

# **The Influence Of Pupils Ranking In Kenya Certificate Of Primary Education On Examination Cheating In Public Primary Schools In Eldoret Municipality, Kenya**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The study sought to establish the influence of pupils ranking in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education on examination cheating in public primary schools in Eldoret Municipality, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design as guided by Rogers (1995) theory of Stages in the Innovation Decision Process and it. There being fifty public primary schools in Eldoret Municipality, 30% were selected through stratified and simple random sampling method. All the head teachers of the selected schools participated in the study while four teachers teaching in upper primary schools were selected through purposive, stratified and simple random sampling methods. Additionally, stratified and simple random sampling methods were used to select 160 standard seven pupils who participated in the study. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data, analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques and presented by use of frequency tables, percentages and descriptions with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) computer programme. The study findings were that there is prevalence of examination cheating. It was recommended that examinations that cut across the curriculum be adopted; that to minimise examination cheating it is crucial to test learners through both oral and written questions and that KCPE should be done through both formative and summative evaluation. The findings of the study will be useful to the school management and the Ministry of Education in Kenya in the endeavour to improve performance in primary schools as they formulate and revise various educational policies in the education sector.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Effects, perceptions, pupils ranking and examination cheating*

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The performance of a school plays a key role in both individual and national development. Ranking of schools both internationally and globally has and continues to make education competitive in the world. Africa has not been left out in the international ranking. According to Chuku (2007), four South African schools were rated among the World's best in the 2008 financial time's business rankings. Lagos Business School (LBS) in Nigeria was the African institute to appear in that year's ranking. LBS was ranked 48<sup>th</sup> in the open enrolment programme category. Overall the rankings were led by business schools in Europe and North America (Chuku, 2008). It is clear from the rankings that, African schools are not doing well on the global scene.

Ranking of schools is blamed for the cheating in National Examinations. According to The Standard Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2009, the only advantage of ranking was that schools would use it as a motivation to work hard to stay at the top. Ranking of schools has also been blamed for only encouraging unhealthy competition. However, it is evident that school performance in Eldoret Municipality has drastically declined according to educational stakeholders during the period of ranking of schools (EMC 2010).

### **Statement of the Problem**

School ranking especially at K.C.P.E level which used to show top performing schools was abolished and replaced by top candidates ranking. According to Siringi (2010) cheating had replaced hard work amongst teachers and students who wanted their schools to emerge top. This research was an investigation on whether individual pupils ranking in national examination in place of school ranking has an effect on the examination cheating.

### **Research Objective**

This study intended to establish the influence of pupils' ranking in KCPE on examination cheating in public primary schools in Eldoret municipality.

## **II. REVIEWED LITERATURE**

### **Ranking of pupils and its effect on the teaching and learning process**

Teachers rank pupils by assigning them a number based on the number of marks they score in comparison to their classmates or peers on examinations in all the subjects (Mchazime, 2003). Assessment of performance is achieved through a well considered list of specific performance criteria that enables an informed judgement to be made. The performance criteria should specifically relate to the relevant syllabus outcome. Peer and self assessment are valuable strategies that can be employed in conjunction with performance assessment. Some teachers say they rank pupils so that they can identify the brightest and weakest pupils in order to assist those pupils who are weak. Teachers and pupils alike expect that the pupil at the top of the class is the brightest pupil and the fastest learner. Conversely, they expect that the child who ranks 30<sup>th</sup> out of 70 pupils has failed. A pupil in 6<sup>th</sup> position is considered a good student if the test on which the marks are based has been fair, but the ability of a pupil in 20<sup>th</sup> position is uncertain.

Some teachers assign pupils' to seat in classroom according to how they are ranked in their examinations and in this way, a teacher can then spend more time and energy with the weak pupils seated together in one area of the room (Schmidt and Santhe, 2002). However, private schools in Kenya are in the spotlight for resorting to pass-at-all-costs frenzy in national examinations and using unfair means to make a name. The practice has led to the schools separating their pupils into cohorts of bright and dull and then registering them separately for the national examination. Both groups study in the same class during the academic year, but the weaker pupils ultimately write their final examinations at a satellite centre, so as not to lower the mean grade of the parent school. In other cases, devious proprietors poach poor but bright students from public schools and offer them bursaries or scholarships to sit national examinations at their academies. This way they end up boosting the mean grade of the institutions as weak candidates are forced to repeat, or are not registered for the examination altogether under the pretext that they are not ready. The Kenya National Examinations Council said some of these schools had also mastered institutionalized cheating where the community would come together to abet the practice (Daily Nation, January 2012).

### **Pupils' Ranking and Examination Cheating**

The school ranking system was adopted to disseminate to all stakeholders the performance of the schools in KCPE. Over time this strategy of ranking schools may have led to examination cheating and other vices. The original Aim of school ranking is misplaced thus school ranking system has to be evaluated and its objectives reassessed KNEC journal (1980). Kenyan Education Ministry strategic objective required KNEC to develop and administer tests and examinations annually for KCSC, KCPE and for post school candidates and to ensure that these tests and examinations are free from bias and are valid, reliable, relevant, and efficient and globally of acceptable standards (Wasanga, 2004),

Examination cheating is any illegal act committed by a student single-handedly or in collaboration with others like fellow students, parents, teachers, supervisors, invigilators, printers and anybody or group of people before, during or after examinations in order to obtain undeserved marks or grades. The means of perpetrating this illegal act may range from bringing in un-authorized materials to the examination hall, disrupting the conduct of examinations, buying examination papers, changing of grades after examination and impersonation to using money or candidate's body to earn marks (Maduabum & Maduabum, 1998). Examinations are a kind of game that can be won if you know enough tricks and exercises the right skill. This is a pity because examinations should be essentially a system of educational measurement designed to provide information about those who are tested (Farrant, 1980).

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

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

### **Target Population**

The target population for this study were pupils, teachers and head teachers in public primary schools in Eldoret Municipality. The study targeted 50 head teachers, 600 teachers and 1,600 standard seven pupils in selected Public primary schools in the Municipality making a total of 2,250 respondents.

### **Sampling Techniques and Sample Size**

For the purpose of getting a representative sample, the schools were stratified into 5 Zones. A Stratified sampling technique is a useful blend of randomization and categorization, which enables both quantitative and qualitative process of research to be undertaken (Cohen, 2003). The advantage in stratified

proportionate random sampling is that it ensures inclusion, in the sample of subgroups, which otherwise, would be omitted entirely by other sampling methods because of their small numbers in the population (Cohen, 2003). Simple random sampling was then used to select 30% of the schools from each zone. This agrees with Kerlinger (1986) who noted that. Purposive sampling was used to select the 15 head teachers from the selected schools. Upper primary school teachers were purposively selected to participate in the study. The study also included those teachers who have been in the profession for the last five years. Therefore 15 head teachers, 60 teachers and 160 standard seven pupils participated in this study making a total of 235 respondents as shown in Table 2

### Research Instruments

Questionnaires and interview schedules were used in the study by after observing validity and reliability. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques w and was presented by use of frequency tables with the help of a Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) computer programme.

**Table 1: Target Population and Sample Size**

ZONE	No. of					
	Public primary schools	Schools Selected	Head teachers	Head teachers selected	Teachers selected	Pupils selected
Kapsoya	8	2	8	2	8	16
Chepkolel	9	3	9	3	12	27
Pioneer	12	4	12	4	16	37
Kapyemit	10	3	10	3	12	43
Kibulgeny	11	3	11	3	12	37
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>160</b>

**Table 2: Influence of ranking of pupils in KCPE on examination cheating according to teachers**

Pupils ranking in KCPE influences learners to:	Responses							
	A		U		D		TOTAL	
	F	%	F	%	f	%	F	%
Report any examination cheating incidents to the relevant authorities	30	54.5	9	16.4	16	29.1	55	100
Indulge in examination cheating	33	60.0	8	14.5	14	25.5	55	100
Reduce examination related malpractices	30	54.5	6	11.0	19	34.5	55	100

Concerning the ranking system and if it influences learners to report any examination cheating incidents to the relevant authorities, 30 teachers (54.5%) agreed, 9 (16.4%) were undecided, and 16 (29.1%) disagreed. Majority of teachers, 30 (54.5%) were in agreement that learners report to authorities any examination cheating. On the other hand, 16 (29.1%) of the respondents disagreed. They believed that the ranking system influences learners to report examination cheating.

From table 4.14, 33 (60.0%) of the teachers agreed, 8 (14.5%) were undecided, and 14 (25.5%) disagreed that the ranking system encourages learners to indulge in examination cheating. This means that the ranking system has encouraged majority of learners to indulge in cheating in order to be ranked top as supported by 33(60.0%) of the respondents.

Lastly from this table, 30 teachers (54.5%) agreed, 6 (11.0%) were undecided and 19 (34.5%) disagreed that ranking of pupils in KCPE has not reduced examination related malpractices. This implies that examination malpractices has been there before and is still there with the new ranking system as supported by 30 (54.5%) of respondents who were in agreement. A few teachers 19 (34.5%) have a contrary opinion that the ranking system has reduced examination malpractices. This means examination malpractices are real and each school will claim clean of such a practise only to be accused by its competitor.

**Table 3: presents learners responses on various items on the influence of the ranking of pupils in KCPE on examination cheating.**

Pupils Ranking in KCPE influences learners to:	Responses							
	A		U		D		TOTAL	
	F	%	F	%	f	%	F	%
Report examination cheating incidents to the relevant authorities	90	58.8	24	15.7	39	25.5	153	100
Indulge in examination cheating	81	52.9	18	11.8	54	35.3	153	100
Has not reduced	71	46.4	29	19.0	53	34.6	153	100

examination cheating								
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In table 4.15 above, 90 pupils (58.8%) agreed, 24 (15.7%) were undecided while 39 (25.5%) disagreed that ranking of pupils in KCPE influences learners to report any examination cheating incidents to the relevant authorities. The disagreement by 39 (25.5%) of respondents suggest that in some schools cheating is not new or strange to warrant reporting while 24 (15.7%) who were undecided may be wondering why such a question when the answers may seem obvious.

Majority of the pupils, 90 (58.8%) supported that ranking of pupils has made them to report cases of cheating. These represent the learners who know that it is individual work that matters more than the average mean for the whole group. They cannot afford to be silent and pave way for their competitors.

Table 4.15 also reveals that 81 pupils (52.9%) agreed, 18 (11.8%) were undecided while 54 (35.3%) disagreed that ranking of pupils in KCPE encourages learners to indulge in examination cheating. From the table, 81 (52.9%) agreed with the statement compared to 54 (35.5%) who are minority disagreeing to the statement. This shows that in many schools, pupils believe that KCPE ranking encourages learners to indulge in examination cheating.

Lastly asked, if ranking of learners in KCPE has not reduced examination cheating, 71 (46.4%) of the pupils agreed, 29 (19.0%) were undecided, while 53 (34.6%) disagreed. This is a clear indication that cheating is still a practise in many schools as supported by 71 (46.4%) of the respondents. Only 53 pupils (34.6%) disagreed with the statement representing respondents in few schools where cheating has not taken a toll.

#### **Head teachers responses on the Ranking of pupils in KCPE on examination cheating**

From the interviews conducted by the researcher, most of the head teachers said that pupils ranking system in KCPE had led to some teachers engaging in examination cheating. This means that, teachers were willing to do anything possible to have their learners' ranked top. On the other hand, the ranking system has led to unfair competition in schools amongst learners as suggested by most head teachers.

### **IV. FINDINGS**

This study reveals that the desire for each pupil to appear top has made them to indulge in examination cheating. Teachers also have not been left out. They also engage in examination cheating to help their learners to emerge top in KCPE. As it was revealed from head teachers, ranking of pupils in KCPE was good publicity for performing schools. This implies that, by having your pupils' ranked top, the school could be the choice for many pupils and parents who want a well performing school. This means that there are other reasons why teachers engage in the examination cheating.

### **V. CONCLUSIONS**

It was concluded that the ranking of pupils in KCPE has not escaped the criticism of having led to examination cheating. Pupils engage in cheating so as to appear top in KCPE. Teachers engage in cheating so as to have their pupils appear top in KCPE. Schools also engage in cheating so as to become the desired destination for anyone looking for performing schools. They do this by having to post as many learners as possible in the top of KCPE ranking list.

### **VI. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It was recommended that there should be both oral and written examinations in order to minimise cheating in examinations. KCPE should be done through both formative and summative evaluation. C.A.Ts and end of terms tests can constitute formative evaluation. That way evaluation will be carried out throughout the entire schooling process.

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