and makes choices about what they will do and what they anticipate to become. Knowledge about self, especially on issues pertaining one's limitations, strengths, relationships and biological development, is important in the process of becoming holistic. In this process of becoming holistic, learners are also made to understand that they should endeavour to make authentic choices and to come to realization that choices are never perfect and,

although the consequences of these choices are unpredictable, they should still take the responsibility.

Existential education aims to develop unique personality and authentic self of the learner and to achieve self-realization. In other words, the student should become personally concerned with the realization of his own nature and courage to be himself (Kneller, 1971). This aim is supported by Nietzsche who posited that the duty of the teacher towards the student is to liberate and empower individuals toward authentic, autonomous and creative life (Aloni, 1989). Existentialists believe that persons also have feelings and emotions, apart from cognitive functions. Consequently, holistic education should enable the students to learn how to feel, master their emotions and to become authentic individuals. To achieve this aim, education must cater for the learner's uniqueness and individual differences.

Jean Paul Sartre talks about two modes of existence: self-in-self and self-for-itself. Self-in- itself means what a person is at the moment. Self-for-itself is what a person becomes in his life by putting his efforts. The achievement of self-for-self condition helps the learner to assume responsible selfhood and therefore better equipped to face the world responsibly. Education therefore must help the students to develop self-for-itself.

Existential education also prepares the learner to face tragic situations of life. The learners must be exposed to realize the facticity of their existence and to face the categories of these facticity. Examples of the tragic situations of life or facticity

include death, sickness, depression and even examination failure. All these situations make the learners to experience dread, anguish, anxiety and fear. Consequently, existential education should prepare the learner to face such situations resolutely and courageously so as to finally prepare to meet death with pleasure. For example, the teacher can prepare the learner to cultivate the right attitude and better understanding of death and to be aware of his death at every moment of life. Such understanding will help the students to enjoy each and every moment of life and to realize the best that he is capable of while still alive. In this connection, learners are assisted to realize that death is not always negative but it also has positive sides. Education for death ought to be integrated with the experience of better understanding of good life and its commensurate obligations. Such authentic conception of life and death help the learners to realize that sometimes it is better to die for an ideal than to live a life and betray it. Great examples of those who have achieved this level of thought include Christian martyrs who died for their faith to benefit others and to set clear the true path of life.

Existentialism also emphasize that education should inculcate choice-making power in the learners. In explaining this aim, Azhar (2013) elaborates that education should train men to make better and also give the idea that since his choices are never perfect, consequences cannot be predicted. Life is a continuous process of making choices and all choices are personal and individual. In essence life is every living individual's project whose architect is the subject in question. Choice per se, to some extent, cannot be avoided since it characterizes the human condition. Authentic choices are made when the learner is in a position of intensive self-awareness. This awareness implies

that the learner makes choices as persons who are constantly free, independent and creative. Education, therefore, ought to empower the learners not only to make choices but authentic choices so that they may realize their individual authenticity. On the other hand, existentialism holds that an individual should not blame other people such as the parents and the society for all the choices he has made. Furthermore, they should not also blame the conditions in which they find themselves. Nevertheless, people must simply make their choices and accept the consequences despite the fact the consequences may be unpredictable. This scenario attaches every choice to a complete personal responsibility.

Another aim of existential education is to prepare the learners for social adjustment. In this connection, social aspect of education prepares the learner to respect freedom of all by first and foremost, by willing his freedom and at the same time by willing the freedom of all. Recognition of ones' freedom and that of others empowers the individual learner to see beyond personal interest and goals by appealing to the logic of "I am responsible for all and myself". Consequently, the acquired social adjustability helps the learner to live and coexist with other human beings by authentic integration into structures, groups and institutions in the society without losing their individuality. In this case, a socialized educated learner will be able to cooperate with others, contribute well in group situations and will be able to work as an efficient member of the team or a group. However, instructors should be very careful when glorifying groups because sometimes group situations frustrate the individual by instilling fear of them. This situation is more likely to make the frustrated individual feel pressurized to sacrifice his personal originality and to conform to them.

Nevertheless, there are still opportunities for original decision especially when the individual freely chooses to join a group and resolves to work in it. In this connection, group learning situations in the school environment should provide opportunities for individual learners to demonstrate the unique features of their personality.

In summary, existentialism advocates for a holistic education system that enables every individual to develop his unique qualities and individualities, discover and exploit his natural endowments and to be integrated.

3.2.2 Existentialism and the Concept of the School

Reflecting on the concept of the school in existentialism, Koirala (2011) posits that the school should provide an atmosphere where the individual develops in a healthy way. The school environment therefore should be one which facilitates proper self-development and self-consciousness. To achieve this, the school should provide an enabling environment where the individual learners feel accepted, secure, loved and motivated. In 2010, the Ministry of Education emphasized the importance of creating an enabling school environment for the learners and formulated *Child Friendly School Manual* for implementation. However, despite the given guidelines, a lot still needs to be done so to achieve holistic education. A hostile school environment is oppressive and an obstacle to proper personality and holistic development. Existentialism in education, therefore, advocates for creation of a conducive school environment which promotes the learner's holistic development by embracing various innovative practices as explained below.

Yahyaei and Mahini (2017), in referring to humanistic psychology, identifies two growth periods of human: the pre-existing period and the existing moment. In the pre-existing period, the child is not aware of his human conditions and therefore unaware of his personal identity and destiny. In the Kenyan 8-4-4 education system, these pre-existing years is associated with early childhood development period and primary school years. It is during this period when the children are assisted to learn the basics in reading, writing, counting recreational, physical and social skills and some program content. After the pre-existing stage, the learners graduate to existing stage when the learners are in puberty, they begin to be aware of their existence in the world as “me” and idea of responsibility towards their actions. At is at this point, therefore, institutions of higher learning when existentialistic education acquires much significance in the school. Learning institutions should be aware of these developments so as to engage that kind of education which awakens, develops and intensifies the individual’s self-awareness. This self-awareness is beneficial in developing the learner’s mental, physical and emotional dimensions so that the individual learner is made ready to face existential situations that serve to guide the learner to better understanding of what being human entails.

Existentialism recommends a school organization with a framework of inclusion of extra-curricular activities like football, athletics, music, clubs, movements and societies. This is because such activities contribute in presenting existential situations which are very good for teaching and development of human beings. While Kenya’s education system provides for this frame work, the situation on the ground shows that

much emphasis is put on class activities for examination purposes while extra-curricular activities are ignored. This trend does not lead to holism.

Furthermore, existentialism attaches greater importance to home environment than the school. The existentialist view is that home-life has critical contributions to the educational growth of individual learners. In the home environment, the child experiences love, sense of belonging and identification. Through the parents and the entire family love, the child receives constant concern of his welfare and this prepares them to be more human and to be able to confront the difficulties of everydayness. This authentic spirit of love shapes the way one relates with the outside world, for example in school and work place. This idea, therefore, encourages the establishment of day schools that are well equipped, staffed and attractive, to the learners. Unfortunately, compared to boarding schools, most day schools in Kenya have very poor infrastructure with serious shortage of the teaching staff making them unattractive to the learners. On the contrary, uncondusive school environment drives the learner to create an idea of being an object and not a subject among the many. This challenge becomes even more complicated especially in situations where the parents abdicate and shift more responsibilities to the teachers and schools especially in boarding institutions.

Furthermore, existentialism advocates for an open education and the learner's freedom. In this connection, learning institutions ought to come up with educational reforms that provide learning freedom for the learner. For example, "open-door" class can provide various opportunities for the learners to learn creatively based on their

interests without being pressured by their respective teachers or school. This dynamic encourages teachers to give room to open-door classes and student's spontaneous self-assembling. According to Gutek (2005), learning in open-class is an unavoidable, flexible and dynamic, since different tendencies of the students are approved in there and their personal choices are supported and respected. Additionally, education should take place throughout the society, in places of business, personal affairs etc. Education should be universal and of the public in the truest sense of the world. Creative teachers therefore can organize un-official out of school unofficial education which is free from formalities.

Existentialism further emphasizes that learning institutions should by all means neutralize mechanization and impersonality of the learners. Mechanization of the learners is occasioned by the modern dynamics such as computerization of student's timetables, work programmes, programmed instructions and use of teaching machines and other related equipment. This mechanized system of education reduces the personal contact between the learners and the teachers. This impersonal situation hampers the learner's personality and individual development. Yahyaei and Mahini (2017), in their critique, observe that official education is an institutionalized process which has imprisoned the children and youths in specific institutes where they are obliged to be present full-time with teachers as their guardians and which forces them to finish an obligatory program.

Existentialism also recommends schools to create learning environments characterized by large classes with a flexible atmosphere. The walls and the charts should be

movable and the teacher's place should not be fixed. Furthermore, there should be abundant availability of reading resources for the learners to discover their skills based on their interests and talents. When the school and the classroom environment is conducive, positive and warm, the learners are motivated to learn and this facilitates individual growth and on-going learning process. In supporting this existentialist view, Mehrmohammadi (2009) posits that the classes should be free, and should be environments filled with trust, mutual respect, cooperation, and friendship in such a manner that the student can share his feelings with others.

The school should also be a place where dialogue creates a proper relationship between the teachers and the learners and among the learners themselves. Teacher-learner dialogue provides an opportunity of one's growth towards self-fulfilment. David Walters (2008) advocates for an existential learning theory in which the student- teacher relationship fosters self-worth and fulfilment of personal destiny. The teacher-learner relationship therefore, should be on the basis of mutual respect and regard for one another as subjects in the teaching and learning enterprise. The teacher should avoid abusive and demeaning language and any other related decorum in the school environment that threatens the stated teacher-learner relationship.

3.2.3 Existentialism and the Concept of Curriculum

Existentialism treats curriculum as the world of knowledge to be explored with a sole aim of self-examination and self-realization. Such curriculum should recognize the individual unique differences while accommodating diverse curricula which respond to the aptitude and the needs of the individual. In discussing existentialist view about

curriculum, Power (1992) notes that the curriculum should be mainly liberal since liberal learning is most likely to lay a foundation for human freedom. From this discussion, existentialists, therefore, reject the traditional approach to the curriculum where the teachers or specialist bodies pass on fixed and selected quantities and qualities of knowledge to the learners. This is because knowledge is dynamic and nothing is fixed, final and absolute. A fixed curriculum is most likely to hinder the learner's opportunity to define and create themselves accordingly.

Existentialism in education further advocates for a curriculum which gives the learners a wide variety of options from which to choose. In explaining this orientation, Scotter (1985) points out that the subjects of the existentialist curriculum are unspecified, although any subject can be, at the right moment, the tool, the vehicle to engage the individual in his or her striving to become. The curriculum therefore should be designed to cater for the learner's individual uniqueness and to provide them with various experiences that will enable them to discover their creativity and self-assertion. Such curriculum also gives space to the individual learner's aspirations, conditions and needs that is related to his self-fulfilment. Craver and Ozmon (1990) sum it well by arguing that the student in situation, making a choice should be the deciding factor. Being situated in the world, the learner therefore chooses the subjects according to his existential situation.

Existentialism also insists that the curriculum should constitute "core of studies". This core studies should be manifested in the lives of learners both while in school and when out of school. In this connection, existentialism emphasizes the importance of

humanities in the curriculum. Examples of these humanities include history, literature and art. According to Azhar (2013), humanities reveal the inner feelings and thoughts of man, i.e., his guilt, sin, suffering, tragedy, death, hate and love. Kneller (1958) demonstrates that through subjects such as history, citizenship, music, art, poetry and biography, through its existential approach the learner “lives” the subject or, better, becomes personally involved in the life of the material under consideration. Existentialists also argue that humanities have spiritual power. For example, art and literature demonstrate the true nature of man. Through artistic expressions, one discovers genuine situations which characterize human existence such as anguish, pain and agony. Art also encourages the student’s creativity and imagination which transcends cramming and imitation. By listening to music, the learner responds individually and in a creative manner to feel music. History challenges the students to appreciate the course of history and to shape the future. In fact, existentially, history is man’s struggle to achieve his freedom. From this interrogation, existentialists therefore want to see a human being holistically by emphasizing the stated essential aspects of human existence.

Existentialism, however, lays less emphasis on social sciences though it acknowledges their importance of inculcating moral obligations and building the relationships between individuals and groups. Kneller (1958) explains this fact by interrogating that the social sciences offer a valuable opportunity for unifying subjective and objective knowledge, for the formulation of moral obligations from social problems, and for a more profound understanding of the relation of individual to the group.

On the other hand, scientific subjects and mathematics should be included in the curriculum but should not be given more emphasis since they deal with an objective knowledge. This is based on the fact that in existentialist doctrine, self-knowledge precedes universal knowledge. Nietzsche, in his reflection, argued that a specialist in science begins to resemble nothing but a factory workman who spends his whole life turning one particular screw or handle on a certain instrument or machine (Azhar, 2013). Arguing on the same, Maheshwari (2011) opines that for existentialists, the subject matter for scientific subjects is considered to be “cold”, “dry” “objective,” and therefore less fruitful to self-awareness. Consequently, existentialism in education recommends that specialization in any scientific field must be complemented by liberalizing studies basically because the person is the one who matters but not the profession.

Furthermore, existentialism opposes any sort of vocational training at a very early age. This practice trains a child to become a particular kind of a person instead of encouraging him to be free. Career or occupation, according to the existentialists, should be primarily a means of exercising freedom and secondarily for immediate and tangible rewards. Vocational training therefore, should also include the teaching of humanities and should also be regarded as a means of teaching students about themselves and their potential rather than just being a means of earning livelihood.

Existentialism further advocates for the type of curriculum which supports the learner’s personal relationship view point and self-actualization. In this connection, the curriculum should be meaningful to the learner and therefore it is a prerogative of the

school to design, arrange and execute programs which are in accordance and adaptable to this component. Such curriculum treats the individual learner as the axis, the programme decision-making and information resource. The learning therefore adopts a teacher-student design since the curriculum is based on friendly action and reaction between the teacher and the learner. This orientation allows active cooperation of the student in designing learning experiences and learning activities so that real learning is realized. The learners therefore should be given the opportunity of the right to choose, participate in critical decision-making process and to participate in designing the plans and activities in which he is going to engage in. In this case, using a predetermined plan is not recommended since such concentrated activity does not cater for the needs and interests of the learners and their varied existential situations. This observation is further supported by Shoarinejad (2004) who opines that the curriculum in existentialism does not agree with topic-centred; the student must be the main axis and what he needs must be included in the curriculum. This curriculum emphasizes the following issues: the curriculum being active; the students being interested in the basic title of the plan and activity; students being absolutely free to choose the work in a group or by themselves; establishing the curriculum based on instant and direct needs, and identifying the individual differences in the experiences.

In the recent times, critics of education like Kennedy (2017) have called for the liberation of the curriculum in the higher education institutions. This move is based on the claim that the current curricula is overly Eurocentric and parochial and therefore does not fully recognize important contributions made by other ethnic, religious, sexual and gender minority groups. This call is also supported by the fact that there is

a perceived misrecognition of the “other” in the content that is delivered to the learners. The resistance to this misrecognition will definitely favour the existentialist approach to curriculum. This is because when what is generally understood as the “traditional sources” of authority is critically interrogated, some elements of the denial of the existential underpinnings of what it means to be human are quite noticeable. In this connection, this discussion needs to be treated with urgency.

In its ideal sense, the curriculum in Kenya’s education system is in line with the existentialist view; it comprises the humanities, the arts, sciences, vocational and technical subjects. This broad conception of the curriculum is good for the learner’s holistic development. However, being in practice an examination-oriented system, the curriculum in Kenya has suffered drawbacks such as the students taking reduced subject choices and elective subjects, not because one loves the subject but for purposes of manipulating grades and passing examinations, overloaded curriculum which is quantitative rather than qualitative and giving more attention to subjects such as mathematics and sciences more than humanities and arts because of the belief that these subjects are more superior and can guarantee employment. When the curriculum takes this line of thought, then the holistic goal of education cannot be achieved.

Therefore, Kenya’s education system, influenced by the philosophy of existentialism, can achieve the holistic goal of the learners by emphasizing a curriculum, which allows the learners in pre-school to be given an opportunity to express themselves through art from which they choose and having school programs which provide an opportunity to the pupils to make their own decisions ethically. On the other hand, the

secondary and the college programs should aim at educating the student to freedom. Across all levels of learning, the curriculum should be chosen, sorted out and owned by the learners. Furthermore, any subject is important provided it helps the individual learner to realize himself, to be aware of the universe and to pursue holistic development. In this way, the curriculum empowers the learner to confront absurdities and the contradictions thrown to humans by life and the immediate and ultimate needs, the good and the bad, life and death.

3.2.4 Existentialism and the Concept of a Teacher

According to Akinpelu (1981), the existentialist philosophy of education is one with which every teacher should be acquainted because of the great message it has for the instructor, both as a person to himself and as one responsible for shaping the lives of others. Therefore, the teacher is expected to redefine his role and to discover the implications and the commitment that is required for being a teacher. Harper (1955) captures clearly the existentialist concept of a teacher by saying that the good educator knows that he is educating individuals, not just man, and will use any method that will educate the whole man. Not even the whole man, but his humanity as well. For this to be achieved, the teacher should experience self-realization so that he may be disposed to guide the learners in the education process. A self-realized teacher, therefore, is capable of creating an educational situation where the learners can also establish contact with themselves, embrace freedom, responsibility and become conscious of themselves for purposes of achieving self-realization.

Contrary to the traditional concept of a teacher, existentialists posit that the best teacher is the home and the parents of the child (Azhar, 2013). This is because at home environment, the child is fully accepted and loved even if he is physically or mentally challenged. In the school environment, therefore, the teacher should bring himself as much as possible to the level of a parent. This means that the teacher should be loving and capable of accepting the learner's unique individual personality and nurture him to discover and to achieve his full potentialities. In this sense, the teacher becomes a guide, counsellor, helper, stage setter and a facilitator.

An existentialist teacher has the responsibility of nurturing the learner to make authentic and independent choices and to be ready always to take the responsibility of the consequences of their choices. Any particular consequence of any choice made is experienced subjectively by the learner and therefore the teacher should also expose the learners to subjective realities. In the process of doing this, the teacher develops a student who ultimately becomes independent and self-reliant.

Another task of an existentialist teacher is to help the students to be themselves and not to pretend but to be authentic and original and to facilitate the students' functioning autonomous minds so that they may become self-moving, liberal and free (Tilich, 1952). In this case, the teacher acts as a helper of the individual learner's inner conflict between the actualizing forces and those which oppose them. By becoming more authentic, the learner becomes more spiritual, cultivates a critical attitude and develops a clear sense of personal identity. The teacher builds authenticity also among the learners by being able to judge in them what is worthwhile and valuable. Indirectly

he can influence the students to embrace worthwhile values which he cherishes in a manner that without some thought, the students begin to accept them. The teacher should not expect the learners to imitate them but should be assisted always to be themselves, original and authentic. An authentic personality is autonomous and such autonomy breeds freedom and self- moving.

Existentialism desires that the teacher develops a positive and a healthy relationship between himself and the students. One of the ways of developing such relationship is by mastering the names of the students in his class and should be fully aware of what every individual capable of. The teacher should therefore avoid negative language and applying labels to the learners using the words such as “slow learner”, “thick” and “stupid”. In reality, individual students may end up thinking about themselves this way. The teacher should also selflessly guide the learners to realize themselves. Through healthy guidance, the students come to accept positively the discipline given to them by the teacher and therefore they become mature and responsible. An open-minded teacher also grows, matures and changes as he guides the students. Such teachers take criticisms directed to them positively and converts them to opportunities for growth so as to become an accomplished teacher. A teacher who closes oneself off from the criticisms of others becomes inauthentic.

Another task of an existentialist teacher is to nurture critical consciousness, creativity, innovativeness, discovery and imaginativeness among the learners without imposing his will on them (Seetharamu, 1978). This task is challenging because in the process of

treating the “other” one must maintain his subjectivity while realizing the subjectivity of the “other”.

Another duty of the existentialist teacher is to encourage the students to work hard, to make the best of their lives and to treat death as something which is imminent. The teacher facilitates them to make the best of their lives by helping them to be personally involved in their problems since one cannot realize his “self” without getting things done in their own way.

In conceptualizing the concept of the teaching profession in Kenya, Mugambi, Ochieng and Miriti (2014) observe that the teaching profession in Kenya falls short of true profession due to low status of teachers compared to those of doctors and lawyers, due to reasons such as low remuneration and poor terms, short period of training, poor career prospects and the idea that teaching has become a dumping ground for those who cannot make it elsewhere. Consequently, teachers who are not motivated and committed cannot deliver learners who are holistic in nature. Therefore, Kenya’s education system should be reviewed to develop the professional status of teachers by improving their welfare and embracing the above stated existentialist practices.

In a nutshell, an existentialist teacher should aim at nurturing an independent, autonomous and holistic learner who is not his replica but one who is distinct and original. For the teacher, the classrooms ought to be places where they rejoice in the authenticity of the learners while encouraging them to have “the courage to be”.

3.2.5 Existentialism and the Concept of Student

The question “who should be educated” equally interests existentialists. The concept of education per se is multi-dimensional and has a broad meaning. Education is more than schooling implying that an individual can get holistic education through various ways such as experience or by living, by working and by reading. Existentialists also view students as individuals who have a critical role of shaping their own education and life. Consequently, the learning institution’s environment is expected to be a free place where learners are given many open options for learning.

However, existentialists advocate for full freedom to the child. This freedom should enable the learner know his “self” and to recognize his being for purposes of converting his imperfection to perfection. The role of the teacher therefore is to guide the learner to realize his self. Freedom also facilitates the learner’s natural development and in accordance to his abilities, aptitude and needs. Freedom should lead to the achievement of holistic educational goal of making man free from kinds of chains, entanglements and enslavements. The responsibility of freeing oneself from such undesired and oppressive condition squarely rests on the individual. The individual student therefore should work hard to overcome what limits or oppresses him with the help of other or else he surrenders and succumbs to it. This observation is based on the fact that existentialists regard man as “an open possibility”, that is a person who is in the process of becoming, but who is capable of actually becoming whatever he wants to become (Akinpelu, 1981).

Existentialists reject a learning environment that encourages cutthroat competition, harsh discipline and constant phobia for failure in examinations. The learner's evaluation ought to cater for selfhood at the beginning and at the end of teaching and learning process. In the process of learning, the learner is required to grow naturally and freely and should lead to full development of the individual. Existentialisms insist that the primary emphasis in the education process must always be the learner as the learner and not on the learning programme. In this case, the learner should always be the centre of learning. On the other hand, the teacher should avoid labels and should always adopt positive evaluation dynamics.

Existentialism emphasizes more informal, lively and personal relationship between the student and the teacher. This kind of relationship, as Buber (1970) articulates, raises learning into a dialogue which according to him is the main aim of education. The teacher-student relationship should thus be that I-Thou, or subject to subject relationship and not I-It or subject-object relationship. In this kind of interaction, human beings are aware of each other as sharing the unity of human condition, engaging in a dialogue that involves each other's whole being. Consequently, the student regards his "I" as unique and the only member of his class who is able to recognize the same in the other I (Thou). This type of teacher-learner relationship discourages both extreme teacher and student centeredness approach. In extreme teacher-centred approach, the teacher provides the learners with information and facts and indoctrinates the student with information and does not give room to creativity. On the other hand, extreme student-centred approach focuses too much on the role of the student making it difficult for I-Thou relationship to prevail, since the student lacks

proper guidance from the teacher and the student ends up capitalizing on own education driven by his own subjective needs and interests in a given environment. In I-Thou relationship, therefore, the dialogue dynamic places appropriate weight on both the teacher and the student roles since such relationship is based on mutual trust and acceptance. The created communion between the teacher and the learner in this subject-subject relationship, the development of the student is caused by an impact of one human being on another. A teacher who is wholly alive, and is fully aware that the student is a fellow human being is able to integrate the learner through his own action and attitudes without affecting them. On the other hand, any teacher who fails to create this communion interferes and divides the learner's soul into an obedient but also a rebellious individual.

From this discussion, for holistic education in Kenya to be achieved, the concept and the place of a student in the learning institution should be well understood. Full implementation of the ban of corporal punishment policy, creation of child-friendly schools, emphasis on appropriate teacher-student ratio and moving away from cutthroat examination competition to overall development of the individual will lead to holistic education.

3.2.6 Existentialism and Teaching Methods

According to Gutek (2005), a teaching method is closely related to objectives and goals of the curriculum and indicates the learning and teaching processes during which the learner becomes familiar with special knowledge and skills included in the curriculum. Learning and teaching methods have the closest relationship with

epistemology, or the cognitive theory or the method of thinking correctly. Studying education leads to obtaining signs about learning approaches which is related to a concept of cognition which is a component of the philosophical system. While an existentialist teacher may employ diverse instructional methods in the teaching and learning enterprise, care should be taken in such a way that the “me-you” relationship that exist between the teacher and the learner is not interfered with.

Existentialist philosophy advocates for instructional methods that focus on the individual. Such methods should also recognize the learners’ individual differences through diverse curricula, which respond to the needs, abilities and aptitudes of the individual. Existentialists also recommend teaching methods that gives the individual learner absolute freedom which encourages the learner to accept the facts and beliefs which are relevant to him. On the other hand, the teacher is expected to demonstrate by example that education is a concentration on personal freedom.

In conceptualizing existential instructional methodologies, Malik and Akhter (2013) observe that existential pedagogy embraces neither realism nor relativism, but rather, it supports sound methodologies for enquiry which are applied to any given situation. This pedagogy is also applicable to all learners regardless of their ages and learning environment. However, the adult learners tend to pursue learning more for existential and intrinsic reasons more than the young learners who tend to more extrinsically motivated. The adult learners are more interested with getting educated for purposes of self-actualization, goal achievement and getting defined in terms of identity. This

observation requires an existential teacher who applies these pedagogies in a relevant way to all ages.

Existentialism recommends that teachers use democratic methods and indirect techniques to teach and to guide the learners (Koirala, 2011). In this case, the teacher prepares his lesson plans guided by the learner's needs and personal objectives without forcing and imposing his personal objectives to the students. Using his professional creativity, therefore, the teacher indirectly provides experiences and chances that serve to motivate and excite the students in a voluntary and active way to learn and to be a participant in the learning process. The democratic method engages the learner in the learning process giving an opportunity each person to play an effective role in the learning enterprise using the available knowledge and information. In this method, the teacher also encourages the learner to express his feelings and to table his problem so that an insightful way forward is realized by way of discussion. Furthermore, the use of indirect education model helps in emphasizing the learner's self-concept growth and builds an efficient relationship between the teacher, the learner and the environment.

From the above discussion, existentialism advocates the use of the Socratic Method as a model. Jaspers, one of the renowned existentialists, insisted that university education is by nature Socratic since the student's sense of responsibility and freedom come into play. According to Maheshwari (2011), existentialists favour the Socratic Method, not so much because it involves induction or the collection of all available evidence, nor because of its complementary process of definition, whereby general values are reached from particular instances; but chiefly because it is a method that tests the inner

life as a stethoscope sounds the heart. In the Socratic Method, the teacher does not know the answer to question asked as opposed to idealist teachers when using dialogue approach. Socrates' method of teaching employed asking questions, refining the answer, asking more questions and eventually probing the issue at hand until some acceptable conclusion was realized. In this way, the best type of question is answered through the student who makes it meaningful. The teacher's responsibility, therefore, is to create an opportunity for the learner to express his mentalities.

Existentialism further advocate for Socratic method simply because it is a "problem method" insofar as the problem originates in the life of the one who is responsible for working out the solutions. The method is also encouraged because the learner is involved in the activity. This is because the method is also personal, intimate and an I-Thou affair in which knowledge and wisdom are gained through the mutual interaction between the teacher and the student. In this case, the learner per-se is recognized in the learning process. This endeavour engages both the teacher and the learner through dialogue in the joint search for the knowledge. Socrates understood himself as a kind of a "midwife" who delivers other people's ideas to birth. The submissions of platonic dialectics confirm that Socrates was not convinced that the truth about things cannot be obtained ready-made but as a result of thought and discussion. Ekanem, Ekanem and Archibong (2011) opine that Socrates begins his dialectic with opinions that may seem to be acceptable but when they are submitted to criticisms, by one's fellow searchers of truth, the inadequacy of them becomes apparent and it is necessary to modify, supplement, or restate them. Unsatisfactory ideas are rejected and as a result, the mind gradually moves forward in its quest of truth.

Existentialist philosophers also advocate for instructional methods which focus on individualized learning or to be specific, learner-centred education. Azhar (2013) explains that existentialist individualized learning is self-paced, self-directed and includes a great deal of individual contact with the teacher, who relates to each student openly and honestly. An individualized instruction furthermore caters for the “whole”. Student-centred teaching methods entail paying attention to particulars such as educational games method, common teaching method where the student learn as a group, field trips, art activities, theatre games and methods that are based on everyday experiences. Student-centred methods cultivates in the learner moral, aesthetic and emotional self rather than his scientific rational self. As such, the learner is enabled to love, appreciate and to respond to the world around him emotionally. In the individualized instruction, the teacher gives room to freedom of opinion and discussion in the teaching and learning enterprise. While being aware that his knowledge is superior based on experience, an existentialist teacher carefully avoids the temptation of being intoxicated with his knowledge and authority. When the teacher becomes transcendental in this perspective, then he becomes tolerant and the class room environment becomes free from fear any form of intimidation. The learner on the other hand cultivates his skills of self- expression and therefore becomes a participant in the learning process and not just a passive and a docile observer. Individualized learning also builds an environment of love, respect, concern and care. Such instructional environment enables the students to discover themselves, realizes their potentialities, acquire sense of responsibility, become self- reliant and autonomous individuals. On the other hand, the teacher plays a role of the “facilitator”

who is in essence the learner's consultant whose duty is to guide their growth. The teacher facilitates the learners to discover existential theories about their own life, their relationships and educational perspectives. The method also creates an open environment for the learners to talk about their issues freely, courageously and honestly with their teacher.

Another instructional method recommended by existentialists is role playing (Malik & Akhter, 2013). Sartre preferred the value of play over seriousness. Sartre and Marcel adopted the approach of play as a more natural and powerful means through which they disseminated their philosophical teachings rather than using treatise and lecture approach. Through play, the individual freely expresses his creativity. In any given play and novel, the ideas of the characters clash and the scenario appeals to the feelings and the reason of the individual at the same time. Role-play cultivates among the individual learner what could be termed as personal-liberation-personal-release. The desire to play communicates the concept of the desire "to be" a certain type of a human being. Play, therefore, functions as a valuable means of self-expression.

On the other hand, existentialism rejects group method or mass education (Koirala, 2011). The given reason against mass education is that, in such a group dynamic, the superiority of the group decision threatens the individual decision. This existential scenario leads to the loss of the learner's unique individualism and free choice. This stated criticism applies to Kenya's education system. The implementation of the free primary education and free secondary tuition has increased enrolment of children leading to congestion in classes. Some classes in basic education have up to 70

students per class. This scenario reduces the students in the class into the above stated mass education.

Malik and Akhter (2013) warn that instructional methods employed should not be resemble the outdated authoritarian model, where the teacher is the “superior” possessor of knowledge and the student the “inferior”, empty vessel waiting to be filled. An outdated method such as the banking method makes education an act of depositing, the students become depositories while the teacher becomes the depositor. This method compromises holistic education. Many educators in Kenya still use traditional and outdated methods basically because, according to Changach and Muricho (2013), are not properly educated and yet they are educating others.

Existentialism, in summary, advocates for teaching methods which are co-creative, co-responsive and co-participatory in the teaching and learning enterprise. Most of the criticisms levelled against instructional methods by existentialists apply to instructional methods of education in Kenya. Most teachers still use traditional and outdated methods of teaching such rote learning. Elements of “banking system” of education are still present and the relationship between the teacher and that of the student still demonstrate authoritarianism rather than ‘dialogue’. While, the learners may voice their opinions, the facts stated by the teacher from the textbooks count and will be required to be reproduced for the teacher in the examinations. A paradigm shift is, therefore, needed without any delay to employ the suggested existentialist varied methods which are democratic and learner-centred so that holistic education may be realized.

3.3 Conclusion

As discussed in this chapter, existentialist philosophy has much to contribute and to enrich the philosophy of education in Kenya. The emphasis of human existence and the qualities that are distinctive to man philosophically shape the achievement of holistic education, enriching the understanding of the aims and objectives of education, the concept of the school, the concept of the curriculum, the concept of a teacher, the concept of a student and the teaching pedagogies. The existentialist thoughts on these areas expose many gaps in the 8-4-4 education system's praxis and theory.

CHAPTER FOUR

RELEVANCE OF EXISTENTIAL EDUCATION IN ADDRESSING PROBLEMS FACING KENYAN SOCIETY

4.1 Overview

As hypothesized in this study, education, especially in its holistic sense, plays a very important role in solving problems of any given society. Any education system that is blind to the problems facing any nation is not holistic and is in fact irrelevant. In the light of this understanding, the Task Force on the Re-alignment of Education Sector to the Constitution of Kenya 2010 (ROK, 2012) proposed that the Kenya's education curriculum should be reviewed with a view to equipping learners with relevant knowledge, to emphasize learners' development of full capacities, living and working in dignity, enhancing the quality of their lives, making informed decisions and continuing with lifelong learning. This observation basically sought to make Kenya's education system more relevant in addressing the many problems facing the country currently. Some of these problems include corruption, tribalism, terrorism and unemployment. Therefore, having interrogated the significance of existentialism in holistic education, this chapter explores how existential education in its holistic sense can be used to address the above-mentioned challenges that Kenya faces.

4.2 Addressing Corruption using Existential Education

4.2.1 Meaning of Corruption

The word corruption is derived from two Latin words, *com*, meaning "with, together", and *rumpere*, meaning to "break" or "to destroy". From this etymology, therefore,

engaging in corruption destroys one's worth and trust or good reputation with others. Carl (1972) defines corruption as any form of deviant behaviour associated with a particular motivation, namely that of private gain at public expense. Transparency International (2013) defines corruption as abuse of power for private gain. Nye (1967) says corruption entails efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means, private gain at public expense, or misuse of power for private benefit. From these definitions, corruption, therefore, violates established rules in favour of personal gain and profit, and the corrupt individual violates the duty he owes to the public or his community. Corruption, in essence, is an immoral human act driven by selfish motivations.

According to Monye (2016), corruption is a systematic vice characterized by favouritism, nepotism, tribalism, sectionalism, position and deprivation of undue benefits. Corruption is also manifested through acts such as bribery, fraud, extortion and embezzlement. Favouritism also involves abuse of power in distribution of state resources, for example favouring one's friend, family member or close confidants. In nepotism, a corrupt individual makes preferences to his relatives. Bribery entails payments either in form of money or in kind to another person to guarantee a favourable outcome. It can be in form of gifts, loans, fees, rewards or any other advantage. Fraud is a form of trickery, deceit, conman-ship, forgery, smuggling and swindling. In extortion, one receives money or any other resource through acts of violence and coercion. On the other hand, embezzlement is a form of stealing of public resources by those charged with the responsibility of protecting and utilizing the said resources on behalf of the public.

Experts categorize corruption into political (grand), bureaucratic (petty) and electoral. Political corruption, as the name suggests, refers to situations where politicians, who are public decision-makers and legislators, use their privileged offices to pursue illegitimate private selfish gains. An example of this type of corruption is when a politician or any policy maker uses the law to embezzle money from public coffers. Bureaucratic corruption is practiced in administrative offices of both public and private organizations. This type of corruption is common in environments such as learning institutions, hospitals police offices and licensing offices. It is a type of graft that threatens effective and efficient delivery of services to the public. Bureaucratic corruption can also take the form of one illegally obtaining business opportunities from public sector, such as tendering services. Electoral corruption involves the use of money or any other unlawful methods to obtain electoral votes. Such unlawful methods include coercion, intimidation, special favours, making unmerited promises and engaging in any activity that interferes with the freedom and fairness of election processes. When corruption is tolerated in any given society, it becomes a culture. Corruption being a culture, it becomes the “normal” means used by people to meet their own needs and pursue their interests with great injustice to others. Therefore, corruption is against holistic development.

4.2.2 Corruption in Kenya

Corruption in Kenya is a matter of great concern, both locally and internationally. In fact, it has become a culture, deeply rooted and endemic. According to Kamuyu (2007), corruption has become a structural problem politically, economically and socially in Kenya. Because of endemic corruption, it is almost impossible for Kenya

government organs to allocate resources fairly. The outcome of this has been the lowering of standards of living in society, which has paved the way for extreme poverty in the country. Reasoning in the same perspective, Noor (2018) opines that, in Kenya, corruption has diffused into and out of every state organ and is the leading cause of high levels of underdevelopment and poverty in the country. From these views, it is clear that corruption is a very big challenge in Kenya. From an existential point of view, corruption perpetuates inauthentic modes of existence and glorifies impunity.

In the 1990s, during the reign of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) under President Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, Kenya lost US\$ 820,512,820 through the Goldenberg scandal. Similarly, during the reign of the National Rainbow Alliance Coalition (NARC) under President Mwai Kibaki, Kenya lost US\$102,564,102 through the Anglo-Leasing scandal (Nyanga & Theuri, 2011). While many key suspects were arrested for these two major corruption scandals, most of them were later acquitted on the grounds of insufficient evidence. These two scandals are examples of high-level corruption cases in Kenya involving high profile personalities like the government ministers, parliamentarians and chief executives.

Corruption has not also spared educational institutions in Kenya. Kirya (2019) points out that in 2008, the World Bank and bilateral donors poured millions of dollars into basic education in Kenya. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) alone provided more than \$ 83 million. The money was meant for infrastructure, school supplies and other needs. In 2009, however, rumours of fraud and

misappropriation of these funds started circulating. The Kenya Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission investigated those rumours and compiled a list of more than 40 education officials implicated in theft of funds meant for basic education. However, prosecuting the officials proved difficult: documents suddenly went missing, and witnesses refused to testify or just disappeared. In 2011, a forensic audit established that more than \$ 54 million had been misappropriated by the Ministry of Education officials. Donors pulled the plug: funding was stopped, and the Kenya government was forced to reimburse donors using taxpayers' money. This report shows how the products of Kenya's education, who are expected to be champions and implementers of quality education, continue to plant the seeds of corruption, thereby making holistic education a mirage. Other more popular forms of serious corruption in Kenya's educational institutions include examination malpractices such as cheating and selling of examination questions in advance, illegal levies charged to parents on school admission requirements that are supposed to be free in the first place, use of school property for private commercial purposes, purchase of substandard educational materials in collusion with unscrupulous suppliers and embezzlement of funds allocated to educational institutions.

Hope (2014) further observes that corruption is equally prevalent in Kenya's private sector. These includes illegal payments to 'get things done', bribing tax inspectors upon requests for illegal payments, illegal payments for licensing and utility connections, offering gifts and illegal contributions to secure government contracts, bribing police officers in the transport sector to evade traffic offences, and bribing the judiciary to rule in one's favour.

The above-stated cases show that corruption in Kenya is systemic. It affects individuals, structures and institutions. Furthermore, corruption is a reflection of the societal philosophy of being in which the key institutions that ought to support the rule of law and good governance have been so compromised that they can no longer act in the interest of common good. Granted that corruption in Kenya is a product of many underlying factors. However, lack of holistic education cannot be ignored.

4.2.3 Critical Existential Analysis of Corruption

Generally, philosophers of the recent times view corruption as fundamentally an ethical or a moral as opposed to legal phenomenon. However, not all acts of immorality are treated as corruption in nature. Philosophically, ethics is a branch of knowledge that deals with moral principles. Moral principles govern a person's behaviour or, more specifically, human conduct. It deals with judgments of right and wrong, good or bad in human relations. According to Ozumba (2004), ethics deals with judgements as to the rightness or wrongness, virtuousness or viciousness, desirability or undesirability, approval or disapproval of human actions. Ethics emphasizes moral norms that define human life such as honesty, integrity, equality, justice and respect for others. In connection to this, therefore, corruption poses very serious ethical implications.

As argued in this study, the development of existential ethical traces its roots in the Socratic belief that an unexamined life is not worth living and that knowledge is virtue. In this connection, self-examination per se is an existential exercise. Furthermore, the Aristotelian *Nicomachean* ethics challenges human beings to develop

ethical virtues. Soren Kierkegaard, in reflecting on the same issue, posited that a human being who operates in what he calls “ethical” stage of human existence operates in accordance with the rules of conduct formulated by reason and thus he becomes a moral person. According to him, an individual who chooses his own way of existence, for example to become moral or ethical, and stays committed to it enjoys what he calls authenticity. From this discussion, existentialism views corruption as a negation of ethical behaviour, which impedes authentic development of an individual as well as that of society. This is because corruption is founded on inauthentic selfish orientations.

In the case of Kenya, there appears to be an existential fallacy or misconception of corruption. The situation is such that while corruption is known to be wrong it seems to be seen as being right; conversely, good moral conduct seems to be considered wrong. For this reason, the corrupt are not ashamed when publicly accused of wrongdoing; the society also treats such accusations as normal and does not condemn the accused person. On the contrary, such a person is regarded as smart and successful. With such impunity having taken root in the society, a young person employed or assuming public office will make it their first mandate to make a fortune for himself through corruption. Corruption, in this sense, also teaches wrong lessons that hard work and honesty do not pay. From the point of view of existentialism, this misconception is done in bad faith, as it amounts to one pretending and convincing oneself that unethical behaviours are normal. From the views of Jean Paul Sartre, the supporters of this status quo avoid the responsibility of the freedom of choice.

Corruption also distorts the essence of a person by destroying one's worth and good reputation. Corruption therefore involves dishonest acts or behaviours that destroy people's trust. By extension, corruption lowers the image and trust that people have in the education sector and the country. Students who graduate from schools with bad reputations due to corruption may not be attractive to employers who are looking to recruit honest workers. At the international level, citizens of nations that are considered corrupt suffer humiliation, disrespect and alienation because they are deemed as fraudsters wherever they go.

Furthermore, corruption dehumanises others since it involves the unjust exploitation of and disregard the poor. Examples of these worst cases of corrupt exploitation include ritual murders and human sacrifices for wealth, child trafficking, money laundering, brothel businesses and child labour.

Finally, corruption lowers the quality and the standards of education. Existence of corruption in educational institutions is a manifestation of loss of values. Corruption discourages or demoralises those young people and teachers who believe in honesty and hard work. Corruption also perpetuates more corruption. A society that considers corruption as the norm will also receive graduates who are corrupt, incompetent, ill-prepared and unemployable. This possibly explains why some of those who engage in all forms of corruption, including prostitution, drug abuse, terrorism, armed robbery and cultism, also happen to be those who hold papers indicating they are most educated. Besides, when schools suffer challenges such as low staffing and poor and

inadequate infrastructure because of corruption, the education system is also reduced to mere ritual years of problem solving.

4.2.4 Existential Education Approaches to Corruption

As already mentioned in this study, corruption is an ethical existential crisis. This being the case, the critical question is: what is the function of education in eradication of corruption and promotion of human holistic development? This question leads us to interrogate the much debated ethical or normative dimension of education, which also constitutes holistic education.

The 'existential' aims of education advocate for a holistic education system that is corrective and offers an alternative to behaviourism and social efficiency. In his theory of human nature, Jean Paul Sartre insisted that an individual should learn authenticity and learn to live authentically. Soren Kierkegaard, on his part, advocated for authenticity and living an ethical truth in the absurd world where little objectivity exists. Kierkegaard's observation was not the question whether one was or not a "person" but whether or not one is able to consciously choose the path of "right" and be able to follow one's own subjective ethical compass. In this connection, one's personness becomes most complete when one chooses between alternatives and makes a difficult decision.

From this discussion, therefore, existentialism advocates for moral education or the normative element in the philosophy of holistic education. This means educators, who are facilitators in the learning process, should advocate for moral development of

learners. They should also be aware of their existential responsibility of being the creators and propagators of values, especially when selecting the appropriate school textbooks, the methods of instruction, designing learning activities and the language of content delivery. All these actions constitute the teachers' endorsement of certain values and virtues for their learners.

To promote the moral development of learners, existentialists advocate for the inclusion and the teaching of humanities in the curriculum (Ekanem, 2012). In their view, the humanities are concerned with the inner experiences of human life, such as guilt and suffering. When such subjects are authentically taught, the learner is empowered to cultivate moral obligations necessary for facing social problems in life. Subjects such as history, geography, sociology, philosophy and economics foster the formation of the civic consciousness among learners. The teaching of responsible citizenship in the curriculum promotes the formation of dependable citizens. It is therefore necessary that anti-corruption goals be included in the learning objectives of both compulsory and elective subjects in secondary schools.

In summary, an existential education helps the learners to develop morally by instilling values, virtues, norms, dispositions, qualities and aspirations in the following ways:

- The learners are helped to become ethically mature individuals capable of moral reasoning and with the desire to act ethically.
- The learners get dispositions to lead disciplined lives, be of good character and have a sense of direction.

- The teachers become role models who set good examples for the learners.
- Education exposes learners to relevant situations where moral decisions are made through experience.
- The daily encounters in school (everydayness) help the learners to be conscious of right and wrong, and to conceive what it takes to be an authentic person.
- Ethical learning equips the learners with a sense of transparency, accountability and good governance.
- The learners are assisted to be aware of their rights and interests hence develop a strong will and power to resist the pressure of giving and receiving bribes.

Curriculum designers should incorporate a component of education against corruption that cultivates in learners an anti-corruption mind-set and character. Such a component should aimed to cultivate the following skills:

- Knowledge to effectively and responsibly manage time, finances and other resources at one's disposal.
- Development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Knowledge of creativity, independence and readiness to take responsibility for own actions and consequences.
- Knowledge to communicate, find, interrogate and transmit information on corruption.
- Knowledge of decent and merited living within and outside school.

In summary, existentialist education emphasizes that education ought to help the mind of an individual learner to realize higher moral and intellectual values to become authentic human beings capable of living the human dignity and to be what they were meant to be. This includes respect for democratic values such as honesty, responsibility for one's own and other's actions and behaviour and continuous self-improvement and enrichment of knowledge to become an authentic human being.

4.3 Addressing Tribalism using Existential Education

4.3.1 Meaning of Tribalism

The term tribalism derives from 'tribes'. The alternative term for tribe is ethnicity. The term 'tribe' as used in anthropological and sociological discourses implies varied and often conflicting meanings. Some thinkers use the term tribe to mean ancestral lineages while others use it to infer rulers or common governments. The Oxford Dictionary (1980) defines 'tribal' as a racial group, especially in a primitive or nomadic culture – living in a community under one or more chiefs. Through communal living, one receives security, protection, confidence and wellness. The American Heritage Dictionary of English Language (2006) defines tribalism as the organization, culture, or beliefs of a tribe. Collins Dictionary defines tribalism as a state of existing as a separate tribe or tribes, as customs and beliefs of a tribal society and as loyalty to a tribe or tribal values. On the other hand, Chambers 21st Century Dictionary defines ethnicity as relating to or having a common race or cultural traditions, seen from the point of view of race, rather than nationality. From this definition, tribe and ethnicity are, therefore, interwoven. The two terms are often used interchangeably, which was the case in this study.

From the above definitions, strictly speaking a ‘tribe’ is a source of identity for people in a particular social group. However, when a tribe becomes “tribalistic”, that is, when individuals from a particular tribe emphasize a strong loyalty to their community exhibiting elements of superiority to other tribes, then such emotions become negative to any person outside the group. Vaaseh (2013) posits that ethnicity is an unfriendly, parochial, spiteful and resentful attitude towards a particular person or harm done to someone else because he or she is of another ethnic group. Therefore, tribalism can be viewed as extreme obsessive protection of one’s tribe at the expense of the whole nation.

Tribalism or negative ethnicity is common in many African countries. In showing the magnitude of tribalism in Africa, Caron, Gboyega and Osaghae (1992) aver that in Rwanda and Burundi, the Hutus and Tutsis struggled for the supremacy; in Ghana, the Ewes demanded a reunion with their Kith and Kin in Togo; in Uganda, the subjugation of the Buganda by Obote in favour of his own group unleashed a complex of hostilities, and in Congo and Nigeria, Kantagese and Ibo attempts at secession led to civil war. Evidently, tribalism or negative ethnicity promotes ethnic chauvinism and produces conflict and social cleavages.

4.3.2 Tribalism in Kenya

Kenya is an ethnically diverse country. It consists of over 42 tribes each with a distinct language, customs and lifestyles. Ideally, this diversity should benefit Kenya by enriching its people’s culture and ways of life. However, the “tribe” mentality is arguably one the root cause of the many problems facing Kenya. In fact, currently, the

issue of ethnicity is very sensitive in Kenya. In explaining the existential situation in Kenya, Indangasi (2008) posits that many Kenyans are obsessed with interest in tribal origin of others. He also insists that Kenya is indeed a place where, as in most of Africa, tribe often overrides any sense of nationalism and political parties form along tribal, not ideological lines, and opportunities often stem from blood ties.

Before the colonial period, the Kenyan tribes lived in their areas of domicile distinctly with their language and cultures. The communities coexisted freely with one another except some cases of conflicts related to water and pasture for livestock. During this period, the issue of belonging to a tribe was not ideological. However, when the British colonialists came, they applied the governance method of divide and rule, taking advantage of tribal differences to sharply divide the Kenyan communities in respect to national agenda and ideology. According to Masakhalia (2011), the British rule magnified the differences among the various communities or tribes, instigating clashes, so that each community distrusted and fought the others. This served as the breeding ground for negative tribal stereotypes that became embedded in popular belief. The Kikuyu, for example, were given the impression that the fish-eating Luo's were lazy, uncircumcised and unreliable while the Luhya were made to view the Kikuyu, Embu, Meru and Akamba (Gema) communities as schemers, liars, untrustworthy, arrogant and so forth.

This situation of suspicion persisted until Kenya got independence in 1963. The first two political parties before and during independence, that is, the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU),

escalated the prevailing tribal politics in the country. From historical records, Kenyan tribes coexist peacefully but only until election time. People from different tribes school together, work together and worship together, only to turn against one another during election periods. Since independence, politics are guided by tribal affiliations. Many politicians escalate ethnic differences when they use the sensitive factor of ethnicity to breed tribalism for their own personal benefits. Tribalism in Kenya has threatened the fabric of Kenyan social life. It also tends to guide one when choosing a spouse, electing a leader to public office, doing business, buying land, seeking employment and distribution of resources.

The problem of tribalism has permeated the education sector in Kenya as well. Ideally, the education sector should be the champion of national unity. According to Mwiria (2006), however, ethnic imbalance is manifested in the representations in universities with respect to the number of students admitted to public universities, employment and leadership positions. Similarly, discussing how tribalism partly informs the admission criteria to secondary schools in Kenya, Taaliu (2017) observes that national schools admit students from all over the country unlike the extra-county and county schools. Nevertheless, the common problem is that the practice ends up promoting ethnicity since there are less than 100 national schools in the country, which means most of the students are admitted in extra-county and county schools that are within their locality. This limits their chances of interacting with students from other parts of the country. It is also common to find that in learning institutions and other workplaces, the language commonly used is not Kiswahili or English but the vernacular language of the region.

4.3.3 Critical Existential Analysis of Tribalism

Kahiga (2015) argues that a human being belongs to one species called ‘homo sapiens’, meaning the fundamentals of what constitutes a human being or a person is the same all over the world; genetically, we are the same. This is our common bond. Our differences are ‘accidentals’. Unique physical characteristics like having big lips or long noses and the like distinguish one type of a human person from others. From this argument, it is plausible to say that all persons irrespective of their tribe are human beings. One is first a human being before getting defined by the tribe into which they were born. Consequently, being a member of a tribe is not a mistake or problem. In fact, critically thinking, tribalism is not harmful in itself. Tribe is in essence a natural and a normal phenomenon. Tribe is not specific to Kenya alone. It is a universal human reality. Indeed, no person is without a tribe.

Problems of tribalism or negative ethnicity emerge from the way people use their tribe to define themselves in opposition to others. It is logical, therefore, to argue that tribalism is an erroneous mind-set that is manifested by its proponent’s utterances and actions. Being ‘tribal’ affects the way one thinks and behaves. In reality, tribalism blinds the individual’s mind, blocking possibilities of other ways of thinking, perceiving, seeing, understanding and interpreting the world in general. This observation explains why the term ‘tribalism’ always has a negative connotation. Tribalism divides people on the basis of their ‘accidental’ features. The separate groups then manifest into philosophical positions of “us” verses “them” or “other”. This orientation leads to adversity, and not cooperation. Furthermore, the ‘us’ verses ‘them’ mentality promotes the fallacy that one tribe is superior to another. In the

Kenyan context, this tribal “othering” is perpetuated by use of derogatory terms such as “*ukale*” for prejudices against the Kalenjin, “*ujaluo*” to describe prejudices directed at the Luo and “*ugikuyu*” for stereotypes against the Gikuyu tribe. This explains why currently in Kenya, people identify others more with indigenous names such as Otieno, Kamau, Nanjala etc. than their given or “Christian” names such as Philip, Margaret and George. The tribal names supposedly carry the essence of the person being described. In this case, the tribe as the essence of a person becomes more pronounced the moment their tribal name is pronounced. Confirming the same, Kahiga (2015) opines that the name given for a human being is always in reference to ‘one of us’, ‘our own’ tribe, race, clan or family. Consequently, one who is not ‘one of us’ is perceived as an enemy, spy and stranger. The tribal name in this situation promotes friendliness and hospitality if it falls under the category of ‘one of us’. However, if the name belongs to ‘other’ tribes, it breeds suspicion and caution, leading to friction in personal and professional interactions. This scenario paints an existential situation of rejection and exclusion, which subjects the outsider to feelings of objectification. Consequently, the mistrust directed at “others” who are not part of “us” causes existential anxiety motivated by false projection of self-protection. The ultimate outcome of such is the dehumanization, depersonalization and objectification of the “other”.

The proposition of tribalism is a fallacy. To use the words of Francis Bacon, tribalism is associated with the idols of the tribe because the proponents submit to deceptive beliefs that are inherent in their minds about the human nature leading to incorrect conclusions. As a fallacy, therefore, tribalism exaggerates a tribe to ethnic nationalism,

which in reality is limited constricted nationalism with imaginary boundaries of “us” and the “them”. In this connection, the nation becomes divided into a composition of many tribal nations. This is evidenced in Kenya by the use of such terms as the Kamba nation, Luo nation, Maasai nation and alike. As a result, in place of national unity there emerges pseudo-unity in which people attached to their tribes form temporary alliances of convenience. Meanwhile, ethnic communities violently compete for jobs, education, health facilities, property and other related social amenities. As already stated earlier, the presence of many tribes in a country should provide a rich diversity of opinions and an environment in which people are free to think differently. Unfortunately, tribalism champions homogeneity, which in reality kills creativity and curtails individual freedoms.

Furthermore, a tribalist uses tribal extraction to discriminate. In this case, the victim’s personhood is crushed making it easy to abuse or deprive their rights, including the right to life. When the victim or the “other” is seen as less or no person, the perpetrator of segregation feels licensed to inflict all manner of suffering on this ‘other’. On the basis of this, in Kenya, tribal animosity has led to destruction of property, rape, forceful displacement of persons, looting, grabbing and killings.

In conclusion, it is important to realize that all human beings have the same dignity, which is a ‘given’. This dignity is inviolable. Therefore, there is need for a paradigm shift to detribalize the mind-sets of Kenyan citizens.

4.3.5 Addressing Tribalism through Existential Education

Existential and holistic education can help the learners and citizens of Kenya to become better persons who are free from tribalistic mentality. Confirming this proposition, Ikeda (1990) argues that universities are places to raise people with new aspirations and leadership that responds to the ever-changing society. As such, universities play a central role in any civilization. The future of any society depends on the types of graduates that its universities produce. As such, holistic education, and not only university education, can help address the existential challenge of tribalism in a number of ways.

The curriculum should foster conscious and critical thinking. This will empower learners to free themselves from tribalistic attitudes that only serve to imprison and cripple their thinking. This empowerment entails awakening the critical consciousness of each learner to realize and live out their individual freedom. This freedom enables one to eliminate myths, generalizations and misconceptions based on ignorance and limited information about the other tribes. Conscious critical thinking will therefore help the learners to authentically transcend tribal mind-sets and to acknowledge and appreciate the richness and strength of appreciating other tribes in the larger Kenyan mix.

Educational decision-makers, curriculum developers, schools, colleges and universities should develop policies that advocate for zero tolerance to discrimination based on tribalism. Left unchecked in Kenya's educational institutions, tribalism can morph into ethno-nationalism or xenophobia. Therefore, good policies and practices

against tribal discrimination, dehumanization and depersonalization should root out maladies such as ethnic favouritism, ethnic bias among students themselves and with the school administration. They include, for example, advocacy for use of common languages, such as Kiswahili or English, as the institutional lingua franca. The use of such common language helps to foster mutual understanding, eliminate suspicion and mistrust and brings people from different ethnic backgrounds together. Experience has shown that negative discourses on ‘other’ tribes, especially manifested by prejudices or conjectures, are often done using vernacular languages. The intention of such gossips, rumours and opinions are to affirm group identity for insiders and exclude the “others” in the conversation. Therefore, it is much safer in the school environment to simply adopt a more practical and common language as a medium of communication. Once a non-discriminative environment has been created and becomes part of the institutional culture, then the learners will be transformed and they will also go and transform mind-sets in their communities. In this case, learning institutions become hubs of multicultural change and outlook.

As it has been emphasized, existential curriculum advocates for the teaching of moral values and the development of an ethical person. To detribalize the learners, the curriculum should, therefore, inculcate values of nationalism, patriotism, cohesion, integration, inclusivity, tolerance, respect, solidarity and respect for human dignity. Nationalism, for example, helps learners to replace tribal loyalty with nation loyalty. Acknowledgment and respect for human dignity, elaborated by excursions about human rights, helps the learner to see the so-called “others” as human persons and not as members of other tribes. Recognition of the personhood of the “other” constitutes

treatments devoid of discrimination, dehumanization and objectification. Learning about tolerance also helps learners to gain an authentic understanding of cultures of other Kenyans. Such curriculum prepares the learners to have an international as opposed to local mind-set; a mind-set that understands and appreciates the cultural value of diversity. People with such a mentality first understand themselves, are conscious of their tendency to discriminate others, appreciate increased contact with others as a means to learning and are, therefore, increasingly prepared to live in a world that is rapidly changing.

Another way of detribalizing the learners is to integrate the teachings of positive ethnicity in the education system. Through explicit, implicit and co-curricular activities such as school societies, clubs, games and sports, learners get assisted to nurture feelings of being valued, recognized and, in the process, get integrated into society either consciously or unconsciously. Activities such as drama and music are an effective means to foster appreciation of diverse cultural norms and practices. This acknowledgement and appreciation of all cultures help the learners and the society at large to realize that the presence of different enriches the national culture. Such integration naturally takes place in an environment of freedom, responsibility, authenticity and subjectivity. An open curriculum with this framework will help learners to overcome anxiety, depression, meaninglessness and anguish associated with the effects of tribalism. Furthermore, schools should take advantage of assemblies, organized talks and guidance and counselling sessions to sensitize students on the effects of negative ethnicity and the value of cultural diversity.

As the Kenya government emphasizes universal access to education, which is yet to be realized as revealed in this study, a lot still needs to be done to eliminate tribalism. It has to be one of the goals of universal access to education to disentangle the learner from the malady of tribalism. To this end, the Kenya government should ensure equitable distribution of educational resources and services. It can begin this by reducing and ultimately eradicating marginalization, especially in sparsely populated, insecure, arid and semi-arid areas as well as informal urban (slums) settlements. Furthermore, there is need to evaluate the existential factors that force students to drop out of school. The state, in collaboration with other education stakeholders, should address the factors that hinder retention of learners in school in different parts of the country. This is important because, in most cases, young people who drop out of school often become the target of politicians out to cause tribal hate and conflicts.

Kenya introduced the quota system mode of admission of learners through an act of parliament in 1985 and was implemented by the Ministry of Education. From the existential point of view, this system should be abolished. As explained by Mwaka, Kafwa, Musamas and Wambua (2013), this policy advocates that a provincial school admits 85% of learners from the district within which the school is situated. This means only 15% for the learners enrolled in any school come from outside communities. Taaliu (2017) argues that the quota system promotes ethnicity in that there are less than 100 national schools in the whole country, which means most of the students are admitted in Extra-County and County schools. As such, the system limits the chances of cross-cultural interaction among students from different parts of the country. An admission policy that facilitates cross-cultural contact among students

from different parts of the country is therefore needed. From the point of view of existentialism and holistic education, an admission policy that gives opportunity for learners from different parts of the country to interact helps to foster values of respect of cultural differences and to challenge ethnic/tribal stereotypes.

The Ministry of Education should further embrace the paradigm shift in which learning is measured in terms of both qualitative and quantitative parameters. The 8-4-4 system has been accused most for relying too much on quantitative indicators of student progress, which glorifies high mean scores, certification and cut-throat competition. Such parameters ignore essential variables that constitute the learner's essence, such as moral values, talents, feelings and individuals' highest potentialities. In the Kenyan situation it is noted that the best performing schools are mostly concentrated in specific tribal regions. Therefore, the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations have morphed into tribal competitions. This is because learners admitted to those particular best performing schools tend to come from specific tribes courtesy of quota admission system. Subsequently, the same students will likely perform very well and be admitted to prestigious university programmes like medicine, law and engineering courses. On the contrary, those from marginalized, politically incorrect regions characterized by their tribal extractions continue to be victims of understaffing, low educational resource allocations and poor enrolment. Such schools register poor performances and their graduates cannot secure admission to prestigious academic courses in institutions of higher learning. This scenario had led to a tribally and systemically skewed development of people and regions in Kenya. It has also

created a scenario in which certain so-called high-class professions seem to *belong* to certain tribes at the expense of others.

Furthermore, to combating tribalism in Kenya requires the knowledge and practice of the philosophy of meritocracy in appointment of school principals, boards of management, hiring of teachers and other administrative staff, lecturers and university vice chancellors and chancellors. Meritocracy operates on the principle of qualification and transparency. Conversely, appointments on the basis of tribalism glorifies and perpetuates tribal inauthenticity and by extension mediocrity. Meritocracy also ought to characterize the admission of learners to prestigious schools and university courses, which should be on the basis of the learners' academic abilities and not on their tribal affiliations.

4.4 Addressing Terrorism through Existential Education

4.4.1 Meaning of Terrorism

According to Ahaya and Onyango (2018), terrorism, though a topical issue of contemporary times, still lacks a universally accepted definition. This challenge stems from the fact that terror acts are ideologically oriented. Therefore, some perpetrators of terror activities may be celebrated as heroes in one area while in other regions they are classified as terrorists. According to Mannion (2006), the definition of terrorism is subjective. Stillman (2003) posits that the varied definitions are influenced by political ideology, location and perspective. However, for the purposes of this study, Stillman's definition of terrorism was adopted. According to Stillman, terrorism is violence, usually indiscriminate, but sometimes exemplary, used for symbolic or political,

religious or ideological purposes, aimed at civilians, designed to create fear and dread and committed by state or non-state actors. The bottom-line in defining terrorism, therefore, lies in the elements of what is considered a terror or violent event. In the violent event, one engages in the act of terrorizing while the victim feels terrorized. In this connection, terrorism is quite different from war; in war, there is a direct confrontation with the enemy. In terrorism, the perpetrators scheme before striking. According to Crenshaw (1981), terrorist activities are forms of reactions to nationalism, ethnicity, poverty, non-democracy, radicalization and religion.

4.4.2 Problem of Terrorism in Kenya

The challenge of terrorism has escalated in the last two decades in Kenya. Perhaps the first time the notion of terrorism was ever used on Kenyan soil was by the colonial government in reference to the Mau Mau militants. The Mau Mau war of independence was characterised by great violence waged from both the government and militant sides. Skip forward several decades later and, in 1998, the Al-Qaeda launched simultaneous bomb attacks on the United States of American embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam. Over 200 people were killed and over 400 others were injured in Nairobi during the incident. According to Wafula (2014), there have been more than 70 grenade and gun attacks in Nairobi, Mombasa and Garissa Counties perpetrated by the Al-Shabaab terrorists between the year 2011 and 2014. The said Al-Shabaab terrorists have also recruited and radicalized the youth from various communities in Kenya. On 21st September 2013, Al-Shabaab associates attacked the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi using two suicide attacks as their *modus operandi*. They shot and killed at least 57 people and injured many more. The onslaught was

sudden, ruthless and bloody; men, women and children alike were wounded or shot dead (Ahaya & Onyango, 2018). In 2014 again, at least 60 people were killed in Mpeketoni, Lamu County, by the Al-Shabaab terrorists. In April 2015, the Al-Shabaab militant group stormed Garissa University College, shot and killed around 150 people, mainly university students and staff, and wounded several others. In January 15th 2019, the Al-Shabaab militants again carried out a terror attack on the Dusit D2 Hotel in Nairobi killing more than 20 people. In view of the above incidences, terrorism in Kenya continues to evolve as a dynamic problem with complex ideological and philosophical foundations.

4.4.3 Critical Existential Analysis of Terrorism

Generally, terrorism is associated with lawlessness, destruction of property and public fear. Pape (2003) opines that the common feature of all terrorist campaigns is that they inflict punishment on the opposing society, either directly by killing civilians or indirectly by killing military personnel in circumstances that cannot lead to meaningful battlefield victory. Many scholars have studied the phenomenon of terrorism from different perspectives, including philosophy. In this study, we argue that existentialism provides an insightful understanding of terrorism. The existentialist view is critical because it focuses on the individual and the nature of being in the world. Existentialism, therefore, explores more on the meaning of life by examining individuals' responsibility and ability to create the essence of their own life. According to Jean Paul Sartre (1946), man first exists; he materializes in the world, encounters himself and only afterwards defines himself.

Meaning-in-life is a core part of what constitutes a human being. According to Soren Kierkegaard, an atheist, individuals must embark on an authentic lived experience to find their own purpose in a fundamentally meaningless world. When an individual cultivates the ability and the responsibility of developing meaning for their own lives, then live that life passionately and authentically. Many achieve this authentic life, for example, by engaging in meaningful parenting or productive career pursuits while others resort to violence and war as their ultimate experience. All human beings are confronted by the emptiness of the essential meaning and purpose of existence. When an individual feels the lack of teleological purpose for life, he experiences an existential crisis. Existential crises produce anxiety, dread and anguish, which are a manifestation of emptiness.

According to McBride (2011), the main categories of anxiety include death, isolation, identity, freedom and meaning. In this connection, the only certainty is death. These factors trigger meaninglessness. Meaninglessness of life is a popular condition of postmodernity characterized by people turning away from traditional ways of life and religion, both of which served as the foundation of stability in life. Today, life is very uncertain and the meaning-in-life tends to be replaced by self-chosen interpretations. It is in this chaos that terrorism, for some, provides an alternative meaning to life. In view of this, in their quest for meaning, often, young people fall victim to radicalization to commit terrorism. For them, therefore, violence and terror constitute ultimate experiences that give essence to their existence.

According to Dubaz (2016), radicalization is a sure path to terrorism. It can be distilled into a process with stages described as pre-radicalization, identification indoctrination and action. In pre-radicalization, an individual experiences conversion of personal belief. Identification is a process of deepening the identification towards the cause and the development of a binary “us-versus-them” outlook towards an out-group. Here, an individual may receive reinforcing guidance from others involved in the cause. Indoctrination is group-level, a process that develops social ties increasing commitment to a cause and propensity for action. Finally, action describes the execution of terrorist activities after all barriers and ambitions are removed. Thinking as a group (group thinking), terrorists get polarized and gain the courage to undertake extreme acts of violence. As radicalized extremists, they isolate themselves from society.

The use of violence to achieve an end in life is a fallacy. There may be a few incidents where violence has yielded good outcomes temporarily. However, violence always culminates in catastrophic outcomes. For this reason, celebrated human rights activists like Martin Luther King Junior, Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi castigated the use violence in response to existential problems. Besides, the true measure and meaning of life is one’s disposition and ability to withstand pain and suffering, not to vent or respond violently. Violence, therefore, pushes the perpetrator towards danger. The role of education is to train people to embrace dialogue, to uphold the dignity of human life and to pursue a higher purpose of life that produces authentic meaning-in-life. Therefore, teaching learners to value their own existence and those of others, to

pursue authentic purpose in life, to master and exercise self-control and positive self-worth is key to limiting violence and terrorism in society.

4.4.4 Addressing Terrorism using Existential Education

Existentialism advocates for holistic and quality education. Such education empowers the learner by providing relevant knowledge. Existential education also creates the right conditions that make it difficult for violence and terrorist activities to thrive. In this connection, this section discusses the various strategies needed to allow Kenya's education system to address the challenge of terrorism.

The curriculum should be designed to foster learners' understanding of their identity and sense of belonging. Mostly the learners in high schools are adolescents. This period of growth is characterized by identity search; often, these young people feel misunderstood and even marginalized. Worth mentioning is that adolescent crises are often characterized by existential and spiritual search for identity and purpose, utopian life, boredom, heroism, and promise of money or adventure contributes significantly to terrorist orientations. From this study, young people's identity crises and their search for meaning in life and self-worth expose them to radicalisation and terrorism. Therefore, the school curriculum should offer opportunities for young people to resolve their identity crises. Such a curriculum develops and shapes the learner's understanding of authentic self and the world around them, which helps to strengthen and validate their identities. This endeavour helps the learners to confront with responsibility false securities and illusions that may bring feelings of uncertainty and insecurity.

The education system should also cultivate in the learner skills of critical thinking, media and digital skills and survival skills. Elements of critical thinking such as logic, problem solving skills and negotiation skills help the learner to access information, appreciate other people's ideas, beliefs and knowledge and to critically evaluate such content in relation to one's own. This critical analysis of ideas eventually helps the learner to challenge wrong or erroneous ideas, construct meaningful and valuable thoughts and persistently, freely and responsibly engage in meaningful and peaceful debates with others. Critical thinking also helps the learner to debunk myths and misunderstandings around terrorism and other forms of violence. A critical thinker cultivates principles against violent practices, including bullying (physical, emotional, verbal and cyber bullying), secret activities such as cultism and drug and alcohol abuse. A critical thinker is not easily misled by toxic content from the media.

From existential point of view, educational institutions should deter practices that promote violence among learners. Such practices include corporal punishment, psychological punishment, bullying, gender based violence and violent strikes. To deter violent and terrorist orientations among the learners, violence should not be accepted or tolerated at all in a school setting. In its place, students should be encouraged to resolve their issues through rational and respectful dialogue. At no point should a learning institution condone violence. In this connection, institutions should promote non-violent approaches to tackling differences of opinions and beliefs. Disciplinary measures in the institutions of learning should also seek to reform character and deter wrongdoing, not to inflict sadistic attitudes on the learner. To this end, educational institutions should design programmes to empower the teachers,

students, parents and managers to cultivate conflict resolution skills and promote authentic peace.

As argued in this study, existentialism advocates for the development of an ethical personality. To deter violence and terrorist orientation, education should promote both the cognitive skills and the normative dimension in the learner. Therefore, institutions of learning should strive to develop soft skills or more specifically the desirable moral values for living in a diverse community. These moral values include tolerance, honesty, responsibility, justice, fairness and compassion. Such values make a human person more humane. One way to inculcate such values is through human rights education and civic education. Human rights education should influence both the content and subsequently foster values that encourage inclusivity. Furthermore, respect for human rights promotes among the learners the ethics of tolerance, respect for different religions, gender and lifestyles. In this case, education helps the learner to resist temptations to violent activities that dehumanize, depersonalize and objectify others. They also develop empathy for victims of violence and terrorist activities by individually and consciously viewing the activity as cruel and unjust.

On the hand, the instructors should pay closer attention on the personal challenges that learners experience and which make them vulnerable to radicalization. These include aspects of the learners' physical and psychological well-being, especially struggles with identity and meaning. In this case, individualized teaching is more appropriate as it helps to identify individually unique life crises and to provide relevant interventions. Therefore, instructors should also be equipped with competencies to detect and

address terrorist orientation, reduce related anxiety and depression and other ways to profile and help without discriminating learners with violent tendencies. School instructors also have a responsibility of being agents of change, mediators, and nurturers of dialogue and models of mutual respect. They should be supported with appropriate teaching and learning tools to facilitate such individualized teaching and relevant competencies to provide a link between the school, family and society. The instructors and schools should develop dynamics and competencies of disengaging, rehabilitating and re-integrating those associated with terrorist behaviours, since they are still human beings and therefore persons.

4.5 Existential Education Approach to Unemployment in Kenya

4.5.1 The Concept of Unemployment

The concept of unemployment is difficult to define since it is a contextual problem. However, term unemployment is generally used to describe the situation in which individuals who are skilled, employable and actively seeking or not seeking a job are, for some reason, unable to secure a job. It entails the presence of people who are trained and are available to work but cannot find an appropriate job. Griep, Othman, Vleugels and Witte (2012) define unemployment as people above a specific age, a set reference period during which the person was without paid work, or were seeking work, and were taking active or specific steps to seek paid employment or self-employment. This study is mainly concerned with the concept of unemployment of graduates or products of the Kenyan education system.

4.5.2 Reality of Graduate Unemployment in Kenya

Despite the Kenya government's huge investment in education, the reality is that there is an increasing number of college and university graduates experiencing difficulties in entering the labour markets. According to the World Bank (2015), Kenya is ranked as having the highest unemployment rate in East Africa. This data indicates that in 2015, 17% of all young people in Kenya eligible for work lacked jobs. Furthermore, the recent census report released by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) (2019) shows that 38.9% of the 13,777,600 young Kenyans between the age of 18 and 34 are jobless. Comparatively, the report indicates that, during the same time, Tanzania and Uganda had their unemployment rates being 5.5 percent and 6.8 percent respectively. On the other hand, the census results indicate that about 91% of the 10,862 Kenyans who are aged 35 years and above are in employment but they are also facing the challenge of job cuts and hiring freezes. The census report further shows that 3.7 million people of ages between 18 and 34 years out of 13.7 million conventional youth population, lacked employment and were not looking for work. By contrast, the number of students enrolled to middle level colleges and universities in Kenya in the recent years seems to predict the problems the school leavers will face. It is, therefore, logical to conclude that the country's formal sector lacks the capacity to absorb the huge number of job seekers and the graduates who leave school every year, contributing to high unemployment. From this report, many students who graduate from the institutions of higher learning are not guaranteed employment.

Since independence, the concern of unemployment has dominated the agenda of all the successive governments. To remedy this situation, a number of policies, programmes

and initiatives have been put in place. Some of these initiatives include promotion and admission to Technical Vocational Education and Training Institutions (TVET), National Youth Service (NYS), youth empowerment projects such as *kazi kwa vijana* initiative, youth empowerment centres, presidential directive on 30% preference for youth on government procurement and national youth policy. Despite these great interventions, a large number of Kenyan graduates still remain unemployed, underemployed or underpaid.

4.5.3 Critical Existential Analysis of Unemployment

According to Creed *et al.* (1999), studies on unemployment since the times of great depression of the 1930, through the 1980s and the 1990s show that lack of meaningful and decent employment seriously affects the wellbeing of people. The documented effects of unemployment include psychological distress, depression, helplessness, poor self-esteem and poor levels of coping. Additionally, Roynayne (1991) posits that unemployment occasions boredom, financial hardships and poor health. Similarly, Schwarzer, Hahn and Fuchs (1994) mention the resultant effects of feelings of despondency, hopelessness and discouragement. Furthermore, unemployed people cannot afford basic necessities like food, shelter, clothing, education and healthcare. As a consequence, they risk engaging in crime, insecurity, drug abuse, alcohol abuse and other related social issues in order to live.

All the above-stated consequences of unemployment threaten the essence of the existing human being in a number of ways. First, unemployment reduces the unemployed persons into government statistics. They are often described using terms

that are not humane. Others are employed as “casual labourers’ or “cheap labour’ and are reduced to ‘tools’ for fixing problems. In this situation, such individuals are dehumanized and depersonalized since their form of employment deprives them of human dignity, self-worth and self-confidence.

Unemployment can drive a person to give up in life to the extent of feeling like a non-being. The state of “non-being” is well explained by Heidegger’s concept of *Dasein*. The term *Dasein* literally means “being-there” or the “there of the being”. The condition of non-being, nothingness or the there-of being subjects unemployed person to existential crises characterised by anxiety, dread depression and isolation. The condition also limits the person’s freedom to exploit his full potentials. A person who is not free is incapable of deriving full meaning of life. In this situation, the human person loses hope in self-existence and resorts to seeking refuge in the crowd, which Kierkegaard describes as “aimless crowd”. To come out of this situation the unemployed person should be helped to take control of their lives by focusing on the “givens “of life and turning these givens into opportunities for creating essences or meanings to their lives. According to Kierkegaard and Sartre, every individual person is endowed with free will and choice and they are faced with alternatives. The consciousness of this free will ought to confront the unemployed graduate to make choices that will aid him/her to strive towards his/her self-worth and to become what he/she was meant to be by the author of life. Whoever resigns from the pursuit of essence and chooses to follow the crowd without any sense of responsibility becomes inauthentic. An unemployed graduate who becomes a job creator rather than a job seeker exists authentically. This only happens when the individual realizes that he/she

is incomplete in a state of joblessness and therefore he/she must be open to reality of making himself/herself a complete being by being that kind of a person who chooses among possibilities and takes the responsibility of the choices made.

4.5.4 Education Existential Approaches to Unemployment

In interrogating the Kenya's education system, Amimo (2012) poses this question: "Why is it that the Kenyan education system has failed to address the problem of unemployment of its graduates?" Harvey (2005) is of the view that employability is the propensity of graduates to secure a job and progress in their career; it is not just about getting a job, it is about developing attributes, techniques, or experience of life. Against this backdrop, this section explores how existentialism in holistic education can address the challenge of unemployment in Kenya.

Existentialism in education advocates for the training of the "whole person" and not only specific components such as the cognitive. Holistic education in this sense prepares the learner to face the tragic situations of life such as joblessness. To achieve this, existentialism in education various factors are needed. First, the curriculum as argued by Scotter (1985), should give the learners a wide variety of options from which to choose. This will allow those learners whose intelligence and aptitudes appear too low to enable them train for occupations such as engineering, medicine and law to settle on studies such as carpentry, wood work and food production. These are equally important and gives self-employment opportunities.

Secondly, the government should make education very affordable and accessible. This move will give the learners an opportunity to receive holistic education with desired life skills and employable skills. Furthermore, accessible and affordable education addresses the problem of school drop-outs, which, according to Morara and Chemwei (2013), are caused by chronic repetition, family size, lack of motivation for schooling, parental negligence and early marriages. Other factors include poverty, absenteeism, examinations and high cost of schooling. School drop-outs lead to wastage of school curriculum resources and facilities, wastage of human resources, production of half-baked graduates and the increase in the number of unemployable citizens.

Thirdly, the education system should move away from excessive much focus on examination at the expense of other dimensions such a normative, creative and dialogical which are also key in producing all-round learners. Too much focus on examination in Kenya has meant that the many who fail examination tests are led to believe that they have no place in the labour market. Those who score low grades therefore see no need to seek further education in tertiary institutions. The “failure” tag creates a stigma and is an aspect of discrimination. Granted, currently, the Kenya government encourages even those who score grade E to TVET institutions so as to acquire self-employment skills. Still, many are reluctant to join due to wrong attitudes towards such institutions as a result of hangovers of education for white-collar jobs. TVET institutions therefore should be marketed, given honour and respect and not be seen as institutions for failures in society.

Fourthly, the instructors should employ varied and dynamic instructional methods that foster innovation and critical thinking among the learners. According to Namwamba (2005), critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skilfully conceptualizing, applying, analysing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide or a belief and action. Critical thinking helps the learner to overcome prejudices, biasness and liberates an individual from half-truths, conjectures and deceptions. Instructors can foster innovation and critical thinking skills through the following ways:

- Allowing the learners to be curious, to question and to challenge assumptions behind ideas, proposals, problems and beliefs.
- Helping the learners to reflect critically on ideas, actions and outcomes.
- Facilitating the learners to see possibilities in every task and problem and not shy away from challenging tasks.
- Encouraging the learners to be open-minded and free to explore ideas.
- Helping the learners to be critical thinkers.

For learners to cultivate the above skills needed to develop their essences, instructors on their part as supposed to:

- Ensure that teaching is learner-centred.
- Be sensitive to every learner's individual differences and uniqueness.
- Provide abundant supply of resource materials for the learners to work on.

- Giving the learners enough time in the classroom to explore and to do their best work.
- Be the facilitator, a stage setter, and observer and a protector of the learner.

When the above has been achieved, education takes an existential model of freeing and liberating the learners from the chains and entanglements that enslave people. Through such education the learners are helped to understand themselves, develop their talents, potentials and all-natural endowments, utilize them to the full to become complete human persons and to achieve what they were meant to achieve by the creator. In this way, graduates of the Kenyan education system will be in a position to be doers and not docile entities, job creators and not hopeless creatures that are unable to create themselves, fight for their rights or allow the existential problems of the world to crush them.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed corruption, tribalism, terrorism and unemployment as Kenya's main existential challenges threatening human existence. These challenges are practiced and perpetrated by the graduates of the Kenya's education system. A critical examination has shown that these societal challenges negatively influence the learners by exposing them to fallacies that negate their authentic identity and meaningfulness to their human existence. Existential education, therefore, addresses these challenges by emphasizing holistic education through well-designed curriculum and instructional practices that train the whole person.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations based on the statement of the problem and research objectives. The statement of the problem stipulated that there is a crisis in Kenya's education systems' endeavour to produce all-round graduates. This is evidenced by challenges such as commercialization of education, cases of moral decadence among some learners and corruption cases. All educational reforms in Kenya since independence have been aimed at producing graduates who are all-round or holistic in terms of their professional competence and personal character. However, despite the mentioned reforms, the 8-4-4 system of education has not achieved the said holistic goal due to various existential problems. As a theory of human development, the philosophy of existentialism was used to interrogate the stated problem. Therefore, this study concerned itself with the question of "Holistic Development: An existential interrogation into the Kenyan Education System". The objectives of the study were to: examine the Kenyan education system in the light of existential philosophical premises; interrogate the significance of existentialism to education in Kenya, and explore the use of existential education in addressing the problems facing the Kenyan society.

Existentialist philosophy was chosen as a framework for this study because it is a contemporary school of thought that has made many contributions to the understanding of holistic education. The study assumed that the philosophy of existentialism in education leads to complete transformation and achievement of holism in the learners. As a philosophical research, the study was modelled on Jean Paul Sartre's philosophy of "Existence precedes Essence". The implication of this premise is that a human being first exists and then, through his actions, creates his essence or nature out of his freedom and historical conditions. From this perspective, existentialism yielded insights into philosophical understanding of holistic education as a lifelong process that must bring transformation to the learner to realize his potential and to realize and actualize himself.

This research was qualitative in nature and it adopted critical, analytical, speculative and existential philosophical methods of enquiry to interrogate the Kenya's 8-4-4 system of education in relation to its intended holistic goal. Extant literature on existentialism, Kenya's education system and related concepts from books, journals and internet sources were evaluated and interrogated.

The study limited itself to philosophy of existentialism to interrogate the Kenya's 8-4-4 system of education. Existentialism studies existence since it is centred on the analysis of existence and the way human beings find themselves existing in the world. The philosophy of existentialism is very important in education sector because it continues to defend individual freedom, responsibility and authenticity in the midst of various forms of conformism, determinism and self-deception. For the purposes of this

study, Soren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger and Jean Paul Sartre existentialist philosophies were selected and applied. The three were chosen because their thoughts generally represent the views of the entire existentialist philosophers and their reflections on the themes of subjectivity, freedom, authenticity, inauthenticity, responsibility and anxiety provided sufficient insights of interrogating the Kenya's 8-4-4 education system.

Indications from the literature review showed that existentialism in education offers insights that can be incorporated into educational ideologies, policies and curricula. Furthermore, existentialist themes discuss important dynamics that contribute to the achievement of holistic goal of education. This is because holistic education is a philosophy based on the premise that education helps the individual to find identity, meaning and purpose in life.

5.1.1 The Analysis of 8-4-4 System of Education in the Light of Existential Premises

The 8-4-4 system of education in Kenya was introduced in January 1985, following the recommendations of *Mackay Report* of 1981. The system comprises 8 years in primary, 4 years in secondary and 4 years in university/ college. The main reason for changing Kenya's education system from 7-4-2-3 to 8-4-4 was to improve the quality of education at all levels. The 7-4-2-3 system of education had received significant criticisms and resistance for being too rigid, too academic and lacking flexibility and the necessary capacity to respond to the changing needs of the Kenyan society and the labour market. It was also criticised as lacking the relevant and appropriate content

necessary for sustainability and (self) employment. Consequently, at that time, the new system of education was deemed to be visionary. It was assumed that the 8-4-4 system of education would equip the learners with skills that would enable the school leavers to secure not only employment in the formal sector but also to better oriented towards self-employment and self-reliance. To achieve this purpose, the curriculum was made broad at both primary and secondary level with emphasis on practical subjects alongside the traditional academic subjects. Science, mathematics, technical and vocational subjects were emphasized to nurture the required technical skills. However, it soon emerged that the 8-4-4 system of education suffered from inadequate government funding, limited resources, trial and error implementation process and lack of human capacity to develop the system. Eventually, most schools dropped the vocational subjects treating them as electives.

Ever since its inception, the 8-4-4 system has received a lot of criticisms necessitating formation of several commissions to explore ways of improving the system. This study found that the 8-4-4 system of education has not been able to achieve the intended holistic goal of education because of the following existential challenges:

First are the challenges associated with the government universal access to education programme implemented through free primary, free secondary tuition and 100% transition rate in basic education. This programme, though commendable, has resulted in overcrowded classrooms, overstretched facilities and overworked teachers. The schools have, therefore, become crowds making the holistic component of catering to

individual learner needs, interests and uniqueness unachievable, since the teachers are unable to adopt effective teaching methodologies and to do their best work.

Second is the challenge of students' unrest caused by factors such as blind freedoms, peer pressure, examination pressure, tensions, high-handedness in school management and sabotage. This has taken a violent trajectory in and out of schools leading to insecurity, fear, anxiety, despair, depression and sometimes loss of lives and destruction of property. This existential scenario has reduced schools into "prisons" where learners feel oppressed, enslaved, dehumanized and unable to achieve their potential to become what they were meant to be.

Third are examination malpractices, especially plagiarism and cheating, demonstrated through examination leakages, impersonation, collusion, use of unauthorized examination materials and assistance by teachers. These have given some students unfair advantage or disadvantage over others, therefore negating the ideals of holistic education. This practice is immoral, illegal and self-defeating. It subjects the perpetrators to a state of falseness, fallenness, escape from freedom and self-estrangement of human existence therefore spoiling one's possibilities.

Fourth is the challenge of commercialization of education and deliberate economization of knowledge for financial gain. This is manifested through secret continuation of banned holiday tuitions, weekend remedial classes, examination coaching, and illegal purchase of examination materials. These practices have distorted the whole concept of education in terms of purpose, attitude and teacher-student

relationships. The practice has also increased costs on struggling parents. Commercialisation of education also opens room for school administrators to employ unorthodox means to increase students' enrolment for profit. It equally diminished the personhood of the learner to a marketable commodity while the teachers become business service providers. This erodes the nobility of the teaching profession and has deviates from the original goal of education, namely developing the learner's potential and wholesomeness.

Fifth is the overload curriculum characterized by voluminous content, which has made the 8-4-4 system of education quantitative rather than qualitative. Both the teachers and the learners are subjected to the pressure, stress and anxiety of covering the syllabus, revise and prepare to pass examinations. This renders teaching and learning shallow. It has also made education very expensive and burdensome to the teachers, learners and parents. The learners feel oppressed and therefore deprived of concrete all-round education.

Sixth, the 8-4-4 education syndrome of "education for employment" has created a fallacious notion that education is synonymous with formal schooling. Therefore, people have been made to assume that self-worth can only be gained through employment on the basis of their ability to pass examinations and the number of academic paper qualifications acquired. This notion has created a culture in which those who fail exams and are subsequently unemployed are regarded as social rejects and misfits. The learners are thus subjected to anxieties associated with examination failure and future joblessness. This denies them the joy of studying and developing

their potentials and holism. Furthermore, learners with such mentality tend to develop contempt for manual labour since it is assumed that education is supposed to lead only to white-collar jobs.

Seventh, the system has become examination oriented. This is evidenced by too much obsession with attainment of high means scores, glorying in high performance, forced repetition of classes for poor performers, cutthroat competition among the learners and schools, temptation to engage in examination cheating and teaching only examination materials. Examination-centric education system compromises the learner's critical thinking abilities since their studies are aimed only at passing examinations. It also distorts the essence of the curriculum and threatens the examination reliability and validity and distorts other opportunities for the learner such as play, which is key in promoting the learner's identity and self-worth.

Lastly, the 8-4-4 system of education has suffered from inadequate funding. There has been a chronic problem of limited resources to employ enough teaching force in all levels. Other related challenges include delays in disbursement of capitation funds for ongoing school infrastructure development programmes and low fund allocation for research in universities. Other indicators of inadequate funding include lack of proper classrooms, inadequate playground space, inadequate science laboratories, lack of dignified toilets, electricity and water, especially in rural and marginalized parts of the country. This has necessitated increase in tuition fees and other levies leading to situations where some learners report to school late, miss lessons, late registration of courses, poor performance in examinations, suspension of learning and drop-out. The

scenario has caused crises such as anxiety, confusion, stress and sometimes despair among both the learners and the staff. This has compromised holistic education by depriving learners the chance to pursue pathways that lead to individual achievement of integral development.

5.1.2 Interrogating the Significance of Existentialism to Holistic Education in Kenya

The study showed that existentialism in education contributes to the achievement of the holistic goal of education through the following ways:

Aims and objectives of education: Existentialism argues that the main aim and objective of education is to educate the whole person through the unfolding of the individual in the situation he finds himself. To achieve this objective, the Kenyan education system ought to encourage the full development and realization of the individuality of the learners by exposing them to scenarios where they can assume responsible self-hood and to realize the best, they are capable of by optimizing their potential. In this way, they get empowered to make responsible choices in life and get prepared to face the tragic situations of their lives and also to be able to adjust socially in the society.

The concept of the school: Existentialism advocates for a type of school environment where individuals develop in a healthy way. To achieve this noble vision, Kenyan school environments ought to be designed to make learners feel accepted, secure, loved and motivated. The school environment should also enhance individual self-

awareness for purposes of developing their mental, physical and emotional dimensions to prepare learners to face life's existential situations. Deliberate inclusion of extra-curricular activities in school helps in teaching and developing the learners as human beings. The teacher-learner relationship should be dialogical and one which promotes respect and regard for one as subjects. Parents on their part should not abdicate their responsibilities to school and teachers but should play their critical roles, including showing love and acceptance to their children so that they may become more human and ready to confront everydayness difficulties. Educational reforms also ought to provide learning freedom for the learners and to neutralize any element of mechanization and impersonality of the learners.

The concept of curriculum: Existentialism emphasizes a type of curriculum that facilitates self-examination, self-realization and recognizes the individual unique differences. Such a curriculum should accommodate the diverse curricula activities that are sensitive to the aptitude and the needs of the individual. Pre-school is advocated for while secondary and college levels are seen as good for teaching freedom to the learners. Vocational training should include in their curriculum the teaching of humanities to enable students to better understand themselves as persons and better appreciate others in society. Existentialists also observe that any subject is important provided it helps the individual learner to realize himself and to be aware of the universe. These revolutionary insights can help the curriculum developers in Kenya to enrich the relevance of the syllabuses for various levels of education.

The concept of a teacher: Existentialist concept of a teacher is that a good instructor and role model who knows he is educating individuals and not just a mass of people. Such a teacher uses any and every method that educates the “whole” person. On his part, the teacher should experience self-realization for him to be able to authentically guide the learners in the education process. The teacher’s role is to nurture the learner to make authentic and independent choices and to take the responsibility of the consequences of their choices. He should also nurture the learner’s critical consciousness, innovativeness and imaginativeness without imposing his will on them. The teacher should encourage the learner to work hard and to make the best of their lives. Therefore, the teacher becomes the home and the parent of the child. From this study, many teachers lack these elements and this call for the rethinking of the teaching profession in Kenya.

The concept of a student: Existentialists treat students as individuals with a critical role of shaping their own education. The learning environment should thus be a place where the learners are given many options for learning and full freedom for them to realize their “self”. The teacher’s role is to help to learner to realize his “self” and to create freedom. This freedom facilitates the learner’s all-round development in accordance with his aptitude, abilities and needs necessary to free them from ideological or philosophical chains, entanglements and enslavements. The student’s relationship with teacher should be that of I-Thou, that is, subject to subject and not I-it, which is subject-object relationship. The Kenyan education system faces challenges of depersonalization of the student and, therefore, such existential insights should liberate the learner to be what they are meant to be.

Instructional methods: Existentialism advocates for instructional methods that focus on the individual learner. These methods recognize every learner's individual uniqueness and apply diverse curricular that respond to the needs, abilities and the aptitudes of each learner. The recommended learner-centred methods, therefore, include: methods of enquiry, democratic and indirect method, the Socratic Method and role playing. Method of inquiry should be applied in any given situation. The democratic method is guided by the learner's needs and personal objectives. On the other hand, indirect techniques motivate and excite the learners in a voluntary and active way to learn and to participate in the learning process. The Socratic method tests the learner's inner life; it is a problem-oriented method and the learner is involved in the activity. Therefore, this method create a personal, intimate and I-thou affair. Role playing allows the individual learners to freely express themselves in a creative way. On the other hand, existentialism rejects "mass" education, since the superiority of the group can threaten the innovativeness and confidence of the individual. Outdated instructional methods that glorify authoritarian model where the teacher is the superior possessor of knowledge and the student is an empty vessel to be filled should be avoided. Existential concepts of instructional methods in essence challenge the current Kenyan instructional methodologies and call for a paradigm shift where the methods adopted educate the whole person and not only a particular aspect of interest.

Kenya's education faces many challenges, especially in terms of theory and praxis, in the implementation of policies associated with educational aims and objectives, the concept of a school or learning institution, the concept of curriculum, the concept of a

teacher, the concept of a student and the concept of instructional methods. The discussed existential approaches provide concrete ways of remedying the said challenges.

5.1.3 Use of Existential Education to address Problems facing the Kenyan Society

Corruption: Corruption is a deviant behaviour associated with the motivation of private gain such as acquisition of wealth or power through illegal means like bribery, fraud and extortion at a public expense. Corruption in Kenya has become a structural problem politically, economically and socially. It has diffused in and out of every organ of state leading to low level of development and poverty. Examples of Kenya's high-level corruption incidences include the Goldenberg and Anglo-leasing scandals, bribery in the Judiciary and the Kenya Police Service. Corruption is unethical, immoral and illegal. It teaches the wrong lesson that hard work and honesty do not pay. It exploits the victims and corrupts the essence of the individual person and society, destroying the worthiness and good reputation of individuals and societies. Corruption has lowered the quality and standards of education in Kenya as evidenced by noticeable loss of values among its graduates.

To remedy the vice, existentialism in education advocates for the aims of education that are corrective. It offers alternative to theories of education that are rooted in behaviourism and social efficacy. The curriculum of whatever level of education and course ought to include the teaching of humanities which is concerned with a better understanding of one's inner feelings and thoughts of being human. Such curriculum should also instil in the learner values, virtues, norms, dispositions, qualities and

empower them to develop the power of moral reasoning, the desire to act ethically, learn and live authenticity and willpower to cultivate moral obligations necessary for facing social problems in life.

Tribalism: While the term “tribe” is supposed to act as a form of identity for people in a particular set up, “tribalism” has taken a negative connotation to mean one’s strong loyalty to his community by exhibiting elements of superiority to the “other” tribes leading to extreme obsessive protection of one’s tribe at the expense of the whole nation. Tribalism is currently a sensitive issue in Kenya. Since independence, Kenya’s politics have been guided by tribal affiliations. Tribalism also seems to guide one in choosing a spouse, electing a leader, doing business, buying land, employment and distribution of resources. Tribalism is an unfriendly, parochial, spiteful and resentful attitude towards a particular person of another tribe. It blinds the individual’s mind and blocks the possibilities of thinking, perceiving and interpreting the phenomenon and the world in general. It makes one to see the “other” as an enemy. The “us” verses “others” or “them” mentality that informs tribalism promotes a fallacy of belief that a particular tribe is inherently superior to the other tribes. This scenario has resulted in acts such as post-election violence and internal displacement of people leaving them dehumanized, depersonalized and objectified.

To remedy the vice of tribalism, existential education recommends a system that helps the learners and the citizens to become better persons who are free from tribalistic mentality. As such, the school curriculum should foster critical consciousness and thinking to empower the learners to reject myths, generalizations and misconceptions

based on ignorance and limited information about the “other” tribe. Institutions should also develop policies advocating for zero tolerance to discriminations based on tribalism. The curriculum should inculcate values such as nationalism, patriotism, cohesion, inclusivity, tolerance, solidarity and respect for human dignity. Positive ethnicity can also be promoted through co-curricular activities such as sports and games where the learners are assisted to nurture their feelings of being valued, recognized and therefore get and become integrated individuals. Inclusion of qualitative parameters, and not only quantitative ones, when measuring the learner’s academic and personal progress will assist to emphasize the desired values and positive feelings in education.

Terrorism: Being an ideologically oriented phenomenon, terrorism means the use of violence, usually indiscriminate but sometimes exemplary used for symbolic or political, religious or ideological purposes aimed at civilians, designed to create fear and read committed by state or non-state actors. Recent incidences of terrorist attacks in Kenya include the bombing of the American Embassy in 1998 by the Al-Qaeda, the Westgate Mal attacks by the Al-Shabaab in 2013, Garissa University College attack by the Al-Shabaab in 2015 and the Dusit D2 Hotel Al-Shabaab attacks in 2019. These attacks have been sudden, ruthless and bloody.

To remedy this challenge, existentialism in education recommends a type of curriculum that fosters the learner’s healthy understanding of their identity and sense of belonging. This may be achieved through opportunities where identity issues are discussed openly. The curriculum should also develop among the learners critical

thinking, media and digital skills and acquisition of survival skills both in and out of school. Critical thinking helps the learners to challenge ideas, construct valuable and meaningful thoughts and to cultivate courage to confront with responsibility false securities and illusions that may bring feelings of insecurity and uncertainty. Institutions should also deter practices that promote glorification of violence and use of violence to solve issues. Such existential education helps the learner to develop value in one's existence, purpose in life, self-control, self-worth and self-transcendence to achieve the real meaning of life.

Unemployment: Unemployment is a situation in which people who are educated and qualified and seeking a job are not able to get a job. Many Kenyan graduates face difficulties both in entering the graduate labour market as well as making themselves employable. Granted, the Kenya government has instituted grand interventions to reduce unemployment, such as promotion of Technical Vocational Education (TVET), National Youth Service (NYS), youth employment projects, presidential directives and national youth policy. Yet, a big number of the Kenyan graduates are still unemployed, underemployed or underpaid. Unemployment and employability have very serious effects on people, including psychological distress, depression, helplessness, poor self-esteem, self-estrangement worthlessness and meaninglessness of life. Such scenario further tempts them to engage in crime, insecurity, alcoholism and drug abuse to find meaning of their lives in the world of joblessness. The situation also reduces them to government statistics and use of derogatory terms to refer to them such as “cheap labour”, “hustlers”, which deprive them their human dignity.

To remedy the challenge of unemployment, existentialism recommends an education system that prepares the learner to face tragic situations of life, such as joblessness, through inculcation of skills of critical thinking, creativity, imaginativeness and innovativeness. Kenya's education needs to move away from "education for employment" mentality to one that makes the learners focus on the discovery and exploitation of their potential and to realize themselves by putting more effort on discovering and building their existing capacities.

5.2 Conclusion

Existentialism is the most appropriate school of philosophy that emphasizes human existence by focusing on humanity and treating it as a complex whole. This line of thought is critical to restoring man to authentic self. Existence is open-ended and the reality that "existence precedes essence" calls on man to face existential problems and to realize the possibilities of his own existence as a concrete existing individual. Existentialism rejects exploitation of man and opposes anything that oppresses his individuality.

In the light of existential philosophy, Kenya's 8-4-4 system, despite having registered some successes over the years, has generally failed to adequately address Kenya's current needs and aspirations and to facilitate the learners to exploit their potentials fully, to realize their true selves, to achieve self-actualization and holistic development. This existential situation has been occasioned by challenges related to universal access to education at the expense of authenticity, student's unrest, examination malpractices, overloaded curriculum, education for employment

mentality, examination-oriented system and inadequate funding. All these factors have contributed to the system's failure, promoted acts of dehumanization, depersonalization and objectification of learners, made learning a painful and futile exercise, instead of a joyful endeavour.

However, existentialism offers great insights that can be beneficial in effecting the desired reforms and enriching Kenya's education system for holistic development of individuals. Existentialism goes deeper, emphasizing effective approaches and highlighting the reasons learners learn. It shows that knowledge is not only created, but one is also empowered to foster self-constructed sense of identity and awareness. Existential thoughts enrich clear clarifications and conceptualization of the aims and objectives of the curriculum, the concept of the learning institution, the concept of the curriculum, the appropriate pedagogies and the clear concept and the place the learner and the respective educator. With the elaborated existential paradigm shift, Kenya's education system in holistic sense gets empowered to respond and to meet the needs and aspirations of the Kenyan society, especially using education as a powerful tool to remedy the current existential challenges of corruption, tribalism, terrorism and unemployment or joblessness among others.

Ultimately, education should challenge and inspire the learners of all education levels to develop the courage to be, ability to leave the learning institution with a strong concept of identity, strong will power to make wise decisions and to engage with courage and passion the pursuit of their essences. In this case, being educated will

mean becoming authentic, spiritual, empathetic, critical, having the right sense of personal identity and, therefore, all-round or holistic development.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Policy Recommendations

The ongoing educational reforms in Kenya should incorporate the existentialist view of reforming the entire education system comprehensively. Reforms should thus emphasize the ability and motivation of the individual learners, and treat them as unique, free and sentient beings with fears, hopes and aspirations so as to foster their holistic development.

The Ministry of Education should formulate a clear policy statement on the Philosophy of Education in Kenya.

With the help of existentialist philosophy, educators at all levels of education should be trained on the philosophies of holistic education in terms of aims of educations, functions of the learning institutions, role of educators, role of learners and the purpose of teaching and learning.

As a basic right, education, whether in public or private institutions, should be truly accessible, affordable and inclusive. This will give chance a chance to learners to reap from the benefits of holistic education.

To realize holistic education, which addresses societal problems through the philosophy of existentialism, the ongoing educational reforms should emphasize integration of value-based education. This can be done by designing programs which addresses the whole person and planning activities which builds interpersonal and intrapersonal positive relationships. The intended value-based education should have clear objectives, implementation strategies and assessment frameworks with various approaches from early childhood to other levels of education. This will help the learners and the education institutional products to live a life based on ethical principles which are important to themselves and the society at large.

There is need for education philosophy scholars to develop and popularize African existential Philosophy with special focus on education in the African context and African challenges. This will provide an alternative model to the fixed claim that the imparted content in the current curricula in Africa is overly euro-centric and patriarchal and does not fully recognize the important contributions made by for example African ethnic groups because of the “other” complex by emphasizing the existential underpinnings of what it means to be human (Chang, 2020).

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

This study dwelt on the existential interrogation into the 8-4-4 system of education in Kenya. This research has pointed out the weaknesses of this system and also opportunities through which existentialist education philosophy can improve and remedy the challenges facing the Kenyan Society. There is therefore need to:

- (i) Conduct a research on the existential interrogation into the relevance of the new Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya.
- (ii) Critique the Kenya's education system using the other philosophies of pragmatism, idealism, realism, naturalism and essentialism
- (iii) An inquiry into African educational existential Philosophy.

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