

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 evaluation methods 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 evaluation exercise refers to the process of collecting information about a student to help in making a judgment 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 color.

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 contemporary society. 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 evaluations 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.

Afrocentric Evaluation Methods

Information was sought on Afrocentric evaluation methods. The respondents indicated their agreement with given statements. The mean and standard deviation were computed. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

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 1 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 1 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 Afrocentric 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 2.

Table 2

Afrocentric Evaluation Methods and Societal Norms

			Societal Norms	Contemporary Evaluation methods	Evaluation Methods
Societal Norms		Pearson Correlation	1		
		Sig. (2-tailed)			
		N	377		
Afrocentric Methods	Evaluation	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 2 show varied degree of relationship between societal norms and Afrocentric evaluation methods. The research findings further show that integrating 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

To assess the relationship between evaluation methods and societal norms, the following hypothesis was tested:

H₀: 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 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 3, Table 4 and Table 5.

To establish the percentage of variation in societal norms that is explained by independent variable in the Model, the researcher regressed integrated Afrocentric evaluation methods against societal norms. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

The Goodness of Fit of Model

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

The information presented in Table 3 shows that evaluation methods had influence on societal norms among secondary school learners. The results 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 Afrocentric 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 4.

Table 4

The Overall Significance of the Model

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Total	131.946	376			
Integrated Afrocentric Evaluation Methods	Regression	30.861	1	30.861	114.485	.000
	Residual	101.086	375	0.270		
	Total	131.946	376			

The research findings in Table 4 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 5.

Table 5

Individual Significance of the Model

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
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 there exists a statistically significant relationship between integrated Afrocentric evaluation methods and societal norms at 5% level of significance ($p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$) 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 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:

$$Y = 1.788 + 0.548 X_1$$

Where Y = Societal norms

X_1 = Integrated Afrocentric evaluation methods

1.788 is the constant which is the value of Y when X_1 is zero.

0.548 is the regression coefficient which shows the expected increase in the value of Y which corresponds to a unit increase in X_1 .

The current study established that Afrocentric evaluation methods enhance societal norms. This study is in line with a study by Gronlud (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. Gronlud (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.

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 a high 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 Afrocentric 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 researcher made the following recommendations:

- i. There is need to integrate 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.

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