

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN EXAMINATION
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND STUDENTS'
ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS
IN EMBU EAST SUB-COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Secondary school students have in the recent past manifested instances of dismal performance.

Their performance in Mathematics, Languages, Sciences and Humanities has been below expectations. Many research studies have been conducted to mitigate the challenges, though little focus has been directed at examination practices. Thus, this study intended to investigate the relationship between examination management practices and academic performance of students in secondary schools in Embu East Sub-county, Embu County, Kenya. The objectives of this study included; examination setting, distribution, invigilation and marking practices in relation to academic performance. The study was guided by The Systems Theory. The study adopted a mixed method approach since it involved collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The study thus applied explanatory sequential design which involved mixing both quantitative and qualitative research and methods. The target population for this study comprised 40 Principals, 370 Teachers, 1 Education Officer, 1 Sub-county Director of Education, and 2000 Form III Students all totaling to 2412. Using The Central Limit Theorem, the researcher sampled 300 respondents, that is, 12.44% of 2412. Stratified sampling was used to create 5 different strata based on the number of zones in Embu East Sub-county. From each stratum, 1 principal, the Sub-county Director of Education and the Education Officer were selected using purposive sampling. Simple random sampling was applied to select 11 teachers and 47 Form III Students. The sampling procedures adopted enabled the researcher to realize a sample of 5 Principals (3 Male and 2 Female), 58 Teachers (31 Male and 27 Female), and the Sub-county Director of Education, the Education Officer and 235 Form III Students (153 Male and 82 Female). Questionnaires, interview schedules and documentary sources were used to collect data. Piloting of research instruments was conducted amongst 2 Principals, 8 Teachers and 10 Form III Students in Embu East Sub-county to establish validity, reliability, credibility and dependability. Reliability was obtained through test re-test method and reliability coefficient obtained using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Method and a reliability coefficient of $r = 0.735$ was obtained indicating internal consistency. Credibility of qualitative data was ascertained by data triangulation through multiple analysts or experts. To guarantee dependability, each qualitative data collection process was reported in detail to enable the researcher to repeat the inquiry and achieve similar results. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically whereas quantitative data was analyzed descriptive statistics whereas and inferential statistics using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) in Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21). The findings of the study were presented using tables. The study established that there different examination practices which enhance students' academic performance. These include; setting, distribution, invigilation and marking practices which have not been fully embraced by most schools. The study thus recommends that schools and other education stakeholders should organize for training of teachers in order to acquire pre-requisite skills in setting examinations. There should be enough security during distribution of examinations to eliminate roadside examination malpractice. The examination distributors should be trained on ethics and adherence to distribution practices with minimum supervision. Schools should follow specifications for examination invigilation based on the number of students per class during examination session. Marking and grading of examination results should be based on a universal standard in comparison with other schools in order for students to rank themselves and thus improve. The Ministry of Education should ensure implementation of examination management practices.