

Influence of Afrocentric Evaluation Methods on Societal Norms Among Secondary School Learners in Meru County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The school system is expected to inculcate desirable societal norms in the learners. However, cases of unacceptable norms such as immorality, destruction of property, riots, strikes, drug abuse and disrespect for authority have been on the increase despite numerous interventions put in place by the government and individual educational institutions such burning of external exams, abolition of visiting days and holiday tuition. This study sought to examine the application of Afrocentric teaching methodology to enhance societal norms among secondary school learners in Meru County, Kenya. The study adopted exploratory descriptive research approach. The study used questionnaires and interview schedules to collect data. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and coefficient of variation. Inferential statistics used for data analysis was Linear Regression Analysis. The study found out that integration of Afrocentric evaluation methods into current Kenyan school system has statistically significant influence on societal norms among secondary school learners. The findings of this study will provide useful knowledge in regard to Afrocentric evaluation methods and societal norms and provide a basis for further studies.

Key Words: Influence, Afrocentric, Evaluation methods, Societal norms

Introduction

An assessment exercise refers to the process of collecting information about a student to help in making an evaluation about the progress and development of the student According to Chilisa (2012) Afrocentric evaluation strategies emphasize on making evaluation culturally relevant. It advocates for culturally responsible and acceptable practices through incorporation of African voices in the practices. This implies that an evaluation exercise should be guided by certain values that acceptable in one's society. Tests and assessment tools should use a language that is neutral, meaning that it will neither give undue advantages to some learners nor will it hurt or unduly disadvantage others. According to Guba and Lincoln (2005) the world is diverse,

culture is diverse and therefore evaluation methods should take care of those diversities and not see learners' backgrounds in one colour.

A research study by Jeng (2012) on rebirth, restoration and reclamation, the potential for Africa centered evaluation and development models revealed that evaluation strategies should not blindly rely on Eurocentric models. An evaluation that would benefit African children should take into consideration the learners' cultural backgrounds because learners' cultural background and experiences form the learners' foundation of learning and understanding the world. According to a research study by Muwanga-Zake (2009) on building bridges across knowledge systems: Ubuntu and participative research paradigms in Bantu communities in Africa, an evaluation exercise should consider aspects of communal nature and collective responsibility of indigenous African communities. This would promote those African values that should live beyond the contemporary globalization which is characterized by capitalistic nature of modern societies. According to a research study by Moore and Zenda (2012) on contemporary development challenges for Africa and their implications for evaluation, an evaluation exercise should aim at building a relationship between the learner and the evaluator. An evaluation exercise therefore ought to take into consideration the learners' views and interest for that relationship to be well established.

Useful classroom assessments will provide feedback through corrective instructions in the spirit of giving students a second chance to demonstrate success thus helping them to learn and acquire intended skills, values and attitudes (Stiggins, 2002). Gronlund (2004) in his book titled assessment of student achievement shows that evaluation has numerous benefits including being an important component in improving education but not just ranking students or schools. Evaluation thus helps teachers to improve the use of results and align their teaching with desired norms and values. According to studies by Rogers (2006) on effective student assessment and evaluation in the classroom, credible evaluation guides students to know what they have learnt in the classroom, the skills and attitudes they have acquired and therefore are able to know where they need to put more effort to succeed. Evaluation thus helps students to plan and revise their classroom instructions.

According to Alberta Assessment Consortium (2005) scoring guide of an evaluation should not be complicated for students to understand and should avoid any content or language that is sensitive, sexist or offensive. After an evaluation exercise results should be promptly communicated. According to a research study by Fernard (2002) the evaluator should think of a general motivation as a reward to the learners based on their performance and collaboration. This is because students can be reinforced to learn what is desired by a physical stimuli such as food. Such an intervention would counter the learners' negative feelings and lack of assertiveness when they consistently do poorly in an assessment exercise. According to Ndambuki, Rono and Frank (2006) affirming children and encouraging them will boost their social and emotional health.

Statement of the Problem

Kenyan society has entrusted the school system with the key role of socialization. The schooling process is expected to inculcate desirable societal norms among learners. However, cases of undesirable behaviors that do not conform to acceptable societal norms such as immorality, destruction of property, riots, strikes, drug abuse and disrespect for authority have been on the increase despite interventions put in place by the government and the individual educational institutions to make the learning environment in schools learner friendly. This inconformity with societal norms raises concern on the role and effectiveness of school system in inculcating societal norms. This study sought to examine application of Afrocentric evaluation methods into the Kenyan school system to enhance inculcation of desirable societal norms among secondary school learners.

Objective

The objective of the study was to establish the influence of Afrocentric evaluation methods on societal norms among secondary school learners.

Hypothesis

The following Hypothesis was addressed:

H₀: There is no statistically significant influence of Afrocentric evaluation methods on societal norms among secondary school learners in Meru County, Kenya.

Methodology

This study used exploratory descriptive research design and correlation design. Descriptive design was applicable for the study because it embarks on investigating and finding the real nature of the problem. The target population was 86,700 subjects and sample size was 384. The validity of the instrument was ensured through assistance of the supervisors. Reliability of the instrument was ascertained through a pilot study and a correlation coefficient of 0.774 was established.

Results and Discussions

The current study sought to determine the influence of Afrocentric evaluation methods on societal norms among secondary school learners in Meru County, Kenya. The respective research findings are presented in Table 1.

Contemporary Evaluation Methods

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for each of the contemporary evaluation methods variables measured. The researcher analyzed the information regarding contemporary evaluation methods and got means and standard deviations of the responses. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Contemporary Evaluation Methods

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	CV
Classroom assessment tests don't come as surprises to learners.	376	3.35	1.232	36.819
Teachers give clear corrective instructions after an evaluation exercise.	377	3.59	1.015	28.279
Teachers guide learners on what is to be evaluated	377	3.34	1.131	33.821
Teachers don't use test to rank learners but rather to get feedback on what they have taught.	377	3.56	0.993	27.927
Evaluation helps learners to revise what they have learnt in classroom.	377	3.63	1.036	28.506
Assessment tests do not use language that is sensitive and offensive.	377	3.29	1.217	37.036
Tests and examinations cover both cognitive and behavior attitudes.	377	3.29	1.153	35.042
Teachers evaluate what they have taught.	377	3.47	1.185	34.103
Overall Mean Score	377	3.45	1.113	32.351

The research findings presented in Table 1 show that evaluation helps learners to revise what they learnt in classroom had the highest mean score of 3.63. This implies that on average the respondents tended to agree that evaluation that is done in their schools is useful in helping the learners to revise what their teachers have covered in class. The least mean score (3.29) was registered on two parameters (Assessment tests do not use language that is sensitive and offensive and tests and examinations cover both cognitive and behavior attitudes). This implies that on average most respondents indicated that they had no opinion on the two statements. The findings further imply that the responses were neutral, meaning that the respondents could neither agree nor disagree with the given statements. Similarly these results imply that it is not very clear to tell whether the tests and examinations in secondary schools evaluate both cognitive and behavior attitudes of the learners. Information presented in Table 1 indicate that the statement teachers don't just use tests to rank learners but rather to get feedback on what they have taught had a mean score of 3.56. This implies that on average the respondents tended to agree that teachers use the feedback they get through evaluation exercises to improve their teaching. The results further indicate that all the variables in study had close mean scores ranging from 3.29 to 3.63. The results therefore reveal that all the variables under study had moderate agreement with an overall mean score of 3.45 which implies that the responses were ranging between having no opinion and agreeing with the given statements. These results agree with research findings of a study by Hansan (2016) on teaching dispositional strategies which established that if teachers utilize feedback they get about their learners, they can reorganize their content delivery in a way that will assure them of achieving their set objectives.

Afrocentric Evaluation Methods

Information was sought on Afrocentric evaluation methods. The respondents indicated their agreement with given statements and mean and standard deviation were computed. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Afrocentric Evaluation Methods

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	CV
Evaluation by observing how the learner works promotes sense of responsibility.	377	4.22	0.806	19.107
Evaluation through participation in what is taught encourages honesty among learners.	377	4.33	0.785	18.117
Evaluating the level of engagement during the learning process promotes integrity.	377	4.27	0.790	18.489
Active involvement in productive work during the learning promotes hard work.	377	4.42	0.740	16.737
Role playing enhances transparency and honesty.	377	4.37	0.743	17.014
Evaluating the character of the learner promotes acceptable social values.	377	4.30	0.768	17.841
Overall Mean Score	377	4.32	0.772	17.884

The research findings in Table 2 indicate that active involvement in productive work during learning promotes hard work had the highest mean score of 4.42 while evaluation by observing how the learner works promotes sense of responsibility had the least mean score of 4.22. This implies that on average, the participants' responses tended toward strongly agreeing. The results therefore imply that most of the respondents believed that involving learners in productive work during learning process can encourage students to work hard. The results in Table 38 also indicate that evaluating by observing how the learners work could promote sense of responsibility had the least mean score mean score of 4.22. This implies that the least responses to the statements were agreeing, implying further that no respondent disagreed with the given statements. The findings also show that for all the variables under study, mean scores were very close ranging from 4.22 to 4.42. Therefore for all the variables in the study, the agreements were high with an overall mean score of 4.32. This implies that on average the responses to all parameters of Afrocentric evaluation methods were above agreeing.

These results agree with Wilmot (2009) on African life and customs who indicated that application of Afrocentric perspectives in schools can improve education system and enhance desired behavior by blending Eurocentric and Afrocentric ideas for the good of African children. The findings also agree with Olaniyan (2006) who established that when emphasis is laid on African cultural traditions, values and

symbols of communication, desirable behaviors can be instilled in the learners. Omolewa (2007) on traditional modes of education and their relevance in modern society supports the findings of the current study by asserting that Afrocentric principles in a school system facilitate for a holistic education in which children's home experiences are linked to school learning.

Correlation of Evaluation Methods and Societal Norms

The objective of the current study was to determine the influence of Afrocentric evaluation methods on societal norms among secondary school learners. A correlation analysis was conducted in order to assess the relationships among the research variables. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Evaluation Methods and Societal Norms

			Societal Norms	Contemporary Evaluation methods	Evaluation Methods
Societal Norms	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	377			
Contemporary Evaluation methods	Pearson Correlation	.436**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000			
	N	377		377	
Integrated Afrocentric Evaluation Methods	Pearson Correlation	.484**	.929**		1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		
	N	377	377		377

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results presented in Table 3 show varied degree of relationship between societal norms, contemporary evaluation methods and integrated Afrocentric evaluation methods. The results indicate that contemporary evaluation methods had a fair positive correlation with societal norms ($r = 0.436$, $p\text{-value} < 0.01$; sig 2-tailed = $0.000 < 0.05$). The research findings further show that integrated Afrocentric evaluation methods had a fair positive correlation with societal norms ($r = 0.484$, $p\text{-value} < 0.01$; sig. 2-tailed = $0.000 < 0.05$). This fair positive correlation therefore implies that integration of Afrocentric evaluation methods into the contemporary

school system in Kenya fairly influences societal norms among secondary school learners.

Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

The third objective of the current study was to determine the influence of Afrocentric evaluation methods on societal norms among secondary school learners. To assess the relationship between evaluation methods and societal norms, the following hypothesis was tested:

H₀₃: There is no statistically significant influence of Afrocentric evaluation methods on societal norms among secondary school learners in Meru County, Kenya.

In order to test this hypothesis, a linear regression analysis was done at 95% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$). The contemporary evaluation methods and the integrated Afrocentric evaluation methods were regressed against societal norms to establish the goodness of fit, the overall significance and the individual significance of the Model. The results are presented in Table 4, Table 5 and Table 6.

To establish the percentage of variation in societal norms that is explained by independent variable in the Model, the researcher regressed contemporary evaluation methods and integrated Afrocentric evaluation methods against societal norms. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

The Goodness of Fit of Models

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Contemporary Evaluation Methods	.436 ^a	0.190	0.188	0.53375
Integrated Afrocentric Evaluation Methods	.484 ^a	0.234	0.232	0.51919

The information presented in Table 4 shows that contemporary evaluation methods had influence on societal norms among secondary school learners. The coefficient of determination is 0.190. This suggests that 19% of variation in societal norms is explained by current contemporary evaluation methods. The results in Table 4 also indicate that 23.4% of variation in societal norms is explained by integrated

Afrocentric evaluation methods. The coefficient of determination is 0.234. Therefore based on these results, the study revealed that integrated evaluation methods contribute significantly towards societal norms.

The researcher conducted analysis of variance in order to assess the robustness and overall significance of the evaluation Model. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5
The Overall Significance of the Models

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Contemporary Evaluation Methods	Regression	25.114	1	25.114	88.154	.000 ^b
	Residual	106.832	375	0.285		
	Total	131.946	376			
Integrated Afrocentric Evaluation Methods	Regression	30.861	1	30.861	114.485	.000 ^b
	Residual	101.086	375	0.270		
	Total	131.946	376			

The research findings in Table 5 indicate that contemporary evaluation methods significantly influence societal norms with F statistics = 88.154 and a p-value $0.000 < 0.05$. This implies that the regression Model is statistically significant at 5% level of significance. The results further show that integrated Afrocentric evaluation methods significantly influence societal norms with F statistics = 114.485 and a p-value $0.000 < 0.05$. This also implies that the regression Model is statistically significant at 5% level of significance.

The researcher sought to establish the significance of the individual variables in the evaluation Model. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Individual Significance of the Model

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
Contemporary Evaluation Methods	(Constant)	2.531	0.145		17.406	0.000
	Contemporary Evaluation methods	0.388	0.041	0.436	9.389	0.000
Integrated Afrocentric Evaluation Methods	(Constant)	1.788	0.197		9.095	0.000
	Integrated Afrocentric Evaluation Methods	0.548	0.051	0.484	10.700	0.000

The results in Table 6 show that contemporary evaluation methods were considered to be statistically significantly significant with t-value of 9.389 and p-value $0.000 < 0.05$. This implies that for one unit change in contemporary evaluation methods, societal norms increase by a factor of 0.388. The study further revealed that there exists a statistically significant relationship between integrated Afrocentric evaluation methods and societal norms at 5% level of significance (p-value = $0.000 < 0.05$) This implies that for one unit change in integrated Afrocentric evaluation methods, societal norms increase by a factor of 0.548.

The study conclusively revealed that contemporary evaluation methods and integrated Afrocentric evaluation methods influence societal norms at 5% level of significance. The null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant influence of Afrocentric evaluation methods on societal norms among secondary school learners, is not supported in the current study. The predictive Models for societal norms in respect to evaluation methods can be stated as follows:

$$Y = 2.531 + 0.388 X_{31}$$

$$Y = 1.788 + 0.548 X_3$$

Where Y = Societal norms

X_{31} = Contemporary evaluation methods

X_3 = Integrated Afrocentric evaluation methods

2.531 and 1.788 are constants
0.388 and 0.548 are regression coefficients.

The current study established that Afrocentric evaluation methods enhance societal norms. This study is in line with a study by Gronlund (2004) on assessment of students' achievements in England which shows that evaluation has numerous benefits including helping teachers to improve the use of the results in order to align their teaching with desired norms and values. Gronlund (2004) established that an evaluation should guide learners to discover their strengths as well as their areas of need. The findings of this study also agree with Guskey (2003) who found that an evaluation assessment should not be a matter of do-or-die experience to the learners. The study confirmed that evaluation should be an on-going effort to help or guide students to learn values and that an evaluation that enhances societal norms therefore does not condemn learners on the basis of their performance outcome but rather encourages learners to revisit what was intended for them to acquire in class. Guskey (2003) further supports the findings of the current study by arguing that teachers need to be given adequate formal training on how to develop evaluation in forms of quizzes, tests and assignments.

Similar studies by Rogers (2006) on effective student assessment and evaluation in the classroom echo the findings of this study by revealing that learners' behaviors are improved by credible evaluation that guides students to review what they have learnt in the classroom and the desired values and attitudes they are expected to acquire. Similarly the findings of this study are backed by Arrasian (2005) who reveals that an evaluation should not come as a secret to the students, especially at the middle grade levels. Informing students on evaluation time and areas to be covered assists the learner to master of what is to be evaluated and enables them to live according to the desired norms and values. The findings of the current study however disagree with the studies by Perkins and Craig (2006) on a successful social norms campaign to reduce college student drinking which reveal that evaluation methods have negative impact on societal norms because most evaluations strategies are only focused on cognitive skills. The results further agree with Ndambuki, Rono and Frank (2006) who revealed that affirming children after an evaluation exercise promotes good morals.

Interview Results on Evaluation Methods

To assess the respondents' opinion on evaluation methods and societal norms, the researcher conducted interviews with teachers and students. The researcher sought to know the common evaluation methods or strategies used in their schools. Teachers and HODs informed the study that classroom assignments and tests, monthly tests, impromptu quizzes and end of term tests or exams are the commonest evaluation techniques used in most secondary schools. The researcher further sought to know if societal norms could be enhanced through the common evaluation strategies and how. Teachers and HODs were of the opinion that the modality of administration of evaluation methods could determine their success or failure in inculcating societal norms. They said that for evaluation methods to be used as avenues of inculcating societal norms, all items in them should be objective. Objectivity in evaluation would encourage learners to be open minded and avoid centering their thinking on only themselves. This would also help them to see the relationship between their actions or conduct and other people's behavior thereby promoting harmonious co-existence. These findings are in agreement with Singleton and Linton (2006) on courageous conversations about race who stressed on the value of objectivity in evaluating learners because that objectivity would help teachers to treat learners equally and create a conducive atmosphere for desired values and norms to thrive in school.

Teachers further said that how evaluation results are utilized matters a lot. They said that societal norms could be enhanced if evaluation results were to be used to motivate learners, boost their self-esteem and build confidence in the learners. Teachers and HODs argued that unfortunately evaluation results are mainly used to rank students thereby neglecting to use the same to build learners' character. They likewise said that it would be more beneficial to learners if the results were to be used to revise what has been taught or what was intended for learners to acquire. This approach according to the teachers and HODs would encourage all learners to express themselves with teachers' major role being to guide and correct them. These findings are in agreement with Tobin and Vincent (2011) who established that teachers can boost learners' acquisition of intended values by getting to know more about them, talking to them and encouraging them before and after an evaluation especially when they have performed poorly.

Teachers and HODs further argued that when evaluation methods cover all aspects of learning, including behavior and attitude, norms and values such as honesty, faithfulness and integrity would be more enhanced. They also said that when teachers clearly guide learners on what is to be evaluated, hard work and sense of responsibility are more enhanced among the learners. Teachers were of the opinion that transparency in the scope of an evaluation enables learners to achieve, acquire skills, values and attitudes that intended for them to learn in a school system. These results agree with Gronlund (2004) and Rogers (2016) who established that a good evaluation should guide learners to master what they have learnt in the classroom. Gronlund (2004) further argued that an evaluation that would assist teachers to achieve set objectives should facilitate identification of students' strengths and areas of need. These findings are also supported by research findings of a research study by Onyango, Raburu and Aloka (2016) who revealed that making clear the guiding rules for norms and their consequences in school when one breaks them enhances good behavior of the learners. The learners act conscious of the rules and consequences which they will not wish to experience.

The researcher sought to know from students in what ways evaluation methods promote societal norms in their school. Students were of the opinion that teachers should communicate clearly before and in the evaluation for societal norms to be enhanced. They said that communicating clearly on areas to be evaluated, constructing evaluation items in a simple and clear language that is understandable to students could boost performance and self-esteem thereby promoting self-respect and respect for others. Students similarly said that teachers' condemnation of students based on an outcome of an evaluation develops stigma in students and makes it difficult for them to acquire desirable societal norms and values. Students further argued that societal norms could be more enhanced if teachers appreciate learners' abilities and guide them to fully exploit their potential in order to improve. These findings are in agreement with Guba and Lincoln (2005) who found that evaluation exercises that use a language acceptable to the learners are more likely to promote inculcation of desired societal norms and values.

Similarly, the interviewed students believed that evaluation strategies used by their teachers would help them more to appreciate societal norms and values if they were to

focus on all areas that students were expected to grow in school. This would mean that evaluation items include academic, social, physical, and spiritual aspects of education. Students argued that this would be a remedy to students' rebellion towards school systems as they would clearly see something that they have acquired through their learning. Interviewed students further said that societal norms could be enhanced if all students are given equal opportunities to perform. They were of the opinion that rewards after an evaluation should be fairly distributed considering all areas of learning and achievements without discrimination or overemphasis of one aspect of learning at the expense of others. These results agree with Swason (2006) and Machado (2016) on strategies of promoting values in education who established that a good evaluation that promotes desired values should be well balanced for all learners to experience inclusion of areas they know. The findings of the current study are further supported by Chilisa (2012) and Guba and Lincoln (2005) who established that an evaluation should consider cultural and context diversities and at the same time guide learners on areas of focus by the evaluation.

Strategies of Evaluation Methods to Enhance Societal Norms

The study sought for suggestions from respondents on how evaluation methods could be improved to enhance societal norms. Respondents gave suggestions in open-ended questions of the questionnaire. The results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Strategies to Improve Evaluation Methods

Statement	Percentage
Evaluating all aspects of learning	12.4%
Considering talents and participation in ranking learners	13.3%
Consistently evaluating behavior of learners	14.8%
Emphasizing integrity in all evaluations	13.8%
Emphasizing more on learners character	14.2%
Guiding learners on what is to be evaluated	8.9%
Exercising transparency in evaluation	9.3%
Giving encouraging positive feedback after evaluation	4.4%
By varying evaluation methods used	8.9%

The information presented in Table 7 indicates that majority (14.8%) suggested that teachers should consistently evaluate the behavior of learners while 14.2% suggested that emphasizing more on learners' character could enhance societal norms. Table 39

further shows that emphasizing integrity in all evaluations to enhance societal norms was suggested by 13.8% of the respondents. The results further indicate that evaluating all aspects of learning was suggested by 12.4% of the respondents while 13.3% of the respondents suggested that considering talents and individual participation in ranking learners could enhance societal norms. The least percentage (4.4%) of respondents suggested that giving encouraging positive feedback after an evaluation enhances societal norms. The findings on evaluating all aspects of learning are in agreement with Gronlund (2004) who said that an objective evaluation which has a higher likelihood of effectively instilling desirable behavior, should assess and thereby encourage learners to identify their strengths and areas of weakness. According to Gronlund such an evaluation will take care of learners' diversity.

Conclusions

The findings of the study revealed that Afrocentric evaluation method contributes significantly to enhancement of societal norms at 5% level of significance. The study shows that Afrocentric evaluation methods have significant influence on societal norms. The study indicates that the highest percentage of variation in societal norms in the Model was as a result of integrating Afrocentric evaluation methods into the current Kenyan evaluation methods in school system. A unit change in integrated evaluation methods similarly resulted to the highest increase in societal norms compared to current Kenyan evaluation methods alone. From the results of this study, the researcher therefore concludes that integrating Afrocentric evaluation methods into the current Kenyan evaluation methods would significantly improve societal norms among secondary school learners.

Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations:

- i. There is need to consider integrating Afrocentric evaluation methods into Kenyan school system for maximum enhancement of societal norms.
- ii. There is need to sensitize teachers and students on the importance of integration of Afrocentric evaluation methods into Kenyan school system.

Suggestions for Further Research

The study made the following suggestions for further research:

- i. There is need to investigate the impact of learners family background on their conformity to societal norms.
- ii. There is need to investigate the impact of media influences on students' acquisition of societal norms.

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