

**THE INFLUENCE OF EXAMINATIONS ON CURRICULUM
IMPLEMENTATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BOMET DISTRICT,
KENYA**

BY

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DEDICATION

To my Husband Alex who has tirelessly supported and encouraged me to move on in this course and my beloved children Emmanuel, Gideon and Faith whose support and patience have been a source of encouragement and inspiration.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of examinations on curriculum implementation. This task was accomplished by collecting data and analyzing perceptions from teachers and students from various secondary schools in Bomet District.

The Theoretical framework for the study was adopted from Wiggins and McTighe (1999) backward design model which involves identifying the aims and goals of the school program before decision making. Data for this study were collected through the use of questionnaires, in accordance with the set objectives.

The study established that examinations have had a backwash effect on the curriculum. For instance, the teachers cannot engage all the methods of instruction to attract the learners' interest in class, selection of the content is determined by examinability, integration of life skills in the various subjects was also ignored or rushed over, and unexamined subjects like P.E are not taught. These are contrary to the education goals which are expected to be achieved in the school system.

The study recommends that: the examination setters should attempt to set balanced examination questions to include all areas of the syllabus, and test questions which do not require procedural skills alone but also require thinking skills; teachers should not prepare students just to pass examinations but also to be innovative, creative, and imaginative; the MOE should launch a campaign to sensitize the students and all the education stakeholders about the importance of the stated goals of education; MOE should also initiate and enact a policy to integrate continuous assessment tests in the final evaluation of student achievement.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

- CATs: ■■ ■Continuous Assessment Tests
- KCSE: ■■ ■Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
- KCPE: ■■ ■Kenya Certificate of Primary Education.
- KIE: ■■■ ■Kenya Institute of Education
- KNEC: ■■ ■Kenya National Examinations Council
- MDGs: ■ Millennium Development Goals
- MOE: ■■■ ■Ministry of Education
- NCLB: ■■■ ■No Child Left Behind
- P.E: ■■■ ■Physical Education
- STI: ■ Science, Technology and Innovation.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the background information to the research problem, presents the statement of the research problem and the purpose and objectives of the study. The main research questions, supplementary questions, justification for the study, the theoretical framework and definition of terms are also dealt with in this chapter. □

1.2 Background of the problem

The future lies in education. The quality of an education system is a very crucial determinant of the economic development and social stability of a nation (Mwanzia and Miano, 2007). Research reveals that, while both the quantity and the quality of schooling matter for economic growth, quality is much more important (Woessmann, 2006). Examinations □ have been used to assess students aptitudes, achievements, inform decisions about curriculum and instruction, and make predictions about how successful a student may be in future (Nichols and Berliner, 2007). For about a century, testing for assessing aptitudes like intelligence and achievement has taken an important part in the Kenyan education system □ During the colonial period, public examinations were organized by the colonial government for the benefit of their government. The Kenya African Secondary examinations were first taken in form four in 1940 (Sifuna and Otiende, 1994). Today there are many types of examinations in the education system in Kenya which include among others, the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) which is undertaken at the end of class eight and the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education taken at the end of Form Four. The reason learning has been reduced to

studying the text, particularly at the secondary school levels, is because the immediate goal of learning is to pass tests that open doors to higher education. School success is determined almost exclusively by high passing scores on examinations (Akrofi et al, 2007). These could be explained by the funnel-shaped nature of the educational structure in Kenya. The pyramidal structure makes access to higher education a literal uphill task, with examinations constituting the means for climbing that hill (ibid). This has led to competition due to the increase in number of students thus limiting vacancies for the next level.

At the turn of the millennium many countries and governments worldwide committed themselves to the development of sub-Saharan Africa, with specific emphasis on poverty reduction. United Nations. (2008), outlines the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as eradication of poverty and hunger, provision of free and compulsory primary education, promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, reduction of child mortality, improvement of health services, fighting HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, management of the environment and development of regional trade. In line with this, the government of Kenya has developed a long term development strategy of transforming Kenya into a middle level income country by the year 2030. Termed “Vision 2030”, the team recognizes Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) as the foundation for economic progress (Karani, 2007). This can be achieved through education of its population. The vision for the education sector for 2030 is to have globally competitive quality education, training and research for sustainable development (GOK, 2007). Mwanzia and Miano (2007) point out that for assessment to play a role in fostering quality education, it must pay attention to the goals of education in terms of

what is taught and learned and the levels at which the knowledge and skills acquired by the learner are assessed. This led the researcher to investigate if what is taught and learnt in school pays attention to the goals of education or the examinations expected.

The aim of education is to produce an all round individual who is productive to himself and his society. Education brings about progress since a well informed and enlightened population will participate meaningfully in development. Individually, people will need literacy skills in order to make informed choices for better life hence education for sustainability. Otieno (2002) defines Education for Sustainability as a lifelong learning process that leads to an informed and involved citizenry having the creative problem solving skills, scientific and social literacy and commitment to engage in responsible individual and co-operative actions. Thus the Education system should seek to prepare the learner to achieve these skills for life which are overlooked when examinations are given an upper hand in school□

Teaching should equip the learner with the right attitude, knowledge, understanding, skills, ways of knowing and practical competencies needed to function autonomously in society, and which reflect the underlying aims of education and broadly accepted values of the society in question (De Luca, 1994). In Ghana, there is lack of respect for mere book knowledge without wisdom (Akrofi et al, 2007). This may be attributed in part to their experiences with school instruction that generally stresses memorization of text and recall of information, hence de-emphasizes creativity and responsibility for constructing learning, and minimizes ability to connect school information to a wider world of understanding (Akrofi et al, 2007). Thus when examinations focus on knowledge only, it

influences acquisition of the required skills hence working against the goal of education which is to produce an all round individual who can fit in the society.

The requirement for schools to be seen to do well in terms of student attainment and the clarity of the relationship between teaching, learning and student outcomes has for some teachers engendered a feeling that if something is not to be assessed then it need not be taught (Freeman, Holmes, and Tangney, 2001). Evidence that what is not examinable is not taken seriously in schools is seen in Kenya where, at independence, the Ominde Commission recommended that Kiswahili be a compulsory subject in the primary schools (Shiundu & Omulando, 1992). Since the subject was not examinable, most schools did not offer it. Other areas of study like physical education (P.E) and the teaching of HIV/AIDS suffer the same fate. This prompted some educators to recommend that HIV related subjects be made to stand alone and be examinable (as discussed in the Consultation on HIV/AIDS Conference, 2003).This was to ensure it was given the seriousness it deserved in the curriculum. At present the study of emerging issues like HIV/AIDs is integrated into the other subjects offered in the schools.□

The draft Education master plan, 1997-2010 suggests that the issues of relevance and quality of education need targeting for reform. The education sector has not satisfactorily met its objectives of inculcating a modern scientific culture, enhancing morality among learners and producing an employable labor force (Otieno, 2002). This shows that there is a gap between the goals of education and what is actually being taught in schools□

Teaching methods tend to be influenced by demand on teachers to perform. Unfortunately, teachers' performance is measured by students' scores in examinations

which influence their approach to teaching. According to a research in Pakistan, it is reported that teachers are bound to switch their teaching methods to mainly the lecture method and adopt teacher and curriculum centered approaches to teaching and learning so as to ensure good performance in examinations (Rehmani, 2003). This teaching approach turns students into learning machines all day long throughout the four year period (Buhere, 2007). Students wake up at dawn, and attend lessons up to 9 pm daily, without the respite that should punctuate learning or any other routine activity. Drilling and uninterrupted teaching undermine thinking that helps to make sense of what one has been taught (Ibid). In such schools, Continuous Assessments Tests (CATs) are done at night. It is assumed that doing CATs during the day is a waste of time meant for normal teaching□

Education stakeholders' (Teachers, Students, Parents, Employers and the Government) interest in what goes on at the school perhaps influences what goes on in class. A case in point was in America in 2001 where the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, which attached great significance to test scores, was passed. In this case, teachers and administrators can receive bonuses for high student scores, or, as is more typically the case, they can be reassigned or fired because of low student scores and poor student gains (Nichols & Berliner, 2007). In Kenya, some schools give incentives to teachers which influence their approach to teaching.

Despite all these, examinations are an important part in the school curriculum since they enable one to know the state of the curriculum and take corrective action. Bishop (1985)

says the fault is not with examinations, discarding examinations will be a case of throwing out the baby with the bath water.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The aim of education is to produce an all round individual who is productive to himself/herself and to the society. It is the duty of the education system to equip learners with practical skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills in preparation for further training, self employment, the world of work and preparation for life. Education is a tool through which National Development is achieved. The formulated curriculum in Kenya is rich enough to meet the broad goals of education which are national unity, unity of purpose, social responsibility, moral and ethical values, life-long learning, science, technology, equity, quality and environment. Access to the curriculum, equity, relevance and quality are challenges that have characterized Kenya's education system over the years, (Policy view, 2008). One of the suspected causes for poor quality is a lot of attention being paid to examinations. As Mwanzia & Miano (2007) observed, schools ignore aspects of learning that are stipulated yet not tested in the curriculum. Some schools may not cover the syllabus holistically. Some topics which are not thought to appear in the examination are not taught, while some practicals in science subjects are ignored and the life application sections on various topics ignored.

All these issues have many repercussions on the intended curriculum if not solved. It fosters cheating in examinations due to the desire for high scores and students being forced to perform highly. This pressure on students often leads to a lot of stress to them□

The teachers on the other hand are forced to apply the less effective teacher – centered methods of teaching to the disadvantage of the weak students.□

The specific purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of examinations on curriculum implementation in Bomet District.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to assess the effects of examinations on curriculum implementation in secondary schools in Bomet District. The following objectives guided the study:

1.5 Objectives

1. To establish the relationship between examinations conducted in secondary schools and the stated curriculum goals.
2. To investigate the influence of examinations on the content and skills taught in secondary schools.
3. To establish whether students are given opportunity for self assessment and the application of life skills.
4. To establish whether teachers adhere to the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) syllabus.

1.6 Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions;

1. Is there a relationship between examinations and the stated curriculum goals?
2. Do teachers assess students according to content taught?
3. Are students given opportunity for self assessment and life application of knowledge and skills acquired in school?
4. Do teachers adhere to the KIE syllabus?

1.7 Assumptions of the study

The study made the following assumptions:

1. Teachers teach according to the set KIE syllabus.
2. Teachers are at liberty in planning for assessment and teaching.
3. Students are aware of the various skills they need to acquire.
4. All respondents would be honest and accurate in providing the required information.

1.8 Justification and significance of the study

The Kenyan education system, despite its inadequacies, has its ultimate purpose, the transformation of individuals and society (Wilcox, 1992). For this reason, it is important that knowledge of quality and good education and training is widely available. However, due to focus on examinations and the need to score high, this quality might be neglected. Schools have resorted to rote learning for the purpose of ‘good grades’ and hence the objectives of the curriculum are not met.

The study hoped to shed some light on the impact of examinations on curriculum implementation. This has highlighted the loopholes that cause poor acquisition of skills and therefore make amendments. This research was also to inspire scholars to conduct more research in this field to fill up the gaps which will be exposed by this research□

Apart from inspiring scholars, this study will contribute to the wealth of knowledge in the current system of education. It also sheds light on practical realities and implications of focus on examinations on curriculum implementation. This study will shed light on the quality of teaching and learning in our schools. This is important information especially because Kenyans place utmost value on academic performance in national examinations.

1.9 Scope and limitations of the study

The study confined itself to the impact of examinations on curriculum implementation within Bomet District. The study attempted to establish: whether there is a relationship between examinations in secondary schools and the stated curriculum goals; investigate the influence of examinations on the content and skills taught; establish whether students are given opportunity for self assessment and the application of life skills and to investigate whether teachers adhere to the KIE syllabus. The respondents in this study included the teachers and the students□

The major limitation of the study was the fact that the goals of education are wide and could not be tested within a short time. It was also limited by the inadequacy of time since examinations were going on which made the researcher to wait for long hours for the students to finish the examinations. In some instances the research process was

scheduled for the days when there were no examinations going on. This slowed down the process and made it costly.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Backward Design model advocated by Wiggins and McTighe (1999). This design commences from the statement of the end points and desired results. This stage involves identifying the aims and goals of the school program. The model specifies three levels of decision making: -

At the first level, education:

- i. Checks on national, state and local content standards.
- ii. Curriculum developers, including classroom teachers judge the possible contents that can assist one in having students achieve the designed results.

The second level of decision making is to determine what knowledge is essential for students to know in consideration of stated aims and goals. What basic understandings and skills within both disciplined and non disciplined knowledge do students need to possess in light of stated standards, community expectations, and research results? What procedures, methods of analysis, and thinking strategies must be experienced to empower students as self – learners? (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004)

The third and final stage involves narrowing in on the content. What specific courses will be developed and taught and what particular content both declarative and procedural,

should be offered to students? Wiggins and McTighe refer to this final level of decision making as identifying “enduring” understanding. The term enduring refers to the big ideas, the important understandings, that we want students to “get inside of and retain after they’ve forgotten many of the details” (Wiggins and McTighe, 1999)□

The goals and aims that have been set by any education system should be met. This will make the education system valid. There are skills and ideas that need to be remembered by the learner long after completion of the course but due to the effects of examinations, this is not so. As McTighe and Wiggins put it, the ‘enduring’ understanding will ‘anchor’ the unit course. When the learners are taught the various application skills like critical thinking and problem solving skills, this will make the learners remember them and make use of them long after school.

1.11 Operational Definition of Terms

Assessment- the measuring of some aspect of students’ education by the teacher to help him/her make decisions regarding appropriate goals and objectives, teaching strategies and programme placement.

Autonomy-Teachers being independent to make decisions on teaching and planning lessons according to the syllabus□

Cheating-being dishonest in examinations for instance carrying written examination answers into the examination room and impersonation.

Curriculum-The course of study followed in a teaching institution.

Evaluation – the act of determining the worth or value of the process or product of education.

Examination – an assessment procedure (written or unwritten) used in schools to measure the achievement of the learners.

Leakage – This is where candidates are found with examination materials way before examinations begin.

Measurement – the assigning of numerical values to a phenomenon in a systematic way as a means of representing properties of the phenomena.

Public examinations – commonly used to describe examinations open to persons of any age or background.

Test – a systematic procedure in which individuals being evaluated are presented with a set of constructed stimuli, called items to which they respond in a variety of ways for example verbally or in writing

1.12 Organization of the rest of the study

The next chapter will review literature related to the study and chapter three will look at the methodology and procedures followed in carrying out the study. Chapter four is the analysis of data while chapter five deals with the discussion of the findings, conclusions recommendations and suggestions for further research.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to examine the past studies and current trends raised by scholars concerning examinations. Various areas will be reviewed including definition of examinations, purpose of examinations, the nature of examinations in Kenya, impact of examinations deduced from the literature, approaches to examining, and administration of examinations.

2.2. Function of Education Evaluation

Education evaluation has confirmation and judgment functions concerning how well the educational goal is realized, based on the goal as originally defined. It also has information-gathering and application functions necessary for making decisions regarding learners, educational methods, and administrative assistance. In addition, it has formative functions for development, revision and supplementation, and alternative research for new and better educational programs, as well as the strategic functions of advertisement, attention, and motivation (Lee, 1999). Evaluation is inevitable in teaching-learning process. The need of evaluation is so intrinsic to the teaching-learning situation in that it helps teachers to make better evaluative judgments. According to Lee (1999), evaluation is important in various aspects of teaching-learning process like:

- a) Fulfilling classroom objectives

- b) Diagnosing learning difficulties of students
- c) Determining readiness for new learning experiences
- d) Forming students' classroom groups for special activities
- e) Assisting students in their problems of adjustment
- f) Prepare reports of pupils' progress

In all these activities, evaluative judgments are made. Accurate judgments on the students make evaluation more effective hence directing their learning.

2.2.1 Areas of Education Evaluation

Lee (1999) outlines evaluation types based on Bloom's (1956) work which suggested taxonomy of education objectives, setting standards on the content of education and behavior dimensions and dividing into goals of cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. *Evaluation of the Cognitive Domain*: This evaluation measures the achievement of cognitive education goals that can be achieved by conceptual process such as memorizing, understanding and reasoning on the educational contents specified in the educational goals. *Evaluation of Affective Domain*: This evaluation looks at changes or improvements in interest, merit, confidence and attitude or characteristics such as a spirit of cooperation, responsibility, law-abiding nature, sociality and self-consciousness. *Evaluation of Psychomotor Domain*: This evaluation measures the achievement of education goals that can be achieved by using whole of parts of the body such as hands, feet, legs and shoulders.

2.2.2 Characteristics of good Evaluation

The basic features that should characterize a 'good' evaluation are validity, reliability, practicability, fairness and usefulness. In Unit 1, "Need, Concept and characteristics of Evaluation" (n.d), the elements of a good evaluation are explained as follows:

Validity

A valid evaluation is one which actually tests what it sets out to test that is, one which actually measures the behavior described by the objective(s), under scrutiny. Quite often non-valid test items are in fact used for example questions that are intended to test recall of factual material but which actually test the candidate's powers of reasoning, or questions which assume a level of pre-knowledge that the candidates do not necessarily possess. Validity related problems are common weakness of many of the widely used test items. For example, a simple science question given to school children ;'Name the products of the combustion of carbon in an adequate supply of oxygen', produces a much higher number of correct answers when the word combustion is replaced with 'burning', Unit 1, "Need, Concept and characteristics of Evaluation" (n.d). This shows that the original question has problems of validity because it is to some extent, testing language and vocabulary skills other than the basic science involved.

Reliability

Reliability is a measure of the consistency with which the question, test or examination produces the same result under different but comparable conditions (ibid). A reliable evaluation item gives reproducible scores with similar populations of students. It is, therefore, independent of the characteristics of individual evaluators. This is often difficult to achieve in practice. For instance a student's answers which receives a score of 75 per cent from one marker and 35 per cent from another reveals a patently unreliable

evaluation. Besides this Marker-Examiner reliability also plays its role in this phenomenon. In order to maintain reliability, one evaluative question should test only one thing at a time and give the candidates no other option (ibid). The evaluation should also adequately reflect the objectives of the teaching unit.

Practicability

Evaluation procedure should be realistic, practical and efficient in terms of their cost, time taken and ease of application, Unit 1, "Need, Concept and characteristics of Evaluation" (n.d). It may be an ideal procedure of evaluation but may not be put into practice. For example, in practical examination of students, it may be convenient to assign different experiments instead of assigning one experiment to all students. By doing this, the problem of having various apparatus for conducting one experiment can be avoided.

Fairness

Evaluation must be fair to all students. This can be possible by accurate reflecting of range of expected behaviors as desired by the course objectives. To keep fairness in evaluation it is also desired that students should know exactly how they are to be evaluated, (ibid). This means that students should be provided with information about evaluation such as nature of the materials on which they are to be examined, the form and structure of the examination, length of the examination and the value of each examination.

Usefulness

An Evaluation should also be useful for students. Feedback from evaluation must be made available to the students and help them to prove their current strengths and

weaknesses. By knowing their strength and weakness, students can think of further improvement. Evaluation should reflect all the needful requirements for their improvement, (ibid). The requirements may be in terms of improvement in the content to be taught, teaching methods and style of learning. Hence, evaluating is very useful in diagnosing weakness and their remedies.

2.3 Defining Assessment

Assessment is defined as a method the teacher uses to make decisions on learners progress (KIE, 2006). It is an essential element in a teaching/learning encounter as it enables the teacher to evaluate the extent of the learners' achievement on set objectives. Thus a teacher may use an exercise, assignment, test or examination as tools for measuring a pupil's performance. The measure of performance may be given in the form of a mark, grade or comment. The Student Assessment is designed to help teachers better understand the learning needs and problems of students, so as to provide timely assistance to enhance students' learning effectiveness (Chan, Kerry, Yu and Fok, 2006). This assessment could be done at the discretion of schools□

According to The Qualification and Curriculum Authority (2009), there are three principles for assessment. These are: Day-to-day assessment, Periodic assessment, and Transitional assessment. Day to day assessment is done every time a teacher discusses a question or a piece of work with a learner or observes how they approach a problem or interact with others, and the teacher gains further insight into the learner's understanding and progress. These day-to-day conversations give learners immediate feedback, provide them with relevant next steps and help them reflect on their learning as it is happening.

They also enable teachers to adjust their short-term planning in line with their learners' needs. In the Kenyan schools this is done through observation of students in class, giving them oral questions on the topic being taught, discussions or short quizzes on the lesson (KIE, 2006).

Periodic assessment which takes place once a term or twice a year is another principle of assessment. In Kenya it is done at the end of the school term and the continuous assessment tests (CATs). It is important in that it looks at the learners' overall progress in a subject or aspect of learning. This allows teachers to draw on a broad range of activities and evidence including learners' contributions in group work or discussions. This activity will help learners to identify their strengths and areas of development in the subject as a whole, rather than in the last piece of work or topic they completed. It will also give the teacher a clear sense of whether the learner is able to transfer the knowledge, skills and understanding he or she developed and use them in different contexts. This sort of assessment can also inform the teacher's medium and long-term planning and provide the evidence to link the learner's attainment to national standards.

The third principle of assessment is Transitional assessment. These are judgments that are meant for a wider audience and will often be made at the end of a year or key stage, (The Qualification and Curriculum Authority, 2009). They draw on the full range of assessment information, including judgments made by the teacher and any other evidence such as tests. These are examinations that come at the end of the academic stage for example the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education which is done after four years of secondary education in Kenya and the end of year exams in the various classes.

Transitional assessments provide a formal recognition of achievement and valuable baseline information for the next teacher, (ibid). They often influence the next stage in the learner's education. Once a term or twice a year for example, it is important to look at the learners' overall progress in a subject or aspect of learning.

According to Beets (2007), a good assessment culture entails the following characteristics: students construct knowledge (rather than reproduce it); assessment focuses on the application of knowledge to actual cases; Assessment instruments ask for multiple perspectives and context sensitivity; students are actively involved in the assessment process, they discuss criteria and engage in self and/or peer assessment; assessments are integrated within the learning process and are congruent with the teaching method and learning environment, Beets (2007).

2.4. Definition of Examination

Examination is an assessment procedure (written or unwritten) used in schools to measure the achievement of the learners. Evaluation on the other hand is the act of determining the worth or value of a process or product of education. Thus examinations are a means through which activities in the school curriculum are evaluated.

2.4.1 Public Examinations

Students are constantly assessed by their teachers in class. Public examinations, however, are different from teacher-grading. Public examinations are conducted by an external organization, usually supported by provincial or national authority, taken by a large number of students in a given grade, used to screen students for promotion and graduation, and are regarded as highly influential on students' future educational and

occupational opportunities (Min-hsiung, 2009). In addition, public examinations are curriculum-based, relative to an external standard, typically competitive, and are often administered at the end of an educational program (Bishop, 1997).

Public examinations certify the level of achievement for each student and provide educational and occupational rewards to students who perform well. An example of public examinations is the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) where the test is administered to class eight pupils for admission to secondary schools. The students compete ferociously for places in the best public academic high schools based on the results of the test. Students who score low on the test usually end up going to district secondary schools whose performance is poor. As stated in the Policy View (2008), most district secondary schools are poorly equipped and staffed owing to persistent unsatisfactory performance in national examinations. Students in such schools have limited chances to compete for entry to national universities to pursue high-demand academic programmes like medicine, law, commerce etcetra (Ibid). The Kenya Certificate of Secondary School Education (KCSE), which is administered in form four, is another highly competitive examination. The students compete for the few vacancies in the public Universities while those who don't score the high grades required go for the expensive parallel degree programmes or to the equally expensive private universities and colleges. Public tertiary institutions take up the rest of the students while others drop out from the school system.

Despite the competition, public examinations have conditions to meet in order for them to satisfy the standards required. Bishop, as cited in Woessmann (2006) suggests that a well-designed system of external exit examinations should be curriculum-based, define achievement relative to an external standard, measure the full range of skills and knowledge and signal multiple levels of achievement, and cover the vast majority of students. However secondary education has long been dominated by the requirements of external examinations and the result has been that teachers have concentrated on the examinable aspects of the curriculum almost to the exclusion of everything else. External examinations not only act as a constraint on proper curriculum development and teaching methods but also are unreliable instruments of evaluation based as they are on a limited sample of work at a particular time (Mercurio, 2008).

2.4.2 School-based Examinations

In the school-based examinations, the assessment task is set by the student's own teacher in accordance with the general assessment specifications set by an authority external to the school. Each individual student's performance is assessed by the student's own teacher. This assessment is moderated by processes developed by an external authority and the score counts towards the final result or decision (Mercurio, 2008). The frequency of these examinations depends on the teacher or the choice of the school.

2.5 Functions of Examinations

There are different types of examinations in the school each with different functions. Public examinations contribute very little to the improvement of teaching and learning process since they are summative. Unlike school based or within-classroom tests, a public

examination provides information on how individual students perform relative to all other students in the nation or region, (ibid).

Teacher's assessment on the other hand is an ongoing process in teaching and learning situations and is used mainly for diagnostic purposes. There are different methods a teacher can use to assess the learners for instance oral questions which are asked on continuous basis to assess learners progress during the lesson, quizzes which are short answer questions used to determine the level of mastery of specific content, and tests and examinations which are normally teacher made to evaluate the progress after a number of topics have been taught or at the end of the term or school year. Teacher's assessment provides feedback on challenges that should be addressed to ensure effective provision and acquisition of knowledge and skills through the school system, Mercurio, (2008).

The main role of examinations for a teacher is to give feedback. It is part of the teaching process, indicating areas in which further tuition is needed. To teach more efficiently the teacher needs feedback in finding out if what has been taught has been learned whether a particular approach to a particular topic was successful or whether to use a different method. The teacher needs to know whether or not the pupils have understood the topic properly so that misconceptions can be corrected. Examinations can give the teacher a sense of the standard of achievement required in the system and can also act as an incentive for teachers if students perform well (Mwanzia and Miano, 2007 and Nichols & Berliner, 2007).

End-of-course examinations generate data for improving teacher quality. While there is wide agreement that a high-quality teacher is essential to improving student learning the knowledge base is thin on what qualities make a high school teacher more effective (Wakelyn,2008).Thus the students performance is used to determine the quality of the teacher.

Different tests have been used to assess aptitudes and achievements, motivation for training in perseverance and steadfastness, indicating areas which need further study and a means of entry to a higher course or a later stage of the same course. (Mwanzia and Miano, 2007; Nichols and Berliner, 2007).

To the student, the rewards of learning become more apparent, especially when examinations involve consequences for individuals, such as entering a better school or a higher institution of learning. In particular, by signaling student performance to potential employers on the labor market, external school-leaving examinations increase students' rewards for learning as well as parents' scope for monitoring the education process, which should ultimately improve student performance (Woessmann, 2006).Teachers and principles whose students perform well are also rewarded with tokens and promotions.

External examinations can help institutions face the challenge of accountability by creating a set of incentives that encourages school personnel to behave in ways that do not necessarily further their own interests, but rather the interest of best student learning. For instance, with incentives, teachers may use the most promising teaching techniques, instead of techniques they find most convenient like the lecture method of teaching (ibid).

Public examinations hold teachers and schools accountable for student performance and provide incentives for students, teachers and school administrators to focus on learning (Woessmann, 2006). Public examinations significantly improve student achievement, making incompetent teachers and principals more visible and likely to be punished (Ibid). Competent teachers are given rewards like promotions and tokens from parents while the incompetent ones are given transfers or made to teach the lower classes and in some private schools they are laid off. Competent administrators, on the other hand, are more likely to be rewarded (ibid). The evidence from the international student achievement tests shows that Students perform substantially better in countries that have external exit-examination systems than in countries without external exit-examination systems (Woessmann, 2006). That is, student performance is immensely higher where schools and students are held accountable by external examinations.

The employer and the public also put some importance to records of school attainment. There is need for keeping parents informed about school progress□ Employers want a guide in form of certificates or leaving certificates from pupils looking for jobs□ Entry to higher levels of education may be dependent on satisfactory completion of an earlier stage. It is the responsibility of a teacher to make sure that this information is available to assist students in their future careers (Nichols and Berliner, 2007 and Mwanzia and Miano 2007).

Examinations play a role in guaranteeing the quality of education and in the continuous learning line to post-secondary education, (Woessmann, 2006). Examinations give

students an opportunity to correct their mistakes and revise their work to meet the standards. Good performance in examinations acts as a passport and guarantees access to post-secondary education, the so-called civil effect (ibid).

In the economic system, money is an institutional feature that allows one to value and compare different objects. This kind of price system creates knowledge that no single person can gather. External examinations can provide such “price information” to the education system (Woessmann, 2006). The important feature is that the examinations are instituted as standardized tests by independent institutions and in a manner external to the individual school, so that they provide independent and comparable information on how the school performs (Ibid). Parents can use this information created by external examinations to make proper choices.

2.6 Nature of Examinations in Kenya

Examinations are an important aspect of the school program. They help determine whether learning takes place in the school. This section will look at the nature of examinations in Kenya which are diagnostic, formative and summative examinations. These have been briefly discussed as follows:

2.6.1 Diagnostic Evaluation

This type of evaluation is done before teaching/learning begins so as to diagnose the specific areas of weakness or strength of a learner and to determine their nature. Characteristics of these examinations include measuring specific objectives based on knowledge or performance. Examples of diagnostic evaluation in Kenya are school admission interviews, quizzes given by new teachers taking up a class, among others.

2.6.2 Formative evaluation

This type of evaluation is carried out during the teaching/learning process to get data which will be used to strengthen or improve the process. Formative evaluation can be used to collect evidence from time to time on student learning with a view to promoting better learning (Chan, Kerry, Yu and Fok, 2006). At instructional level, formative evaluation include: weekly tests, observation, checklists and termly tests (Shiundu & Omulando, 1992). Formative evaluation is sometimes in form of Periodic Tests which are used to assess the scholastic achievements of children after providing instruction for a specified period. The period may be one or two months. Some schools call these periodic tests, Continuous assessment tests, (CATs) or Terminal tests. The purpose of these tests is two fold;

- a) To provide feedback to students and teachers about the achievement of students.
- b) To help students in improving on their weaknesses (Unit 1, "Need, Concept and Characteristics of Evaluation", n.d).

Rehmani (2003) indicates that formative evaluation is an instrument used by teachers in giving feedback to their students as to how they are progressing and how they can improve their learning and understanding during a course of action. It is through the formative evaluation that learning can be enhanced and deepened. It thus helps students

to self assess their work. Students can be helped in narrowing the gap between their current performance and what needs to be done to achieve the required standards.

2.6.3 Summative Evaluation

Summative evaluation is often carried out through paper and pencil tests and examinations at the end of learning and teaching cycle (Chan, et al 2006). It is concerned with purposes and outcomes of the teaching-learning process. Examples of summative evaluation in Kenya include the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations.

2.7 Impact of examinations on curriculum implementation

Evaluation is ideally meant to be a platform for curriculum improvement. However, the major purposes of examinations as currently perceived and expected by the great bulk of people inside and outside education are, to provide a basis of selection (for further education, employment or training) and to provide some indicator of future potential (Murphy and Moon, 1989). Examinations have assumed a “gate-keeping” role in the education system. Because of this importance, the examinations exert considerable influence on what goes on in schools. Although the curriculum has generally incorporated issues of the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains, examinations mainly focus on the cognitive domain, (Chakwera, Khembo, and Sireci, 2004). With so much emphasis on passing examinations it is not surprising that the instruction has become examination oriented. The divorce between the objectives of education, as shared by so many teachers and parents and the reality of the system as it is bent to satisfy the

needs of examinations has been commented upon so much that one must assume that there is no will to insist upon the primacy of educational objectives over the secondary, distorting values of examinations as currently operated (Ibid)□

This negative effect of instructional evaluation or, specifically, standardized tests, on the curriculum is what Shiundu & Omulando (1992) refer to as backwash. Urevbu (1985) defines backwash as the effect of examinations upon the curriculum. The backwash effect has been generally defined as the effect of assessment on teaching and learning. This effect can be either positive or negative. Bachman (as cited in Bedford 1990), argued that positive backwash occurs when the assessment used reflects the skills and content taught in the classroom. However, in many cases and particularly in high stakes testing, the curriculum is driven by the assessment leading to negative backwash.

From a study carried out in Pakistan, Rehmani (2003) outlines some of the characteristics of backwash as:

Teachers and students work under considerable pressure; teaching and learning is totally concentrated to prepare for the examinations; Teachers switch their teaching methods to mainly the lecture method and adopt teacher and curriculum centered approaches to teaching and learning; Some even rely on model or guess paper guides available in the markets; Mostly, students adopt surface approach to learning as they are expected to memorize the contents of prescribed textbooks, they look for shortcuts to learning and also use such guides; In the government school, teachers even identify paragraphs from textbooks that answer particular questions.

It clearly demonstrates that such an examination system drives teachers on what and how to teach and forces students to learn without much consideration paid to understanding and comprehension. Such approaches to teaching and learning could not help in developing problem solving or thinking skills to develop understanding in a holistic way rather it atomizes knowledge.

These characteristics of backwash reflect the scenario in Kenya today. Education seems to be all about passing examinations other than the knowledge and skills achieved. According to Mwamu (2008), the current education system stresses too much on passing examinations at the expense of other aspects of life the schools should be pumping learners with. Based on an empirical study, it is argued that examinations play a vital role in determining approaches to teaching and learning and that teachers face great pressures from various stakeholders to gear their teaching to prepare students for passing examinations with good grades. Students are also expected by teachers and parents to sharpen their latent potentials in rote memorizing factual knowledge and reproducing it in the examination (Rehmani, 2003).

Learning is a life cycle process. Investment in education raises not only the skills and competences attained but builds the foundation for the acquisition of further skills and competences at the next level. This multiplier effect means that education is a dynamic synergistic process in which early learning begets later learning (Woessmann, 2006). Interventions at an early stage are, therefore, crucial especially because deficiencies in learning that may have developed are difficult and more costly to rectify at later stages

(Commission Staff Working Document (CSWD), 2006). Research shows that, in all systems, a poor early education experience has serious consequences at later stages in life and that policy makers need to ensure that there are systems to reduce early failure and/or provide alternative routes to skill acquisition (CSWD, 2006). Thus any education system should be cautious not to lose the actual goal of the course, to acquire skills and competencies. With the emphasis on examinations, it is possible to fail to deliver these skills which will affect the later years of education. Examinations have made a profound influence on what is taught in schools. Hawes (1979) reports that the effects of the examination on the school curriculum, described as the “backwash effect”, are massive and on the whole disheartening. Students are subjected to many examinations including continuous assessment tests, mock examinations, regional examinations and the common public examinations such as KCSE.

Way back in 1952, the Secondary Education commission in the United Kingdom enumerated the defects of examinations as;

Dictating the curriculum instead of following it, prevent any experimentation, interfering with the proper treatment of subjects and sound methods of teaching, fostering a dull uniformity rather than originality, encouraging the average pupil to concentrate too rigidly upon too narrow a field and thus helping him to develop wrong values in education (Beeby 1977 as cited in Unit 1 Need, Concept and Characteristics of Evaluation). Hence pupils assess education in terms of success in examinations.

The report of the task force on student discipline and unrest in secondary schools (GOK, 2001), observed that the current curriculum did not wholly address the policy, objectives, and philosophy of education. In its implementation, teachers tend to be more examination oriented. Teachers recognizing the importance of the external examination to the individual pupils are constrained to relate their teaching to an examination which can test only a narrow field of the pupil's interests and capacities and so inevitably neglect qualities which are more important though less tangible (Bishop, 1985)□The backwash effect of the assessment-led curriculum promotes cognitive rigor but the overloaded curriculum hinders opportunity to learn with understanding and proficiency (Cheung, 1990).

Straightforward measurements of the level of students' absolute performance can lead to strategic responses on the part of teachers and schools: the stigmatization of low achievers; the possibility of schools creaming off the most able pupils; increasing placements of low-performing students in special-education programs which are outside the accountability system; or by pre-emptively retaining students. Even judging schools on the basis of value added measures of school performance may still give schools an incentive to select the pupils who are easiest to teach, not least because absolute levels of performance are what attract pupils to schools and provide access to higher education (Woessmann, 2006). Indeed, if an average value added measure of performance is used, there can be a disincentive for teachers to concentrate on students at either end of the performance spectrum. This will demoralize the weak students who may lose hope of learning and hence perform worse or even drop out of school all together (Woessmann, 2006).

If examinations play their proper role, instruction can reap immense benefits. But the opposite is also true. Reports on examinations in various countries have highlighted various shortcomings in the examination systems which affect the quality of education. For instance subjectivity, poor content coverage, use of single textbooks for examination preparation, administrative shortcomings, malpractices and rote memorization are listed as major shortfalls of the examination system (CSWD, 2006). This hinders teaching and learning as it narrows the teaching of content to a few topics which are suspected to be examined. The learners on the other hand will be forced to memorize the few topics at their disposal. This limits the acquisition of generic skills which cannot be measured by paper and pencil tests (Chan et al. 2006).

Poor content coverage and selective study are also common factors affecting the quality of education. Afzaal & Christie (2005), in their evaluation of paper setting in three subjects and two boards concluded: "There has been increased repetition of questions and only selected contents are tested again and again. Nobody seemed to take any serious view of this phenomenon which leads towards selective study". This leads to the teachers and students predicting examination questions after which they teach repeatedly on those topics and the student's cramme them. Thus the implementation of a well-received curriculum could be undermined or distorted by a technically poor examination, by an examination which did not articulate well with it, or by an examination system which lacked coordination for example if students were over tested (De Luca, 1994). This kind

of practice works against the purpose of education to instill skills in the learners for national development.

Reliance on a single textbook and reproduction of materials from new recommended textbooks are also major factors leading towards rote memorization. In each subject a single government textbook is the only source of teaching and learning in the majority of schools (Afzaal & Christie, 2005). The public examination boards then use the same textbook in examination setting. This narrows the ability of students to research information from various books and makes them only rely on being given information directly from a given book. This can be a limitation to those students who might proceed for higher learning since they will be expected to do a lot of research for themselves.

The fluctuation in cognitive levels that is knowledge, comprehension and application, around a major focus on simple recall questions in examination tends toward rote memorization as an examination strategy (Afzaal & Christie, 2005). Nevertheless in the absence of a uniform scheme of assessment across the boards, lack of standardization on allocation of marks to cognitive levels brings the credibility of scores and grade into question (Ibid).

While reviewing the overall picture, Afzaal and Christie (2005) stated:

The present examinations provide the only gateway, and a very limited one, through which individuals must pass if they wish to progress economically and socially. Presently they function to certify completion of one level of education also to admit to a higher level or to qualify for certain jobs.

De Luca (1994) gives a summary of the positive and negative effects of examinations on the curriculum as follows. The positive effects are: raised standards through motivation of teachers and pupils; a clear statement of standard required and a common goal for students and teacher to achieve and ensuring reform of the total curriculum. There are also negative effects examinations which include: the examination being technically flawed; the examination given particular emphasis, for example becomes “high stakes” for individual students; the examination being poorly articulated with the curriculum development; and the teachers can resist the changes, for example if the change would require unreasonable workloads. Any one of these conditions might undermine an otherwise educationally-sound curriculum development. Ways in which this might be manifested include: slowing down or inhibiting curriculum development; subverting curriculum development and distorting the curriculum by teaching to the test. If the examinations are not well matched to the curriculum in terms of content, types of knowledge, ways of knowing, learning strategies, it influences how the curriculum is taught, and hinders the development of new teaching methodologies which leads to over-emphasizing the status of some subjects at the expense of others.

Excessive testing and examination can be stressful for teachers and students and can take valuable time which may be used more effectively for other forms of teaching and learning. Standardized testing which attempts to measure the whole range of skills could introduce incentives to focus teaching on testable skills, neglecting other important qualities which cannot be tested easily (CSWD, 2006). There is even some evidence that high-stakes testing can introduce incentives for outright cheating by teachers

(Woessmann, 2006). This established in the study, where some students confessed cheating in examinations. There are different forms of examination cheating in schools today. As listed by Adewale (n.d.), they include bringing in foreign materials to examination halls; irregular activities inside and outside examination hall; collusion; impersonation; leakage; mass cheating and insult/assault on supervisors. Others include assistance of candidates by invigilators to answer or have clue to difficult concepts. Some invigilators also go to the extent of answering some parts of the question for candidates. Examination malpractice is not limited to the time and place examination is taking place. There are pre-examination malpractices, and post examination malpractices. In pre-examination malpractices, candidates knowing their ability offer to give a bribe to the examiner, messenger, typist, examination officer, invigilator, or head of department so that examination materials could be leaked to them before hand (ibid). They then study the materials with the view to memorize answers to the questions raised in the examination question they had access to.

According to Olatoye (n.d), examination cheating influences students in the following ways: Discourages good candidates from studying hard: Good candidates are tempted to believe ‘If you cannot beat them, join them’ especially as they see other candidates get away with their corrupt behaviors; Discredits certificates: Employers of labor require certain skills from their employees based on the certificates they hold. These employers are disappointed when their employees perform grossly below expectation. The implication is that the employers will begin to rely more on their own tests and oral interviews than the certificates the applicants are holding in order to employ suitable

hands; Denies innocent students opportunity for admission: Many good students have been denied admission by the examination malpractices. The best brains that could help in research and development are likely to be thrown out or frustrated while seeking admission; Dominates examination planning and conduct procedures: The threat of examination malpractices on the validity of examination has made some examination bodies to give excessive attention to checking examination malpractices even at the test development stage; Delays the processing of examination scores and grades: Every year, many students are caught for engaging in various examination malpractices which needs to be investigated before results are released. Though some results are withheld pending the determination of the cases, some are decided before results are released. This extends processing time; Dissatisfies candidates: Candidates who possess certificates they cannot defend are dissatisfied (ibid).

Due to examination malpractice, effective teaching and learning is no longer taking place in many schools Olatoye (n.d). Candidates are too conscious of examinations and only want key points to pass rather than to learn. The root cause of examination malpractice is that there is poor preparation as a result of decreased level of quality teaching and learning in our schools (Akrofi, et al 2007). Proper preparation prevents poor performance. On the other hand, poor preparation promotes poor performance. Therefore, it is not surprising that junior and senior high school students perceive learning as reading textbooks, class notes and/or pamphlets, and practicing examples of concepts explained by the teacher. Particularly during senior years and when students meet in small groups for after-class discussions, these meetings usually center on examination past questions or

teacher-generated questions. Critical thinking and inquiry learning through class projects are rare and usually considered “time-wasting.” Additionally, content not listed on the external examinations syllabuses and strategies seen as not directly and expeditiously helping students cram for those examinations are deemed substandard and useless (Akrofi, et al 2007).

There is a growing phenomenon in the Kenya education sector today which is the stiff competition for good performance at all levels of education. The competition is not only between individual learners and schools but also between various geographical zones. The competition has led to a mushrooming of zonal examining panels formed by schools in a given zone or districts. By pooling resources together schools in a zone finance development of examination instruments which individual schools administer to their learners (Mwanzia and Miano, 2007). The tests target several levels, but especially those that are near the top of the secondary education cycles, since most of the panel members are drawn from teachers who mark national examinations, the tests they develop bear all the characteristics of standardized tests (Mwanzia and Miano, 2007). When the feedback from these tests is used to inform teachers’ approaches to teaching the results are always positive. Also, arising from the appointment of the most competent teachers to the panels, other teachers in the zone learn from their experience□

The end of course examinations are also seen to be wanting since they don’t cover all that is in the syllabus. Wakelyn (2008) comments that, because they have to cover several years of high school courses in a single test, the examinations can only take a superficial

sample of the standards. Assessment experts say that for a test to properly cover the standard, each standard should have at least six questions attached to it (Ibid).

Negative effects of examinations on the curriculum in general are: reduced time available for delivering the curriculum; reduced subject choice for individual students where electives are available since perceptions of subject examination difficulty can affect subject choice; increased alienation of low achievers, unless they are specifically catered for; increased uniformity/conformity; increased emphasis on the easily-measured aspects of learning at the expense of the more qualitative and social aspects of learning and increased control over the curriculum by the demands of the examination (Wakelyn, 2008). All this lead to the delivery of a substandard curriculum which does not fulfill the national goals of education.

2.8 Administration of examinations in Kenya

Internal examinations like the CATs, mocks and the zonal examinations are carried out by teachers in their respective schools. There are examination panels which set the examinations in some districts while in others teachers set them individually. The Mock examinations are given once a year. In some schools post mock and pre-mock examinations are also given.

The Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) plays a major role in the administration of national examinations like the KCPE and KCSE. It was established in 1980 by an Act of Parliament to conduct School and Post-school examination and award certificates to successful candidates. The KNEC awards certificates and diplomas to

successful candidates of public examinations. Examinations and Certification are major indicators of quality of Education. National examinations are carried out at the end of every year and are used as a yard-stick to measure the achievement of curriculum objectives. The role of the KNEC is to facilitate the setting, moderating, marking and grading of all national examinations for various levels of education in this country (Mwanzia and Miano, 2007). The council is in charge of the Primary school, Secondary schools, Teachers colleges, Technical Training Institutions, and other relevant public examinations in the country.

One of the strategies employed by KNEC to improve the quality of education in Kenya is through effective assessment. This is in line with the Mission Statement of KNEC, which is, “to objectively test and evaluate the curriculum and to enhance and safeguard globally acceptable certification standards”. This strategy is accomplished within the broad framework provided by the Council's Vision which is, "Efficient Testing for Quality Education". Efficient testing involves maintaining relevance, fairness, validity, reliability and equity in all examinations. KNEC plays a strategic role in national development since examinations and certification is central to education and training as a means of evaluating levels of achievement for further education, training and employment (Mwanzia and Miano, 2007).

To maximize the positive wash back effect of its examinations, the Council has adopted an effective reporting approach of performance of candidates. At the time of release of results a comprehensive report is issued on performance trends in all the subjects. This is soon followed by preparations of comprehensive Newsletters analyzing performance in

every subject with suggestions of how the weaknesses displayed can be rectified (Mwanzia and Miano, 2007). The targeted consumers of these reports are teachers, school managers, curriculum developers, subject inspectors, parents and other interested stakeholders (ibid).

2.9 Summary

From the literature, it is apparent that a well educated workforce endowed with the ability to think and analyze using varied reasoning and problem solving skills is an asset to any nation. However, though examinations have immense benefits when well used, they have brought about pressure on the teachers and students which have interfered with the teaching of these skills. This study established that examinations have had a negative backwash effect on the curriculum. For instance, the teachers cannot engage all the methods of instruction to attract the learners' interest in class, selection of the content is determined by examinability, integration of life skills in the various subjects was also ignored or rushed over, and unexamined subjects like P.E are not taught. The issues raised in the literature were seen to be taking place in the schools in Bomet District.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is a description of how the study was done. It details the study population and sampling technique, the development of research instruments, content validity and reliability, procedure for data collection and ethical considerations.

3.2 The location of the study

The study was carried out in Bomet District in the southern rift region of the Rift Valley Province of Kenya. The District has 72 fully fledged public and private schools. From these schools a sample was selected from the teachers and the students to respond to the research questions. The district was chosen because:

- (i) The district has a high level of school leavers who have not yet been absorbed to the job market.
- (ii) The District had the required population for the study which consisted of the different categories of schools found in Kenya. This implied that the results of the study could be generalized to the rest of Kenya.
- (iii) The available resources in terms of time, finance and human resources were inadequate for wider geographical coverage and could only facilitate the research in the district.

3.3 Population and sample

The target population was 351 form three students out of 3,949 in the district. The scheme of determining sample size was adopted from (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970). In this scheme, no calculations are needed. Instead a table is given where (N) represents the population size and (S) represents the recommended samples. (Refer to Appendix III). The sample size for teachers was 8%. This yielded 43 teachers out of 538. The data for the study was collected from the following sources:

- (i) Teachers from selected secondary schools
- (ii) Form three students selected from the sampled schools. Form Three students were selected because they have been exposed to examinations over a long period of time compared to the form ones and twos.
- (iii) Content analysis of past examination papers, teachers' handbook and the KIE syllabus.

3.3.1 Sampling Procedures

There were 72 schools in the district comprising 19 provincial schools, 48 district and 5 private. Out of the 72 schools in the district, 22 schools were selected which was 30% of the sample. The researcher used proportionate stratified sampling to select schools from the different categories in the district, that is, provincial, district and private schools. Thus 6 provincial schools were selected, 14 district and 2 private schools.

Table 3.1 Number of schools, teachers and students selected from the different categories

Type of school	No. of schools in the district	No. of schools selected	Total students population (N)	Sample size for students(n)	No. of teachers selected
Provincial	19	6(31%)	1,042	86(8.25%)	18
District	48	14(29%)	2,633	204(7.74%)	22
Private	5	2(40%)	274	30(10.94%)	3
Total	72	22(100%)	3,949	320	43

Simple random sampling was used to select the respondents from each of the schools included in the study where 351 students were selected. Out of these 351 questionnaires 331 were returned. A total of 320 questionnaires were used in the data analysis and 11 of them were not well answered therefore they were not included in the study. A total of 20 questionnaires were not returned. Random sampling was used to select students from the sampled schools in Table 3.1. The number of teachers selected was 18 from the provincial schools, 22 from the district schools and 3 from the private schools thus making a total of 43 teachers. Random sampling was also used to select teachers from the different departments in every school visited where 10 teachers were studied in the languages department, 9 in mathematics, science department 14, applied science 3 and humanities 7. In all 43 teachers participated in the study.

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Table 3.2 Teaching experience

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	less than 10 years	34	79.1
	10-19 years	8	18.6
	20 years and above	1	2.3
	Total	43	100.0

According to Table 3.2 the majority of teachers selected (79.1%), had a teaching experience of between less than 10 years. Those who had taught between 10-19 years were (18.6%) and the least were those with a teaching experience of over 20 years who were 2.3%.

3.4 Instruments of Data Collection

Questionnaires were developed for the study both for the teachers and the form three students. The questionnaires for teachers had items soliciting information about the type of school teachers are in, their department, and teaching experience. The teachers were also asked on skills they would like their students to achieve; sources they would prefer to use in planning their lessons; which syllabus they use and why; whether they think examinations facilitate the achievement of the stated curriculum goals; what type of examinations and students assessment they give their students; whether the examinations they give integrate knowledge from other subject areas; whether they think examinations are useful in gauging the learners ability; whether they plan for assessment before the

beginning of teaching; whether examinations bring about heavy workload which interferes with lessons and whether students are given time for self assessment and life application of content(Appendix I).

The questionnaire for students had items eliciting information about the type of school they are in and their gender; their feelings about various aspects of examinations; the skills they would like to achieve before the end of the course; and what material they use in revision for their examinations (Appendix II).

Both questionnaires had closed-ended and open-ended items. These items were suitable as they limit the number of responses thus helping the researcher to get relevant responses. Closed-ended questions are also easier to analyze since they are in immediate usable form (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). They are also economical to use in terms of money and time. The format of closed-ended questions has several disadvantages: Responses were limited, and the respondent was compelled to answer questions according to the researchers' choices, secondly there was a temptation on the part of the respondent to avoid serious thinking and choose the easiest alternative and provide fewer opportunities for self-expression. Due to these reasons it was necessary for the researcher to combine this format with open-ended response items which provided opportunity for self-expression.

Document analysis was also done to review the content of target materials with the aim of adducing some relevant secondary data. This technique was used to derive data from

curriculum materials such as the KIE syllabus, teachers' handbook and past examination papers.

3.5 Content Validity and Reliability

Content validity was ensured during the development of the research tools. The researcher had a discussion with her supervisors and colleagues to check whether the question items in the questionnaires could elicit the expected responses for the study.

A pilot study was also conducted in some schools in Bureti District before administering the tools. During this time, items that were found to be ambiguous and not clearly framed were revised accordingly. The test-retest method was used to establish the reliability of the questionnaires. This involved administering the instruments twice to the same respondents within an interval of two weeks. A calculation of the responses using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient(r) was done using the data obtained from the two interval administration of the instruction. The (r) value obtained for the students and teachers was 0.70 and 0.67 respectively. These values were above average, that is, 0.50 value which is the standard set by the researcher as minimum acceptable value for reliability. Hence the questionnaires were accepted as reliable for the study.

3.6 Procedure for data collection

Clearance to carry out the study was sought from the Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology. The permit obtained was further used to secure permission from the District Education Office in Bomet District to facilitate involvement of teachers and the students in the study.

Once permission was granted, the researcher administered instruments to schools in person, by introducing herself and submitting samples of the instruments together with the covering letter to the head teachers of each school. Permission was then granted by the headteachers and the researcher administered the questionnaires personally to the students and the teachers. The filled questionnaires were then collected immediately where possible. Apart from 20 questionnaires all the other questionnaires were received and hence 94.02% return rate of these tools registered.

3.7 Ethical considerations

The research proposal was approved by the department of curriculum and instructional media of Moi University. The study was conducted with the approval of the Ministry of Higher Education science and technology and the District Education Officer-Bomet and the teachers and students participating in schools. They were informed about the intention of the research, its potential benefits to the wider society and on their right to choose whether to participate or not. The respondents were informed that the questionnaire was not an examination and therefore did not need to write their names for anonymity. All personal information was kept confidential.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the analysis of data. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents are outlined. The following areas are analyzed and interpreted: The relationship between examinations conducted in secondary schools and the stated curriculum aims and objectives; influence of examinations on what is taught in schools; self assessment and application of skills and whether teachers adhere to the KIE syllabus.

The purpose of this research was to find out the influence of examinations on curriculum implementation in Bomet District. The objectives of the study were: to establish the relationship between examinations conducted in secondary schools and the stated curriculum goals; to investigate the influence of examinations on what is taught in secondary schools and to establish whether students are given opportunity for self-assessment and the application of life skills; to establish whether teachers adhere to the KIE syllabus. The sample of this study composed of 363 subjects who included teachers and students.

Table 4.2 Analysis of skills that teachers would like their students to achieve

	Valid	Preferred	Undecided	Less preferred
Skills to pass exams	43	42(97.7%)	–	1(2.3%)
Problem solving and application skills	43	40(93.0%)	1(2.3%)	2(4.6%)
Decision making skills	43	35(81.4%)	4(9.3%)	4(9.3%)
Disaster preparedness skills	43	27(62.8%)	6(14.0%)	10(23.2%)
Desirable moral standards	43	39(90.7%)	2(4.7%)	2(4.6%)
Mastery of languages	43	37(86.0%)	–	6(14.0%)
Critical thinking	43	37(86.0%)	2(4.7%)	4(9.3%)

The study sought to establish if there was a relationship between examinations and the stated curriculum goals. Table 4.2 shows the teachers responses on the skills they plan to

instill in their students. It was revealed that 42 teachers (97.7 %) preferred skills to pass exams. As for the problem solving and application skills, out of the 43 teachers 40 (93.0%), preferred it, while 35(81.4%) teachers preferred decision making skills. For disaster preparedness skills, 27 out of 43 teachers (62.8%) preferred. Out of 43 teachers 39 (90.7%) preferred desirable moral standards. As for mastery of language 36 teachers (86.0%) preferred and 37 (86.0%) teachers also preferred skills on critical thinking. This shows that most of the teachers preferred the students to achieve skills to pass examinations compared to other skill which is contrary to the intended goals of education. An example of these goals is to provide the learners with the necessary skills and attitudes for national development. These skills include critical thinking, disaster preparedness, decision making and others. This implies that the teachers might focus on skills to pass examinations at the expense of other equally important skills. Pressure on teachers to perform makes teachers to concentrate on preparing students majorly for the examinations. As Rehemani (2003) says, the pressure for passing examinations make teachers to switch their teaching methods to mainly the lecture method and adopt teacher centered approaches to teaching, some even rely on model test paper guides available in the markets. This works negatively against the set goals of education which are to acquire skills and competencies for the later years of education and for life. According to Bedford (n.d.), teachers should choose standards as assessment tools rather than making them the driving focus. This would lead to a more balanced approach across the skills and a return to more communicative teaching and learning practice. From the survey, the skills were not entirely neglected but that while these skills were less regarded, they were also less emphasized.

Table 4.3 Skills students would like to achieve

	Valid	Preferred	Undecided	Less preferred
Skills to pass exams	320	312(97.5%)	2(0.6%)	6(1.9%)
Problem solving and application skills	320	301(94.1%)	9(2.8%)	10(3.1%)
Decision making skills	320	289(90.4%)	19(5.9%)	12(3.7%)
Disaster preparedness skills	320	148(46.8%)	65(20.3%)	106(33.2%)
Desirable moral standards	320	305(95.3%)	6(1.9%)	9(2.8%)
Mastery of languages	320	275(85.9%)	19(5.9%)	26(8.1%)
Critical thinking	320	295(92.2%)	13(4.1%)	12(3.8%)

In the student's response majority 312 (97.5%) students showed interest in skills to pass examinations which indicate how much they valued passing examinations. For the problem solving and application skills, 301(94.2%) students preferred while 289 (90.04%) preferred decision making skills. Disaster preparedness skills had 148 (46.8%) students who preferred and 305 (95.3%) who preferred desirable moral standards. As for mastery of language 275 (85.9%) students preferred it and 295 (92.2%) students' preferred critical thinking as illustrated in Table 4.3. Therefore it can be deduced from the findings that, students prioritized skills to pass examinations which is good evidence for a

backwash effect. This shows that the presence of examinations has changed the students' attitudes to skill acquisition. Due to examination pressure students adopt surface approach to learning as they are expected to memorize the contents of prescribed textbooks; they look for shortcuts to learning and also use such guides, (Rehemani,2003).In such a situation, little consideration is paid to understanding and comprehension. Such approaches to teaching and learning cannot help in developing problem solving or thinking skills to develop understanding in a holistic way rather it atomizes knowledge.

Table 4.4 Syllabus used by teachers

	Frequency	Percent
KIE	35	81.4
KNEC	3	7.0
Both	5	11.6
Total	43	100.0

The syllabus has been designed to guide the teachers on what to teach in school. From the study, it was discerned that majority of teachers 35(81.4%) used the KIE syllabus, 3 (7.0%) used the KNEC syllabus and those who used both were 5(11.6%) (Table 4.4). The syllabus is important since it ensures uniformity in the implementation of the curriculum. However the presence of teachers who use both the KIE and the KNEC syllabuses shows some influence of examinations on the teaching in schools. The teachers would like to sensitize the learners on the requirements of examinations for them to pass the examinations. These teachers would stress the topics found in the KNEC syllabus and

ignore or give minimal attention to other topics that are not highlighted in this syllabus. This is a disadvantage to the students since they are supposed to get all the knowledge planned for in the recommended syllabus for teaching.

Table 4.5 Analysis of reasons why teachers use particular syllabus

	Frequency	Percent
KIE is recommended by the ministry of Education	13	30.2
KIE enables the achievement of education goals	5	11.6
KIE is broader, deeper and up-to-date	9	20.9
Use KNEC for students to pass exams	12	27.9
Both are used for comparison	4	9.3
Total	43	100.0

The teachers had different reasons why they choose to use the various syllabuses available. As shown in Table 4.5, 13(30.2%) teachers preferred the KIE syllabus because it is recommended by the ministry of education to enable the achievement of the education goals. Those that preferred to use the KIE syllabuses because it enables achievement of education goals were 5(11.6%) out of the 43 teachers. Quite a number of teachers 9(20.9%) used the KIE because according to them, it is broader and deeper. A considerable number of teachers 12(27.9%) said they used the KNEC syllabus for students to pass exams. Those who used both the syllabuses were 4(9.3%) out of the 43 teachers and their main reason was for comparison. The K.I.E. syllabus guides the

teacher on what to teach and how to teach but examinations makes the teacher compromise on the methods of teaching and what he teaches. Mercurio (2008) explains the situation that for the teacher: public examinations constrain him to watch the examiner's foibles and note idiosyncrasies rather than to teach as he thinks a subject requires; encourage him to impart information in too digested a form, or to select groups of facts of the subject to be learnt by rote rather than to be understood; predispose him to set too much value on a particular type of mental development which secures success in examinations; make it important to him to excel in teaching the examinable side of his professional work; and constrain him to concentrate on a definite syllabus and place a barrier in the way of experimentation'.

This shows that the examinations actually influenced what the teachers teach in class. It makes them ignore what has been planned for them to teach and focus on what the examinations require. This makes the students graduate from the particular level without the full knowledge they are expected to acquire. The result of such a situation is that since the students are not well prepared, they might have difficulty in pursuing the other levels of the academic ladder ahead of them.

Table 4.6 Resources that teachers would prefer to use in teaching and revision

	Teachers			
	Preferred	Undecided	Less preferred	Total
Textbooks	41(95.3%)	–	2(4.7%)	43
Resource materials	38(88.4%)	–	5(11.7%)	43

Model test papers	20(46.5%)	2(4.7%)	21(48.9%)	43
Consulting subject specialists	19(44.2%)	7(16.3%)	17(39.6%)	43

It was revealed that most teachers 41(95.3%) preferred text books followed by resource materials which had 38(88.4%) who preferred them. The study also found out that almost half of the teachers 20(46.5%) used model test papers and as for consulting subject specialist in their revision 19(44.2%) teachers preferred as illustrated in Table 4.6. The use of model test papers and selected resource materials leads to rote memorization of the few topics suspected to be examined. According to Chan, et al. (2006), this limits the acquisition of generic skills which cannot be measured by paper and pencil tests.

The teachers spent most of their time teaching the content of the textbooks because their students' ability was tested by the various tests and examinations in the schools. The content of the textbooks was the focus of the test. The teachers expressed that the instructional time they were given, did not allow them to cover the content of every lesson. Therefore they sometimes had to use their students' extracurricular time for reviews or quizzes after finishing a lesson in order to promote or diagnose their students' learning. In addition, most create time in the morning, evening, weekends and during vocation. This continuous teaching did not allow students to have their own personal studies which enable them to internalize what they have learnt and to be creative. Some teachers indicated that they hardly had any activities other than lectures and drills in their

teaching. Teachers said that time constraint was the major reason why they were not able to have more communication-based activities.

Many teachers also used resource materials. These are books which are written by other teachers especially those who are examiners with the KNEC. These books focus mainly on examinations. Most of them have examination questions on the various topics and how they can be answered. They also highlight the challenges that have been experienced in the past examinations and how they can be tackled. These books are used mainly by the teachers to drill the students during revision which shows the influence of examinations on teaching.

Table 4.7 Resources students prefer to use in their revision

Resource materials	Students responses	
	preferred	Less preferred
Textbooks	242(75.6%)	63(19.7%)
Model Test papers	280(87.8%)	30(9.4%)

Consulting Teachers	262(82.1%)	42(13.1%)
Lesson notes	273(85.3%)	35(11.0%)
Group discussions	267(83.4%)	41(12.8%)

A majority of the students 280(87.8%), preferred using test papers in their revision which showed the influence of examinations on students learning. Lesson notes were preferred by 273(82.1%) and 267(83.4%) students preferred having group discussions for revision as is shown on Table 4.7. Most of the students 262(82.1%) preferred consulting teachers while the use of text books for revision were the least used in this category. This shows that the students did not have time to do independent studies from the recommended textbooks. Independent studies allow students to find knowledge on their own and apply to life situations. Skills like problem solving and critical thinking are acquired when students do research on their own from textbooks. From the study, this was not achieved since students relied majorly on lesson notes and model test papers for revision. When students rely only on the teachers to give them lesson notes for their studies, they tend to get used to reproduce other people's ideas' which hinders enduring learning. This favors a somewhat passive type of mind interested in absorbing information and encourages

little attainment rather than the recognition of the need to improve understanding (Mercurio 2008).

Table 4.8 Other resources students prefer using for revision

	Frequency	Percent
Revision books	15	4.7
Summary notebooks	7	2.2
Leakage	4	1.3
Timetable	18	5.6
None of the above	276	86.3
Total	320	100.0

In Table 4.8 are other materials used by the students for revision and independent learning. These are revision books, summary notebooks, timetables and even some waited for examination leakages. This implied that examinations had a lot of influence on what the students used for revision. Instead of the recommended textbooks, student's preferred revision textbooks which contain majorly question and answers. From these books they would memorize what is predicted to be examined. Examination leakage is where students get the examination questions before the onset of examinations. They then study the materials with the view to memorize answers to the questions raised in the examination question they had access to. This is an unfortunate situation since it makes the examination loose its credibility. This discourages the bright candidates from studying leading to mental anguish, financial drain and loss of confidence among the

certificate holders. A total of 276 students did not have other sources of material for revision. This shows that they did not try to search for other means of learning and revision but relied on what the teachers recommended.

Table 4.9 Type of school verses other sources students would prefer for revision.

		Other sources students would prefer using for revision					Total
		Revision books	Summary notebooks	Leakage	Timetable	None of the above	
Type of school	province	6	3	1	5	131	146
	district	7	4	3	12	112	138
	private	2	0	0	1	33	36
Total		15	7	4	18	276	320

From the analysis in Table 4.9, it was revealed that more students, (7) from the district schools used revision text books compared to those in the private schools who were only two. These are revision books other than the text books recommended by KIE for various subjects. These books contain majorly past examination questions and their answers. This could be due to pressure to pass examinations given that students from district schools are low achievers as elucidated from their entry behaviour. They therefore dwell more on revision to pass exams than on acquiring skills for further learning or for life. This could also be the reason why students from the district schools also had the majority who admitted access to examination leakage.

Table 4.10 Type of Examinations and Assessment given by teachers

	Often	sometimes	Undecided	Rarely	Never	Total
CATs	37(86.0%)	5(11.6%)	–	–	1(2.3%)	43
Quizzes	26(60.5%)	14(32.6%)	–	–	3(7.0%)	43
Interviews	1(2.3%)	10(23.3%)	4(9.3%)	17(39.5%)	11(25.6%)	43
Oral examinations	10(23.3%)	14(32.6%)	1(2.3%)	8(18.6%)	10(23.3%)	43
End term Examinations	39(90.7%)	4(9.3%)	–	–	–	43
Projects	3(7.0%)	19(44.2%)	1(2.3%)	14(36.6%)	6(14.0%)	43

As for examinations and assessments, it was established that out of the 43 teachers, 37(86.0%) often gave CATs, 26(60.5%) gave quizzes, 1 teacher 2.3% used interviews often to test understanding while 65.1% never. It was also clear from Table 4.10 that 53.5% teachers rarely used projects to examine students, 58.1% rarely gave oral examinations and the majority 90.7% gave end term examination. From this information, it was revealed that most teachers gave end term exams, CATs and quizzes unlike other methods which are equally important. It was revealed that interviews and projects were rarely used and yet they are important learner centered approaches to instruction. These approaches enable the learner to acquire and master concepts in a practical manner hence leading to understanding. When projects are removed from assessment and examinations it limits the scope of instruction. It was revealed that schools rarely felt the need to teach by project method, even though it remained an important part of the national curriculum. If teachers are to cover the whole curriculum, then examinations must cover the curriculum. The frequent use of CATs and End of term examinations lead to cramming of

various examination questions and in some cases practicing the test. The teachers used CATs and quizzes to drill the students on how to answer examination questions and to master certain concepts which are thought to be examined.

Table 4.11 Analysis of examinations preferred in the different categories of schools

		Often	Undecided	Rarely	Total
CATs	provincial	21	0	1	43
	district	18	0	0	
	private	3	0	0	
Quizzes	provincial	20	0	2	43
	district	17	0	1	
	private	3	0	0	
Interviews	provincial	13	2	7	43
	district	12	2	4	
	private	3	0	0	
Oral examinations	provincial	12	0	10	43
	district	12	1	5	
	private	0	0	3	
End term Examinations	provincial	22	0	0	43
	district	18	0	0	
	private	3	0	0	
Projects	provincial	10	0	12	43
	district	10	1	7	
	private	2	0	1	

From Table 4.11 it can be deduced that all schools in all categories give CATs and quizzes in their assessments. Teachers from the private schools used interviews quite often compared to those in the provincial and district schools. This could be because the student population in the private schools is lower compared to the district and provincial schools. This therefore enables the teachers to give individual attention of the students focusing on improving their performance. More than half of the teachers in the provincial and district schools used oral examinations compared to those in the private schools who rarely gave oral examinations. In the provincial schools more than half of the teachers (12) rarely gave project work to their students while in the district and private schools the majority gave. The reason for this could be the time constraint in a bid to prepare for examinations. Project work is very important since it allows the students to seek knowledge independently. Since it takes a lot of time and commitment, teachers tend to ignore it.

Table 4.12 Examinations and integration of knowledge from other subject areas

(Tests done on departmental level)

	Do your examinations integrate knowledge from other subject areas			
Department	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
Languages	3	6	1	10
Mathematics	7	2	0	9
Sciences	8	6	0	14
Applied sciences	1	2	0	3
Humanities	1	6	0	7
Total	20	22	1	43

It was established that some teachers in some departments integrated knowledge from other subject areas in their teaching than others. This is seen in Table 4.12 where 8 teachers in the sciences department integrated knowledge from other subject areas while in the applied sciences and humanities 1 in each case integrated knowledge from other subject areas. In general, 20 teachers embraced the idea of integration and often practiced it while 22 teachers only integrated knowledge sometimes. This is a disadvantage to the students since they need to relate knowledge from one subject to another. The lack of integration among subjects brings confusion to the learners which make learning a complex issue. The integration of knowledge from other subjects is an important aspect of the school curriculum. The teachers in their teaching are required to integrate knowledge so as to enable students to grasp concepts in a holistic manner.

Table 4.13 Teachers views on examinations

	Totals	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
Examinations are useful in distinguishing the learners potential	43	39(90.7%)	1(2.3%)	3(7.0%)
Examinations are the only way of gauging Students ability	43	13(30.3%)	3(7.0%)	27(62.8%)
Examinations are set from the content taught	43	38(88.4%)	1(2.3%)	4(9.3%)
Examinations should be abolished and different ways of rating students be established	43	11(25.6%)	8(18.6%)	24(55.8%)
I plan for assessment before the beginning of teaching	43	26(60.4%)	4(9.3%)	13(30.3%)

The data in Table 4.13 indicates that out of the 43 teachers, (90.7%) agreed that examinations are useful in distinguishing the learners' potential. However (62.8%) felt that examinations were not the only way of gauging students' ability. The majority of teachers, (88.4%) agreed that examinations were set from the content taught. Despite the pressure from examinations, the majority of teachers 24(55.8%) still felt that examinations should not be abolished and different ways of rating students be established. These revealed teachers still saw the importance of examinations on the school system. On the other hand, it was revealed that most teachers 26(69.4%), planned for assessment before the beginning of teaching which could easily affect what is taught in class since teachers would teach what they have planned to test.

Table 4.14 Teachers views on examinations compared to their teaching experience

	Teaching experience	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Totals
Examinations are useful in distinguishing the learners potential	Less than 9 years.	30	1	3	43
	10-19 years	8	0	0	
	Above 20 years.	1	0	0	
Examinations are the only way of gauging Students ability	Less than 9 years.	9	2	23	43
	10-19 years	5	1	3	
	Above 20 years.	0	0	1	
Examinations are set from the content taught	Less than 9 years.	29	1	4	43
	10-19 years	8	0	0	
	Above 20 years.	1	0	0	
Examinations should be abolished and different ways of rating students be established	Less than 9 years.	10	8	16	43
	10-19 years	1	0	7	
	Above 20 years.	0	0	1	
I plan for assessment before the beginning of teaching	Less than 9 years.	21	3	10	43
	10-19 years	4	1	3	
	Above 20 years.	1	0	0	

It can be established from Table 4.14 that a majority of teachers in all the levels of the teaching experience felt that examinations are useful in distinguishing the learners'

potential. Among the teachers with less than 9 years teaching experience and those above 20 years, a majority (23) and (1) respectively disagreed that examinations were the only way of gauging students' ability. From their experience, they felt that there are other ways of establishing students' ability like in co-curricula activities. The majority in all categories set examinations from the content taught and plan for assessment before teaching. This shows that it is possible for examinations to influence what is taught in class.

Table 4.15 Students self assessment and internalization of life skills

	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Total
There are too many examinations in the School programme.	202 (63.2%)	19(5.9%)	99(30.9%)	320
The examinations are good for us	4(1.3%)	2(0.6%)	314(98.1%)	320
There is no time to apply and practice what is learnt in class	201(63%)	18(5.6%)	101(31.7%)	320
Due to exam pressure, cramming is a Must	197(61.6%)	19(5.9%)	104(32.5%)	320

When teaching, a teacher basically has to be careful in choosing the teaching methods in order to be effective. For instance in teaching History and Government a teacher has to use the expository method where the teacher exposes knowledge to the learners and the heuristic approach where the learners are encouraged to find information on their own among other methods. However due to examinations students have very little time to internalize the knowledge they have been exposed to and to find information on their own as shown in Table 4.15. It was revealed that out of 320 students, 201(63%) agreed that

there was no time to apply and practice what is learnt in class. This could be the reason why a majority, 314(98.1%) students felt that examinations were not good for them. It is sad to report that out of the 320 students 61.6 %(197) said that due to examination pressure cramming was a must. There was a general feeling among the students that there were too many examinations in the school programme. Cramming for examinations has adverse effects on learning. According to Akrofi, et al (2007), school instruction that generally stresses memorization of text and recall of information, de-emphasizes creativity and responsibility for constructing learning, and minimizes ability to connect school information to “a wider world of understanding and thoughtfulness”. This is dangerous for the education system since crammed knowledge is short lived. The memorized knowledge goes against students learning hence incompetent students graduate from the school system.

Table 4.16 Teachers response on effects of examinations on students self assessment and application of knowledge

	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Total
Due to examinations, little is done to test for understanding	25(58.1%)	4(9.3%)	14(32.5%)	43
Examinations encourage cramming of content	33(76.7%)	6(14.0%)	4(9.3%)	43
Teachers rush to cover the syllabus	39(90.7%)	1(2.3%)	3(7.0%)	43
Self assessment and application of content is not adequately done	33(76.7%)	5(11.6%)	5(11.6%)	43
All free lessons and prep time are used to teach those subjects that are	25(58%)	3(7.0%)	15(34.9%)	43

behind in the syllabus				
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Table 4.16 illustrates the effects of examinations on students self assessment and application of knowledge. It was revealed that out of the 43 teachers, 25 agreed that due to examinations, little was done to test for understanding. A majority of teachers 33(76.7%) also feared that examinations encourage cramming of content which affect learning. It was also revealed that teachers rush to cover the syllabus and hence little attention is given to students grasping of knowledge. Self assessment and application of content was not adequately done as was said by 76.7% of the teachers according to Table 4.16. It was also revealed by 25(58%) teachers that all the free lessons and prep time were used to teach those subjects that are behind in the syllabus. This scenario does not allow students time to do their own independent studies which enable them to acquire and internalize knowledge which will last since every time; a teacher is in class to drill them for examinations. Students are therefore at a loss since they don't get time for physical education and personal study which make them all round students.

Table 4.17 Effects of examinations on the school programme

	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Total
There are too many examinations in the school programme	23(53.5%)	1(2.3%)	19(44.2%)	43
Marking of examinations bring about Heavy workload thus interfering with lessons	32(74.4%)	1(2.3%)	10(23.2%)	43

Examinations force teachers to rush with the syllabus in order to have time for revision	39(90.7%)	1(2.3%)	3(7.0%)	43
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A significant number of teachers, 23(53.5%) agreed that there were too many examinations in the school programme as shown in Table 4.17. It was also revealed that, 32 (74.4%) teachers agreed that marking of examinations brought about heavy workload thus interfering with lessons. Most of them, 39 (90.7%) agreed that examinations force teachers to rush with the syllabus in order to have time for revision. Rushing in teaching is a disadvantage to the weak students who may be left behind thus discouraging them and making them loose hope in education. Rushing with the syllabus also creates a situation where some teachers give partial attention to some topics while ignoring others altogether. These deny the learners knowledge which they are supposed to acquire from school. Excessive testing and examination can be stressful for teachers who use valuable time which may be used more effectively for other forms of teaching and learning like discussions, giving projects and others, to drill the learners.

4.9 Document analysis

The secondary school curriculum aims at preparing the Kenyan youth to play an effective and productive role in life of the nation (KIE, 2006). In addition, the national goals of education aims at producing school leavers equipped with skills so as to engage in gainful employment after school or to have an opportunity for further studies. The researcher therefore analyzed the syllabus and various past school based and K.C.S.E examination papers. This was done to find out whether teachers abided with the education goals by

stressing the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge relevant for career development and for life. It was also to test whether examinations were in harmony with the basic goals of education.

4.9.1 Content Analysis of the Syllabus

In the syllabus, teachers are supposed to integrate emerging issues in their teaching subjects. These are issues like HIV and Aids, drugs and disaster preparedness. This is intended to help the learners make wise decisions in matters of their sexuality and health. Other vices include corruption, cultural decay, child labor and gender disparities. Due to the wide syllabus that need to be covered and the short time before the examinations, teachers ignore these subtopics. This makes the students unprepared in such skills for challenges that may come in life outside school.

4.9.2 Content Analysis of Past Examination Papers

For effective assessment, a teacher needs to use different assessment tools or instruments to evaluate the learners' achievement on set objectives. Blooms Taxonomy (as cited by Tedi, 1996), suggests six major categories of intellectual developments. This include; Knowledge which involves remembering facts, events, or concepts; Comprehension which calls for understanding, perceiving and grasping insights; Application where the learner is expected to use information in a particular situation which calls for some creativity; Analysis where the learner is to break down episodes into related components; Synthesis which involves combining facts ,views or viewpoints to form a coherent whole and Evaluation which is the highest level of development and enables the learner to make judgment, assessment and draw conclusions. However, from the sampled 2008 KCSE History and Government paper 1 examination past paper (Appendix IV), it was discovered that the questions set were mostly based on knowledge which required the learners to recall what they had been taught. The questions required the students to state,

name, give, and identify with only a quarter of the questions requiring the learner to explain and describe. According to Afzaal and Christie (2005), the examinations focus on a narrow range of low-level skills and are dominated by the content of the approved textbooks.

This was in line with the findings of Miano & Mwanzia (2007) that even where teachers use written tests, many of the tests they develop are wanting in quality. The tests are usually wanting in originality of style, clarity of language and abilities tested. Some teachers do not even bother to develop their own tests. Instead they simply lift questions from past national examinations or from commercial publications (Ibid). This brought about the danger of cramming for examinations and hence lacking enduring understanding. The crammed content always has a short lifespan hence when the student goes for further studies or work, they become incompetent. From the above analysis, it is evident that examinations make teachers to digress from the actual goals and objectives of the school system. The teachers switch to teaching methods which are less time consuming, the use of various teaching resources is also limited and the assessment questions set are also wanting in quality. This shows how the thinking in favour of examinations has made the education stakeholders compromise the quality of education.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is a discussion of the findings presented in the previous chapter in line with research objectives. The chapter includes the conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

The purpose of this study was to establish the effects of examinations on curriculum implementation. The collection of data for this study was done by questionnaires, interview, and document analysis. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. Summary of the findings are given at the end of chapter four of this report. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: To establish the relationship between examinations conducted in secondary schools and the stated curriculum goals; investigate the influence of examinations on the content and skills taught in secondary schools; establish whether students are given opportunity for self assessment and the application of life skills and to establish whether teachers adhere to the KIE syllabus.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

This chapter presented and analyzed data. The organization of data was in such a way that related information obtained was analyzed and reported together. Characteristics of the sample were presented first to facilitate analysis and reporting. To adequately address the research problem, data were analyzed and reported under the following headings: Social demographic characteristics of respondents, relationship between examinations

conducted in secondary schools and the stated curriculum goals, influence of examinations on what is taught in schools, self assessment and life application skills' and teacher adherence to the KIE syllabus. The following were the findings of the study:

1. Most teachers and students preferred skills to pass examinations compared to other skills required by the education goals. Majority of students were not aware of what skills like decision making, critical thinking, and disaster preparedness among others were. This implied they were not optimally taught.
2. The majority of teachers used the KIE syllabus while a few of them used the KNEC syllabus for better performance in examinations. This showed influence of examination on curriculum implementation.
3. Model test papers and revision books were used to a great extent in revision by both teachers and students.
4. Other students admitted getting examination leakages and using them in revision.
5. Due to examination pressure, students crammed a lot to pass examinations. CATs, quizzes and end term examinations were mostly used to test students. Oral tests, projects and interviews were rarely used to test the students.
6. The majority of teachers plan for assessment before teaching. Self assessment and life application skills were not adequately done since time that should otherwise be left for students to apply skills acquired is used by the teachers to cover the syllabus.
7. In the school programme examinations are too many. Marking examinations bring about heavy workload which interferes with lessons. Examinations force teachers to rush with the syllabus in order to have time for revision. Due to many examinations,

little is done to test students understanding. Students felt that examinations were not good for them.

5.3 Examinations and skills stated in the curriculum goals

Any nation desires to have a well educated workforce with the ability to think and analyze, using varied reasoning and problem solving skills in an integrated manner. This is necessary for national development. Basically, every subject in the school system should be able to provide skills like critical thinking, disaster preparedness, desirable moral standards, problem solving skills, positive attitudes, mutual respect and many others. However, it was generally observed that most teachers and students preferred skills to pass examinations compared to other skills required by the education goals. According to Policy View (2008), the over-emphasis on examinations has limited schemes for making learning and training programmes practical-oriented. The learners are taught content that is predicted to be examined while sometimes the same content is repeated several times for the students to memorize. This was evidenced by the students indicating that they have to cramme in preparation for examinations. From the study, pressure to pass examinations had a greater influence in the skills one would desire to impart in the learners. It was also evident from the responses that most students were not aware of what these skills were. This showed that they had not been taught about them. Due to examination pressure, it was revealed that teachers taught the various skills last in the syllabus instead of integrating them in the various topics. According to Khalid (2007), the repercussion of this is that teachers would think that they would only have to deal with mathematical thinking and problem solving last, after they have completed the

topics and not to weave these skills throughout the syllabus. The learner therefore needs to learn the skill of Mathematical thinking in Mathematics and not just to calculate sums but to build a long term strong foundation on mathematical concepts which will be useful to them in future. Mathematics as a subject is applicable in many areas of further learning and also in life therefore when the skill is learnt and internalized it is an asset to the learner.

5.4 Adherence to the KIE syllabus

The study found out that the main aims of education stated in broad terms and the specific objectives and course content in the KIE syllabus were not in harmony with what was on the ground since the teachers were focusing on the examinations other than goals of education. According to KIE (2006), Kenya can be part of the Industrial and Technological Development if our education system deliberately focuses on knowledge, skills and attitudes that will prepare the youths for the changing global trends. The various class activities and teaching methods suggested in the KIE syllabus for different subjects are supposed to inculcate different skills in the students. However the teachers go for the easy methods of teaching like the lecture method which are less demanding and which consume less time.

The study found out that the majority of teachers used the KIE syllabus while a few of them used the KNEC syllabus for better performance in examinations. The KIE syllabus outlines the Education goals and objectives, teaching content, methodology, teaching and learning resources and advices on methods of assessment. The content to be taught in

each class should be exhausted but it was found out that some areas of the content were left out for example disaster preparedness skills and critical thinking. The teachers also used particular methods of teaching and leaving out others like debates, question and answer and role play because they are seen to be time consuming. Employing the varied teaching methods during the lesson emphasize active and creative learning and stimulate the learners curiosity to learn.

Many teachers also revealed that they use the KNEC syllabus so that the students could pass the examinations. The KNEC syllabus is intended to guide the teacher on areas where the examinations will be set. This influences some teachers to only dwell on these areas in their teaching and hence ignoring those important areas like the acquisition of skills which may not be tested by paper and pencil. The Ministry of Education has designed a secondary school syllabus through the KIE which is organized according to subjects. The KIE has also designed teachers' handbooks which facilitate interpretation of the syllabus, as well as suggesting appropriate teaching methods, and providing guidelines on time management.

Some school administrators are interested in good results in order to boost their school image. In these schools, teachers mentioned that they are forced to complete teaching of the whole syllabus in July. The rest of the months until end of October are used for revision which involves activities like practicing the past-year examination papers again and again. This also forced them to use time meant for the unexamined subjects like P.E to teach other subjects. This is contrary to the KIE plan where P.E though not examined,

is an equally important subject and hence compulsory for all classes. Therefore, though the teachers follow the KIE schedule they find “shortcuts” on the way in order to clear the syllabus early. In conclusion therefore the teachers do not fully adhere to the KIE syllabus. In fact some teachers use the KNEC syllabus for better performance in examinations.

5.5 Use of model test Papers

KIE has also recommended certain teaching/learning materials which are available for teachers in all subjects in the schools. The teachers are expected to use their innovativeness and creativity in organizing the teaching/learning resources for instance they are supposed to source materials from the environment where learning materials are expensive, update textbook information by reading other printed materials such as newspapers, magazines, journals and reviews and to guide learners on how to use textbooks for note making and written assignments. The study showed that model test papers were used to a great extent in revision by both teachers and students together with revision books instead of the recommended teaching and learning resources like textbooks, reference books, journals etc. Teachers rushed to complete the syllabus early so that they could start drilling students using the model test papers and revision books geared towards examinations. In such a situation, there is no time to assess the students understanding. Moreover, not being exposed to other kinds of teaching like teaching through problem-solving makes them think that the best way to learn is by rote memorization. This backwash effect is not favorable for the students learning as transmission, delivery and drilling constitutes major classroom activities. These findings

show that examinations influence what is taught in schools and what resources are used. This leads to poor educational foundation of the students hence difficulties in later stages of learning. Research shows that, in all systems, a poor early education experience has serious consequences at later stages in life and that policy makers need to ensure that there are systems to reduce early failure and/or provide alternative routes to skill acquisition (CSWD, 2006).

5.6 Examination Leakages

Woessmann (2003), found out that high-stakes testing may introduce incentives for cheating. This could be the reason why other students admitted getting examination leakages and using them in revision. This showed that the student did not take time to learn and understand since they would get the examination questions in advance after all. Cases of cheating in national examinations due to poor management of the processes is an unfair practice since the leaked papers give some students and schools an unfair advantage over others. This works against the education goal of fostering social equality and responsibility. Moreover, students who get leakages don't see the need of learning which is also contrary to the aim of the education system to deliberately focus on knowledge skills and attitudes that will prepare the youth for the changing global trends. Some of the students who score highly due to this leakages find it difficult to cope with the challenges of the higher levels in the academic ladder.

5.7 Students self assessment and application of life skills

The road to true learning is thinking. Yet, children have no spare time to engage in this necessary practice, known for creation of knowledge, development of social skills and

cognitive growth (Policy View, 2008). Time that is meant for students self assessment and application of what they have learnt is used by teachers to cover the syllabus. This is why the students resorted to cramming of the content in order to pass the examinations. According to Wiggins & McTighe (1999), the education goals and aims have to be met in order to make the education system valid. The learner should be able to understand what he/she has learnt in school such that he/she can remember long after school. This means what learners learn in school should help them when they go for further studies, for employment and even life after school.

5.8 Methods of assessment

Assessment is an essential element in the teaching and learning encounter as it enables the teacher to evaluate the level and extent of learner achievement on set objectives. Each assessment method suggested has its advantages and hence it is important for the teacher to use them. According to (Chan, et al 2006), assessment is highlighted as both the processes for instance inquiring, independent learning, use of generic skills, reflections and the products of learning which is knowledge/concepts, problem-solving and capabilities are important by the assessment methods most suited to them like oral tests for oral communication, discussion for collaboration, presentation/performance for creativity, tests and examinations for knowledge. However methods like projects, oral tests and presentations which a teacher should use on a continuous basis to assess the learners' progress during the lesson are rarely done. Instead, assessment methods like CATs, quizzes and end term examinations are often used by the teachers. The reasons given for this biased approach is lack of time to cover the syllabus before the beginning

of examinations. Methods like projects which give the learner a chance to learn concepts practically, are seen to be time consuming.

5.9 Assessment and Teaching

Teachers plan for assessment before teaching therefore most teachers teach for examinations especially for the internal examinations. Teachers also tend to give more attention to topics which they suspect might appear in the exams. Many schools did not go with the time plan offered in the syllabus for instance some topics meant to be tackled in form three are taught in form one. This is unfair to the form one students who could not grasp the concepts in these topics.

5.10 Too many Examinations

The teachers therefore did not have the freedom to teach all that is intended in the school goals and objectives. It was also revealed that examinations were too many in the school program. This brought about the heavy workload of marking which had deadlines hence it interfered with lessons and teacher creativity. Examinations made teachers to concentrate more on teaching and marking exams other than ensuring understanding of the students. Due to this pressure, teachers felt examinations were not the only way of gauging the students' ability.

5.11 Conclusion

From the findings and discussion, it was concluded that examinations have had a negative influence on curriculum implementation. The examinations have played a central role in the entire school programme influencing each activity that took place in the school. As a

result of pressure due to examinations the teachers cannot engage all the methods of instruction to attract the learners' interest in class. Teacher centered methods like the lecture methods are used at the expense of the learners' understanding. Examinations also made teachers to be selective in the content to be taught. For instance predicted topics were taught while the rest were either done partially or completely left out. Integration of life skills in the various subjects were also ignored or rushed over when all the other "important" topics have been dealt with. The unexamined subjects like P.E were also not taught. This shows that examinations have influence on curriculum implementation.

5.12 Recommendations

1. The Ministry of Education should attempt emphasize formative evaluation more than the summative. Thus the MOE should initiate and enact a policy to integrate continuous assessment in the final evaluation of student achievement.
2. The examination setters should also attempt to set balanced examination papers. Thus the examination should include all areas that have been planned for in the objectives of the school program. This will make the students and teachers take seriously every aspect of the school curriculum.
3. Since the purpose of education is to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes for the development of the self and the nation, teachers should not prepare students just to pass examinations but also to be innovative, creative, and imaginative. To achieve this, teaching methods like debates, fieldtrips and inviting resource persons should be taken seriously to allow the students to be exposed to the world and to think critically.

4. The Ministry of Education should launch a campaign to sensitize the students and all the education stakeholders about the importance of the stated goals of education. This will ensure that the students and teachers are not pressurized to perform well only in examinations, but also to acquire other important skills.
5. Teachers should be given in-service courses where they will learn and practice the challenging instruction of teaching students analytical and reasoning skills and to apply content knowledge that prepares them for further studies.
6. The KNEC should change the nature of test from testing pupils on questions requiring procedural skills alone to questions that require thinking skills and problem-solving.

5.13 Suggestion for Further Research

1. Education is a very important aspect in the life of a nation since it gives an opportunity to our youths to thrive in many areas of life. A detailed study into the influence of examinations on students' attitudes towards learning would be useful to help many young people who loose hope and interest in education.
2. A study should also be carried out on the effects of examinations on students' subject selection in secondary schools.
3. It is also important to study the effects of rote learning on students' retention of knowledge after the examinations.

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APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

This study aims to establish the effects of examinations on curriculum implementation in secondary schools .All information will be treated with strict confidence. Do not write your name or identification on this questionnaire .Answer all questions as indicated by either filling in the blanks or ticking the options that applies.

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS.

1. Type of school

Provincial District Private

2. Please select your department

Languages Mathematics Sciences

Applied Sciences Humanities

3. Teaching experience

Less than 5 years 5-9 years 10-14 years

15-19 years Above 20 years

4. Gender:

Male Female

SECTION B: EXAMINATIONS AND STATED OBJECTIVES

4 .The statements below are about teaching of content. Please tick (√) in the box that most closely represents your response on the skills you would like students to achieve.

		Most	Preferred	Undecided	Less	Never
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		preferred			preferred	preferred
a	Skills to pass exams					
b	Problem solving and application skills					
c	Decision making skills					
d	Disaster preparedness skills					
e	Desirable moral standards					
f	Mastery of languages					
g	Critical thinking					
h	Others(<i>specify</i>)					

6. Which is the most preferred source you use in planning your lessons?

	Source of lesson planning	Most preferred	preferred	undecided	Less preferred	Never preferred
a	Syllabus					
b	Text books					
c	Model test papers					
d	Consulting specialists					
e	Resource materials					
f	Others(<i>specify</i>)					

8. a) Which syllabus do you use?

K.I.E

[]

K.N.E.C.

[]

Both

[]

b) Why?.....

8. In your opinion, do examinations facilitate the achievement of the stated K.I.E goals of the curriculum?

Very much [] A little [] Average []
 Not at all [] Do not know []

SECTION C: INFLUENCE OF EXAMINATION ON CONTENT

9. What type of examinations and students assessment do you give your students?

		Often	Sometimes	Undecided	Rarely	Never
a	CATs					
b	Quizzes					
c	Interviews					
d	Projects					
e	Oral examinations					
f	End term examination					

10. Do your examinations integrate knowledge from other subject areas?

Often	Sometimes	Undecided	Rarely	Never
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10. Please respond to the statements below using the following key.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a	Examinations are useful in distinguishing The learners' potential.					
b	Examinations are the only way of gauging students ability					
c	Examinations are set from the content taught					
d	Examinations should be abolished and Different ways of rating students be established					
e	I plan for assessment before the beginning of teaching					

SECTION D: TEACHERS AUTONOMY AND EXAMINATION

		Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a	There are too many examinations in the school programme					
b	Marking of examinations					

	bring about heavy workload thus interfering with lessons					
c	Examinations force teachers to rush with the syllabus in order to have time for revision					

SECTION E: STUDENTS AND SELF ASSESSMENT

Please place a tick (✓) for the choice that most closely describes your response to the following aspects of teaching.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a	Due to many examinations, little is done to test understanding					
b	Examinations encourage cramming of content.					
c	Self assessment and life application of content is not adequately					

	done					
d	All free lessons and prep time are used to teach those subjects that are behind in the syllabus.					

APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

This questionnaire is to collect data purely for academic purposes. The study seeks to investigate the effect of examinations on curriculum implementation. All information will be treated with strict confidence. Do not write your name on the questionnaire. Kindly answer all questions as indicated by circling the option that applies.

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENT

1. Type of school

Provincial District Private

2. Gender

Male Female

SECTION B: EXAMINATIONS

3. Please place a tick (✓) for the choice that most closely describes your response to the following aspects of examinations.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a	There are too many examinations in the school programme					
b	The examinations are good for us					
c	There is no time to apply and practice what is learnt in class in real life					
d	Due to exam pressure cramming is a must					

4. The statements below are about learning of content. Please place a tick(✓) in the box that most closely represents your response on skills you would like to achieve.

		Most preferred	Preferred	Undecided	Less preferred	Never preferred
a	Skills to pass exams					
b	Problem solving and application skills					
c	Decision making skills					
d	Disaster preparedness skills					
e	Desirable moral standards					
f	Mastery of languages					
g	Critical thinking					
h	Others(<i>specify</i>)					

5. Which materials do you use in your revision for exams?

	Source of study material	Most preferred	Preferred	Undecided	Less preferred	Never preferred
a	Lesson notes					
b	Text books					
c	Model test papers					
d	Consulting teachers					
e	Group discussions					
f	Others(<i>specify</i>)					

APPENDIX III: TABLE FOR DETERMINING SAMPLE SIZE

Table for determining sample size for a given population (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970).

N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

Note: N-Sample size

S-Population size