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**An Analysis of the Classroom Tests in Primary Schools of West Pokot
County, Kenya**

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An Analysis of the Classroom Tests in Primary Schools of West Pokot County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Focus in excelling in national examinations in primary school has influenced teaching and learning process in the classroom. The classroom process is however very essential in determining learning achievements. The purpose of the study was to analyze the nature of classroom tests in primary schools in West Pokot County. Thus, the objectives of the study were; to determine the influence of classroom tests on learner motivation, identify types of classroom tests and to assess the use of tests in instructional decision making.

Methodology: The study was guided by Stufflebeam's Evaluation Model. A Conceptual framework was also used to show the interplay between the variables under study. The study employed a descriptive survey design and adopted mixed methods approach in data collection. The study combined both simple random and stratified proportionate sampling to select a total of 353 participants. A structured questionnaire consisting of 54 items was used to collect quantitative and some qualitative data. Cronbach's Alpha reliability test was computed to estimate internal consistency of the questionnaire, and an overall reliability index of 0.724 was realized. Further, classroom observation, interview and document analysis were also used to collect qualitative data.

Results: The study revealed that the testing practice adopted by teachers in public primary schools was mainly teacher centred and to drill pupils to pass KCPE. The study also found that teachers' own testing practices can motivate pupils. Further, it was established that objective questions were the most preferred by teachers. Common instructional decisions made by teachers based on tests related to pupils' grading, diagnosis of learning difficulties, checking pupils' progress, preparing terminal progress reports and gauging learners' level of mastery of content.

Unique contribution to practice and policy: The study concluded that classroom tests in public primary schools in West Pokot influences learning achievements of pupils. The study recommends that schools should adopt classroom assessment method in evaluating learning in public primary schools.

Key Words: *Learning, Instruction Process, Classroom Tests, Excelling National Examination*

1.1 Background of the Study

Emphasis on excellent performance in national examinations by teachers, pupils and parents at the expense of classroom process is a worrying trend in Kenya. Most of the process in the classroom consists of tests developed by classroom teachers, learner motivation, pedagogical skills and engagement of learners in various domains of learning and observation. Reche, Bundi, Mbugua and Riungu (2012) observe that Kenya's education system is dominated by examination-oriented teaching, where passing examinations is the only measure of performance and learning achievement.

A study by the MOE (2010) found out that learners and parents viewed classroom tests as important in the preparation for different types of questions anticipated in KCPE. UNESCO (2000) concurs that teachers are sensitive to the content of the examinations that their students will be taking. They stress subjects and particular topics that they expect to be on the tests and de-emphasize others. This attitude according to the study report puts emphasis on national examinations at the expense of meaningful learning. Educationists according to the study particularly emphasized the value of classroom process in identifying learners' strengths since there are many learning tasks that are not evaluated by KNEC at KCPE especially in such subjects as Physical Education (PE), Music, Art and Craft which are important in acquisition of psychomotor skills for pupils. William, Lee, Harrison and Black (2004) agree that the pressure in schools to improve results in such externally set tests or examinations prevents the effectiveness of the classroom process.

Pontefract and Hardman (2005) found that teacher-pupil interactions in Kenya Primary Schools took the form of lengthy recitations of questions (by the teacher) and answers (by individual pupils or the whole class). Pontefract and Hardman (2005) further established that pupil-generated questions were very rare despite evidence that such a strategy promotes higher order thinking and higher learning achievements. Studies by Kigotho (2012) and UNESCO (2008) have also shown that about 20 per cent of children complete primary school without having learned how to read, write or count - skills that should be obtained in the first two years of schooling. Unless learning is meaningful at this stage, children are likely to become disengaged and thereby find learning in the later grades increasingly difficult (UNESCO, 2008). Similarly, KNEC (2010) assessments of Standard 3 learners in numeracy and literacy reported poor learning achievement. This is partly because of pressure mounted on them by school administration and parents to produce top grades at national examinations. Rote learning has therefore become the commonest method of classroom instruction. Ebel and Frisbie (1991) in concurrence state;

...if the effectiveness of instruction is to be judged on the basis of students' performance on a test the temptation may be strong for the teacher to prepare students to answer the specific questions that will be included in the test...when the negative consequences of low scores are significant for the teacher-loss of job, low salary increase, reassignment to a less favourable setting-there is a great urgency to ensure students' scores will not be too low. The morality of the decisions often takes a backseat to practicality and survival (p.4).

This explains why Popham (2009) advises that the best way for teachers to deal with pressures of test-based performance is to accept these pressures as given then focus on

providing instruction that measure up to the expectations of all stakeholders, administrators, parents and the needs of their students.

Maiyo (2009) cited in Reche *et al.* (2012) postulates that Kenya's education system is dominated by examination-oriented teaching, where passing examinations is the only benchmark for performance. Many reports (Wafula, 2011; Nabwire *et al.*, 2014) indicate that the release of examination results in Kenya at primary or secondary school level elicit predictable reactions. Well performing schools and teachers are feted while those deemed underperforming are admonished. Wafula (2011) notes that majority of the teachers are not conversant with the importance of classroom process. This is why some teachers even resort to copying tests from textbooks or purchase commercial examinations prepared externally by non-teachers and administer to give the students. McDaniel (1994) confirms that most of the classroom tests administered by teachers are borrowed heavily from the textbooks which are typically written by professional item writers who are not educators. Consequently, such tests may not help teachers identify student's strengths and weaknesses in their learning competencies.

According to Uwezo (2011) learning levels in West Pokot County have been reported to be low with 28.1% and 32.5% of pupils in Std3 to be able to do mathematical division and read a story respectively. Ngware (2013) found that at Class six, less than half of the pupils could score more than 50% of the items in literacy and numeracy tests. This scenario consequently leads to many children being taken through the school system without acquiring prerequisite competency in literacy and numeracy. Teachers teach for the examination and compete to get good results.

The House of Commons Report (2008 in Elwood and Lundy 2010) points out the fact that UK has the most frequently tested children in the world and estimated that the average pupil in England will take at least 70 tests during a school career thus exposing children to a programme of formal testing across their school lives. This could lead to negative consequences for their overall experience of schooling and learning outcomes.

In Kenya, primary school teachers administer written tests continuously on the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) pattern during the midterm and at the end of the term or year to prepare learners for the final KCPE examinations (MOE, 2010).Learners therefore spend too much time preparing for the tests at the expense of actual learning and even participation in co-curricular activities. Due to poor learning in public schools, there is need for government to establish why a large number of children are going to school but not actually learning despite increased resource mobilization in the education sector (Kigotho, 2012).Teachers teach for the examination and compete to get good grades.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

- i.Determine influence of classroom tests on learning motivation in primary schools of West Pokot County, Kenya
- ii. Identify types of classroom tests used in primary schools of West Pokot County, Kenya

iii. Establish uses of tests on teachers' instructional decision making in primary schools of West Pokot County, Kenya

2.0 Theoretical Framework

The study was based on principles embedded in Daniel Stufflebeam's CIPP Model (1983). The Context Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) Model is a comprehensive open systems model for guiding formative and summative evaluation of a program and provides feedback and judgment on the program's effectiveness for continuous improvement.

Daniel Stufflebeam's CIPP Model views pupils' learning achievements (product) as a consequence of environmental (context), characteristics of teachers and students (input) and classroom interactions (process). This theory can thus be conceptualized as follows:

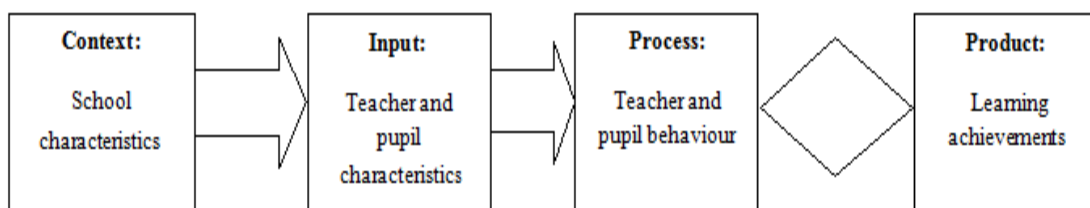


Figure 1: Principles of CIPP Model (Source: Researchers)

This model shows input and output (product) as the beginning and end of the learning process in the classroom. The study sought to analyze the nature of classroom tests used in West Pokot County in relation to this theory.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

The variables that played a major role in the study are represented diagrammatically in Figure 2.

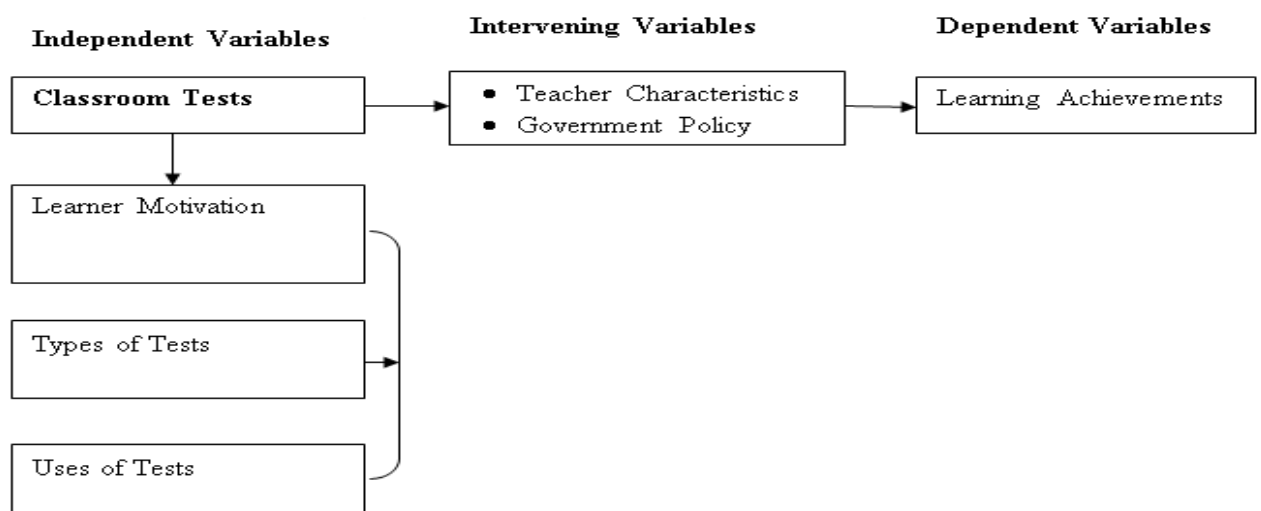


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework suggests a causal effect between classroom tests and learning achievements. Teachers play a significant role in classroom learning process through wide variety of classroom practices which heavily depend on their instructional skills. Further to that the most important variables in causing learning achievement as depicted in figure 2 are: the learner motivation, types of classroom tests exposed to learners and uses of such tests. The nature of the tests determines the use such that high level tests drawn from the respective domains of learning develops critical thinking and problem solving skills in the; learners rather than the low level tests that translate into memorisation and cramming. Related to tests are the learners' dispositions in learning process as to whether their intension is merely passing national examinations with very high grades or grasping the problem solving skills needed in life. These variables depending on the disposition of the pupil and teacher influence pupils' learning achievement.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study was guided by descriptive research design. Bryman (2008) noted that the choice of research designs has implications on expressing causal connections between variables. The study therefore adopted a descriptive design because data on attitudes and other characteristics about the participants were collected in their natural school settings and in a one-time interaction with teachers and head teachers. The investigation was based on expert opinions, teacher and head teacher perspectives on classroom tests and review of related literature. This enabled the researcher to obtain information that effectively described classroom tests.

The study adopted a mixed methods approach in which both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms were applied. It involved collection and triangulation of data in order to infuse deductive and inductive thinking in addressing research objectives. The triangulation of data offset the weaknesses inherent within one approach. The questionnaires and semi structured interview schedule were used hence the need for mixed methods approach. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006) concur that the purpose of mixed methods research is to build on the synergy and strength that exists between qualitative and quantitative research in order to understand a phenomenon better than using either of the two paradigms. Creswell and Clark (2007) confirm that mixed methods approach provides more comprehensive evidence for studying a research problem than either qualitative or quantitative data alone. This study sought to find out if data provided by participants would fit into Daniel Stufflebeam's CIPP model anchoring the study.

Based on the descriptive survey design and mixed approaches used, the study adopted the pragmatic philosophical paradigm. Pragmatism provides a set of assumptions about knowledge and enquiry that underpins the mixed methods approach and which distinguishes the approach from purely quantitative approaches that are based on a philosophy of positivism and purely qualitative approaches that are based on a philosophy of interpretive. (Pragmatic research philosophy was deemed applicable to the study because it defines how individuals (teachers) react towards a real world

situation (classroom process) and focuses on what really happens in the environment (context) by borrowing from aspects of both positivist and interpretive positions (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2009).

3.2 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

This study targeted all primary school teachers and head teachers in West Pokot County which have Standard three (3) to Standard eight (8) pupils. For the purpose of this study, the researcher opted to use only public schools which had pupils from class 1 to class 8 and are registered by the Ministry of education. There were 497 public primary schools in West Pokot County in the in the category of those schools. This formed the basis of the study population. The Table 1 shows the total teachers' population in the four sub-counties in West Pokot County.

Table1 : Target Population in the Sub-Counties

Sub-Counties	Schools	Teachers	Head Teachers
Pokot Central	133	1063	133
Pokot North	120	958	120
Pokot South	64	642	64
West Pokot	180	1621	180
TOTAL	497	4284	497

Source: CDE, West Pokot

The researcher employed cluster sampling technique where both simple random and stratified proportionate sampling was used to select participants in the study, from the four administrative sub-counties of West Pokot County, Kenya.

To attain the sample size the researcher adopted Kish's (1995) formula as indicated below.

$$X = Z(c/100)^2 r(100-r)$$

$$N = \frac{N_x}{((N-1)E^2 + x)}$$

$$E = \text{Sqrt}[\frac{(N-n)x}{n(N-1)}]$$

Where N is the population size,

r is the fraction of responses that you are interested in,

and $Z(c/100)$ is the critical value for the confidence level c .

For easy calculation the researcher used Raosoft online calculator which has infused the Kish formula above (<http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html>). With a target

population of 4284 teachers, at a confidence level of 95% the researcher therefore obtained a sample of 353 teachers who took part in the study.

Table1: Summary of Sampling

Sub-County	Schools (N)	Sample size (n)	Teachers (N)	Sample Size (n)
Pokot Central	133	15	1064	88
Pokot North	120	13	960	79
Pokot South	64	9	640	53
West Pokot	180	22	1620	133
Total	497	59	4284	353

To obtain the number of schools to participate in the study, the researchers used the proportionate sampling technique. The records in the CDE's office indicated that the most poorly staffed school in the county had six teachers. This number was then divided by the total number of sampled teachers in each sub-county to obtain the proportionate number of schools to be sampled from each sub-county as shown in Table 2.

Through simple random sampling the researcher selected 6 teachers from each of the schools sampled. The number six was therefore used to give each school an equal chance of being sampled for the study through random sampling technique. One head teacher was purposively selected from each of the schools sampled as indicated in Table 3. The researcher obtained a complete list of all public primary schools in the four sub-counties of West Pokot County to facilitate sampling.

Table 2: Sample size and Sampling Techniques

Sample Items	Sample Size	Sampling Techniques
Schools	59	Proportionate sampling
Teachers	353	Simple Random
Head teachers	59	Purposive

In order to collect more qualitative data researcher made 12 classroom observations in 12 different schools sampled purposively in all the four sub-counties of West Pokot County in the settings that the researchers felt were consistent with the objectives of the study. According to Creswell (2009) the idea behind qualitative research is to purposively select participants, documents or sites that will help the researcher understand the problem under investigation in order to answer research questions

3.3 Research Instruments

The researcher used four research instruments namely; questionnaires, interview guide, document analysis schedule and classroom observation schedule. All the four research instruments were developed by the researcher to enhance the depth of the research perspective on classroom tests and learning achievements. The four instruments were used because in any research there is no single research instrument that is sufficient enough to elicit valid and reliable conclusions and therefore need for methodological triangulation. Cohen and Manion (1992) assert that exclusive reliance on one method may bias a researcher's picture of the phenomenon under investigation.

The main data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire that was used to collect quantitative and some qualitative data respectively. The questionnaire was administered to the sampled teachers in public primary schools in West Pokot County. The teachers' questionnaire was accompanied by general information letter on what was expected from participants as well as instructions to participants on how to complete the questionnaire. The Questionnaire consisted of a mixture of open and closed ended items. This enabled the researcher to control and focus responses to nature of classroom tests used in public schools.

The questionnaire was deemed fit because it enabled the researcher to cover a wide geographical area. This also helped in collecting data from a large number of participants with minimum expenses while remaining anonymous hence enhancing honesty, well thought out responses as well as increasing completion and return rates.

A structured interview guide developed by the researchers was used to obtain qualitative data from head teachers. An in-depth face-face interview was conducted by the researchers on teachers' application of learning domains in classroom instruction. The researchers first briefed the participants in order to create a good rapport, trust and confidence during the interview. The interview was crucial in determining how head teachers perceived diverse aspects of classroom tests. During the interview, the researchers listened keenly to the respondents, asked questions, probed them and took notes in order to capture more details from them. The head teachers' interview guide consisted of questions aimed at obtaining specific information on influence of classroom tests on learner motivation, types of classroom tests and uses of tests on teachers' instructional decision making in primary schools in West Pokot County.

Further that document analysis was used to triangulate data collected from teachers' questionnaire and head teachers' interview guide. Document analysis on the Table of Specifications (TOS) was developed by the researchers to analyse data on nature and prevailing practices of teachers' classroom testing in the sampled schools. TOS consisted of 6 hierarchical levels of cognitive learning domains namely knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation against two teaching subjects, Mathematics and English in Class III and VII. This is because some studies Ngware (2012), KNEC (2010) and Uwezo (2011)) pointed out on poor learning achievement of Std III and VII learners in numeracy and literacy in Kenya. Classroom tests were analysed against the TOS to determine their nature.

Structured Classroom Observation Schedule was used as additional tool for understanding the nature of classroom tests. Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011) define observation as a data generation method that involves critically watching what people do and listening to what they say in a given situation with a view to obtaining deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study. The researchers personally sat behind classrooms, listened and watched carefully defined list of activities that teachers and pupils were engaged in during teaching and learning process. The researchers made 12 different classroom observations each lasting 35 minutes in 12 different schools sampled purposively. The data collected during classroom observation was on the nature of both oral and written classroom tests.

4.0 Findings and Discussion

The study sought to analyze the nature of tests administered by teachers during classroom instruction in public primary schools in Kenya in respect to learner motivation, test administration, types and uses of tests. Although the nature of classroom testing alone is not a perfect way of gauging students learning due to dynamics of student characteristics, it helps generate a general picture of student's cognitive ability. It has also been observed that the nature of classroom tests administered in the classroom give a reflection of the teaching strategies inherent in the classroom, and teachers' instructional skills. Classroom tests eventually reduce examination anxiety. It was therefore necessary to determine the nature of classroom tests in public primary schools in West Pokot County.

4.1 Classroom Tests and Learner Motivation

The purpose of classroom tests is to give students the opportunity to show what they have learned rather than what they have not learned. This motivates them to learn. It was therefore imperative to establish how classroom tests motivated learners to achieve higher learning outcomes.

Figure 3 presents a summary of percentages of teachers' responses to different tenets of classroom tests affecting learner motivation. The teachers were asked to indicate whether the manner in which they tested learners affected learner motivation. Most (72.2%) were in agreement that it truly affected learner motivation, 26.6% indicated that it did not, while only 1.2% did not know.

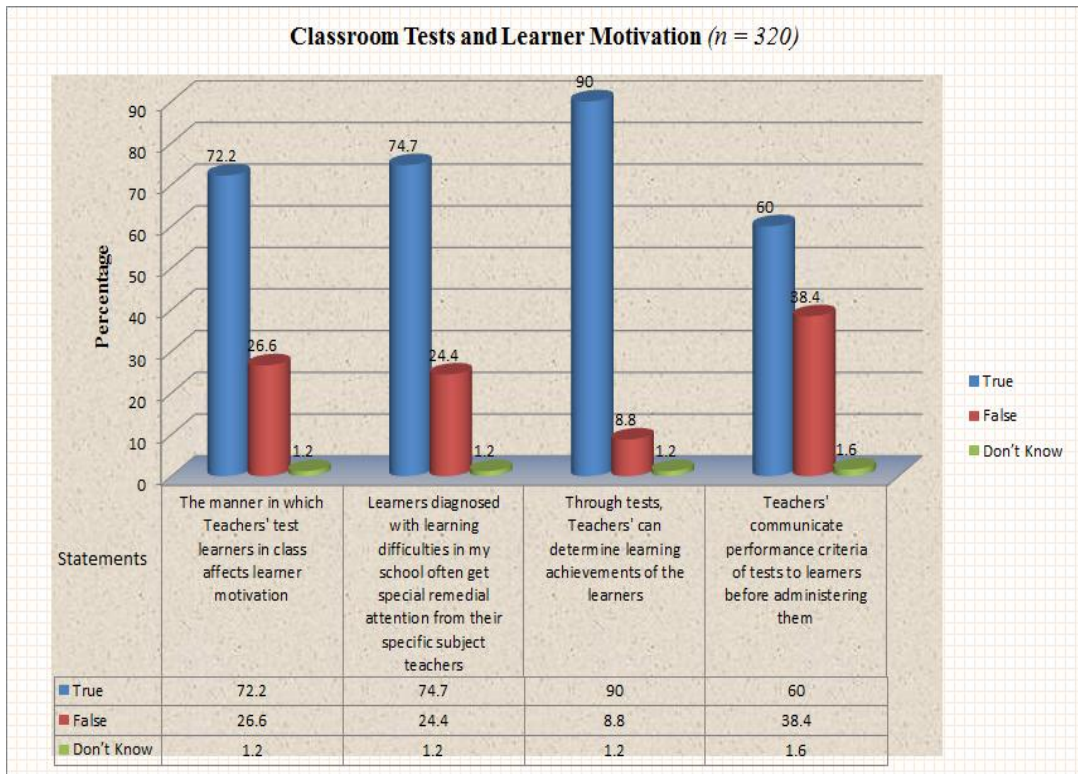


Figure 3: Classroom Tests and Learner Motivation

The teachers were also asked to accept or object that learners diagnosed with learning difficulties in their schools often got special remedial attention from their specific subject teachers. Majority (74.7%) accepted, 24.4% objected while 1.2% did not know. In regard to whether the teachers could determine learning achievements of their learners through tests, results in Figure 3 show that (90.0%) indicated that it was true while (8.8%) indicated that it was false. However, 1.6% of the teachers did not know if they could determine learning achievements of their learners through tests. Asked whether they communicated performance criteria of tests to learners before administering the test (61.0%) confirmed doing so, 38.4% indicated that they did not while 1.6% did not know.

These results echo the findings of Amrein and Berliner (2003) who established that teachers' own testing practices can motivate students if teachers explain the purpose and expectations of their tests and provide feedback. It can therefore be deduced that tests cause students to put more effort into learning hence improving learning outcomes.

4.2 Test Aspects and Administration

Table 4 shows how teachers handled common aspects of tests in the classroom. The teachers were asked to indicate the occurrence of the common aspects of tests on a 5-time period scale, daily, weekly, monthly, every term and never.

Table 4: Test Aspects and Administration

Item	Occurrence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Give written tests	Daily	122	38.1
	Weekly	122	38.1
	Monthly	61	19.1
	Every term	10	3.1
	Never	5	1.6
	Total	320	100.0
Give home assignments	Daily	185	57.8
	Weekly	104	32.5
	Monthly	9	2.8
	Every term	8	2.5
	Never	14	4.4
	Total	320	100.0
Give group assignments	Daily	63	19.7
	Weekly	173	54.1
	Monthly	47	14.7
	Every term	16	5.0
	Never	21	6.6
	Total	320	100.0
Assign scores or grades to classroom tests	Daily	51	15.9
	Weekly	76	23.8
	Monthly	126	39.4
	Every term	54	16.9
	Never	13	4.1
	Total	320	100.0
Give feedback on test performance to the learners	Daily	88	27.5
	Weekly	77	24.1
	Monthly	96	30.0
	Every term	48	15.0
	Never	11	3.4
	Total	320	100.0
Mark class assignments	Daily	256	80.0
	Weekly	27	8.4
	Monthly	18	5.6
	Every term	8	2.5
	Never	11	3.5
	Total	320	100.0
Analyze performance of classroom tests	Daily	66	20.6
	Weekly	83	25.9
	Monthly	84	26.3
	Every term	75	23.4
	Never	12	3.8
	Total	320	100.0

These aspects were listed as written tests, home assignments, group assignments, assigning scores, giving feedback on performance, marking classroom assignments and analyzing performance of classroom tests. The results were presented as in Table 4.

Teachers were asked to indicate how often they administered written tests. It is apparent from Table 4 that 122(38.1%) of the teachers administered them daily, 122(38.1%) administered written tests weekly, 61(19.1%) administered them monthly, 10(3.1%) administered them every term while 5(1.6%) never administered written tests. It is evident from Table 4 that 185(57.8%) of the teachers gave home assignments daily, 104(32.5%) of the teachers administered them weekly, 9(2.8%) administered them monthly, 8(2.5%) gave them every term while another 14(4.4%) never administered any home assignment.

Most 173(54.1%) of the teachers administered group assignments weekly, 63(19.7%) administered them daily, 47(14.7%) gave the assignments monthly, 16(5.0%) gave them every term while 21(6.6%) did not administer any group assignment.

On the aspect of grades, most 126(39.4%) of the teachers indicated that they assigned scores or grades to classroom tests on monthly basis, 76(23.8%) assigned scores to classroom tests on a weekly basis, 54(16.9%) on terminal basis, 51(15.9%) on daily basis while 13(4.1%) never assigned any scores or grades to classroom tests.

Table 4 also shows that 96(30.0%) of the teachers gave feedback on test performance to the learners on monthly basis, 88(27.5%) gave feedback daily, 77(24.1%) on weekly basis, 48(15.0%) every term and only 11(3.4%) never gave feedback on test performance to the learners

Asked to indicate how often they marked classroom assignments, most 256(80.0%) of the teachers stated that they marked classroom assignments daily, 27(8.4%) marked them weekly, 18(5.6%) marked them monthly, 8(2.5%) marked the assignments every term while only 11(3.4%) never marked assignments.

The teachers were also asked to indicate time interval in which they analyzed classroom tests. Most 84 (26.3%) of the teachers analyzed them monthly, 83(25.9%) analyzed performance of classroom tests weekly, 75(23.4%) did it every term and 66(20.6%) of the teachers analyzed classroom tests daily.

Document analysis was carried out on English and Mathematics test papers using TOS Analysis Tool which had been taken by Std III and Std VII pupils at the end of every school term. It was noted from the tests analyzed in both English and Mathematics for the two classes that the preferred test format was multiple choices. It was also noted that there was no essay type questions for Std VII English as expected.

The analysis also revealed inherent weaknesses of the commercially prepared tests. It was noted that some questions were ambiguously stated, illogical, had grammatical mistakes, had typos and some words were wrongly spelt. All test items in the commercially prepared examinations were multiple choice type of questions with some lacking correct answers hence lacking the necessary variety of other types of test items.

These findings are consistent with the results of a survey carried out by Ngesu-Ngugi (2008) cited in Wachira (2012) on teacher made tests, which found out that the tests were of poor quality and that teachers did not have the basic skills in development of valid tests.

4.3 Uses of Classroom Tests

The study sought to establish how teachers use tests in the classroom process in public primary schools. The teachers were asked to indicate their perceptions on uses of classroom tests in their schools on a Likert Scale: SA= Strongly Agree A= Agree; U= Undecided; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree which was collapsed to a three point scale: Agree; Undecided and Disagree. The results are summarized in Table 5

Table 5: Uses of Classroom Tests

Statements	Response						Total
	Agree		Undecided		Disagree		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
For Student grading (<i>n=320</i>)	290	90.6	16	5.0	14	4.4	100.0
Diagnosis of learning difficulties (<i>n=320</i>)	292	91.3	21	6.6	7	2.2	100.0
Checking students progress(<i>n=320</i>)	304	95.0	11	3.4	5	1.6	100.0
For preparing a terminal progress report to the learners(<i>n=320</i>)	291	90.9	17	5.3	12	3.8	100.0
To evaluate success of teaching(<i>n=320</i>)	296	92.5	20	6.3	4	1.3	100.0
To help learners confirm their learning strengths and weaknesses(<i>n=320</i>)	293	91.6	17	5.3	10	3.1	100.0
To gauge learners' level of mastery of particular content area(<i>n=320</i>)	267	83.4	31	9.7	22	6.9	100.0
Grand Total	2033	635.3	133.0	41.5	74.0	23.1	700.0
Percentage Total	290.4	90.8	19.0	5.9	10.6	3.3	100.0

Source: Survey data

Table 5 depicts that majority 290(90.6%) of the teachers agreed that they used classroom tests for student grading, 14(4.4%) disagreed while 16(5.0%) were undecided. Table 5also shows that 292(91.3%) of the teachers were in agreement that classroom tests were used to diagnose learning difficulties of learners, 7(2.2%) disagreed while 21(6.6%) were undecided.

With regard to using classroom tests to check students' progress, Table 5 reveals that 304(95.0%) agreed with this opinion, 5(1.6%) disagreed while only 11(3.4%) were undecided.

According to Table 5 it is evident that 291(90.9%) of the teachers used classroom tests for preparing terminal progress reports to the learners, 12(3.8%) disagreed with this opinion while 17(5.3%) were undecided. This report is normally needed by learners and parents to monitor learning progress. As far as teaching is concerned Table 5 further reveals that majority of the teachers 296(92.5%) agreed that they used classroom tests to evaluate the success of their teaching, 4(1.3%) disagreed while 20(6.3%) were undecided.

When asked about whether classroom tests helped learners confirm their learning strengths and weaknesses research data in Table 5 shows that 293(91.6%) of the teachers agreed with the assertion, 10(3.1%) disagreed while 17 (5.3%) were undecided.

Table 5 further indicates that 267(83.4%) agreed that classroom tests were used to gauge learners' level of mastery of particular content area, 22(6.9%) disagreed while 31(9.7%) were undecided.

This implies that teachers understood the importance of tests in making vital instructional decisions and in helping students retain more content and reduce test anxiety in national examinations

4.4 Ranking of Uses of Tests

Figure 4 shows how teachers ranked the uses of tests in the classroom.

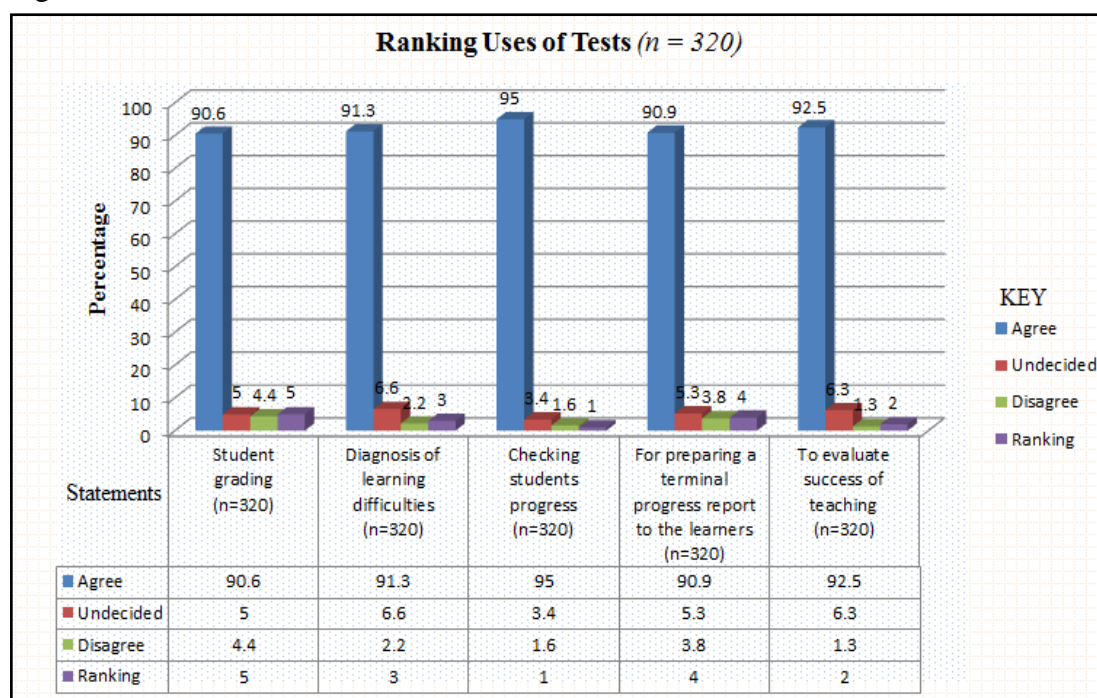


Figure 4: Ranking of Uses of Tests

Figure 4 reveals that checking students' progress was the commonest way of using tests with 95% of the teachers ranking it position one. 92.5% of the teachers ranked evaluation of success of teaching as the second use followed by diagnosis of learning difficulties with 91.3% of the teachers ranking it third. Teachers ranked preparation of terminal progress report as the fourth use with 90.9% response and 90.6% of the teachers ranking student grading as the fifth use of classroom tests. It is apparent from the findings that teachers use tests to make different instructional decisions that influence learning achievements.

4.5 Types of Tests

The teachers were asked to indicate how often they administered types of tests in the classroom.

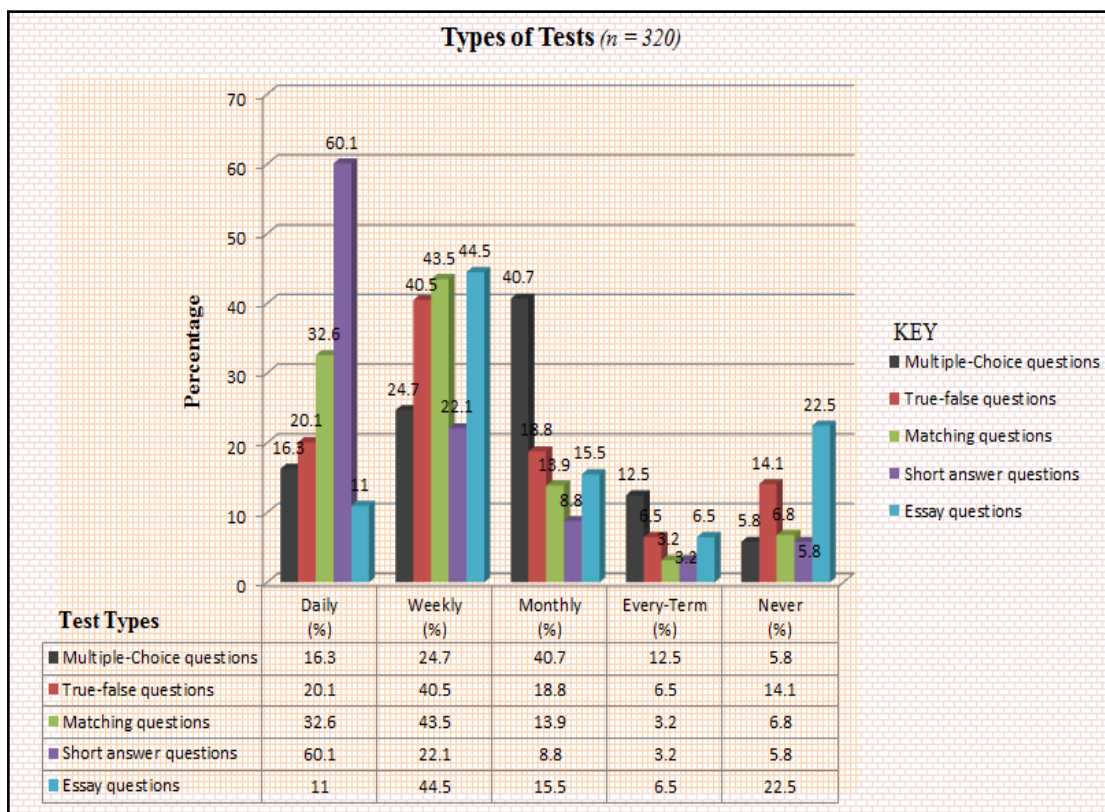


Figure 5: Types of Tests

Results in Figure 5 shows that most(40.7%) of the teachers who used multiple choice questions to measure extent of attainment of learning objectives in the classroom preferred administering them monthly. True-false questions and matching questions were most preferred on weekly basis by 40.5% and 43.5% of the teachers respectively. Figure 5 further reveals that most (60.1%) of the teachers who used short answer preferred administering them daily. Most (44.5%) of the teachers preferred administering essay questions on a weekly basis. There was no preferred type of tests administered every term, an indication that most of the teachers relied on externally prepared tests which they had no control over.

The semi structured observation carried out by the researcher revealed that most classrooms were congested with a class size of up to 92, a motivating factor for teachers to administer multiple choice tests which are easy to mark and considered more objective. This finding indicates that teachers mainly use expository teaching strategies in classroom instruction. The results of this study are in agreement with the study conducted by Reeves (2006) who found out that most teachers tend to focus their tests on what is easy to measure rather than on what is important.

It can therefore be inferred that objective type of questions namely multiple choice, true-false questions and matching questions are most preferred by teachers either due to their objectivity or due to ease of marking. This confirms results of document analysis which showed that all the commercially prepared tests bought by teachers were multiple choice types.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

That the nature of Classroom Tests in Public Primary Schools in West Pokot did not help pupils master specific knowledge and skills as specified in the objectives of the curriculum. Instead rote learning was rife and teachers focused on preparing students for KCPE. From the foregoing findings, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Classroom tests influence learner motivation in primary schools in West Pokot County as evidenced from the findings that different tenets of classroom tests influenced motivation of learners.

Most teachers preferred objective types of classroom tests to be administered to learners in primary schools in West Pokot County, Kenya.

Teachers use tests to make different instructional decisions that influence learning achievements of pupils in primary schools in West Pokot County, Kenya.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on these findings the following recommendation was made:

Schools should adopt teacher developed classroom assessment tests in evaluating learning in public primary schools as opposed to relying on objective (multiple choice) tests sourced commercially.

Teachers need sensitization on purposes for testing learners and have to be facilitated to attain appropriate skills in testing through in-service training and educators awareness campaigns.

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