

FACTORS AFFECTING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN
NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS: A CASE STUDY OF CHINATO DIVISION,
KURIA EAST DISTRICT, KENYA

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Okello Mary Atieno, do hereby declare that this research project is my original work and has never been submitted for any academic award. Where the works of others have been cited acknowledgment has been made.

Signature.....

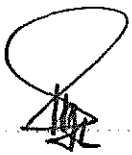
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Date 11/08/2011

APPROVAL

I certify that the work submitted by this candidate was under my supervision.

Her work is ready for submission, to be evaluated for the award of a Bachelor of Education in Arts.

Supervisor.....

Mr. Ssekajugo Derrick

Date.....11/08/2021.....

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my beloved husband Mr. Marwa and my daughters; Lynn, Jenipher and Michelle.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research study has been as a result of the efforts of several individuals. Indeed, am greatly indebted to my supervisor Mr. Ssekajugo Derrick for all the guidance and help accorded to me during this study. On the same note, my sincere gratitude and thanks go to the Almighty God for enabling me reach this far in the field of academia.

Further appreciation goes to my dearest husband Mr. Marwa who tirelessly supported and assisted me in all areas, my daughters Lynn, Jenipher and Michelle, my mother and my sister Joyce not forgetting my classmates and colleagues at Komotobo primary school.

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ABSTRACT

This study was intended to determine the relationship between teacher factors and students performance in KCSE (Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education) in Kuria East District within Kenya. Relevant literature related to the field of study was gathered and this assisted the researcher get a clear picture of what the entire study was to entail. A descriptive design was viewed relevant for use in this study and together the application of questionnaires and interview guides, the researcher managed to gather data from the key informants. The data collected were sorted and processed and there after, analyzed. The findings were presented in tables of percentages and frequency distribution and this gave a visual impression to the findings of the study. Recommendations were made which called for using student-centered teaching approaches, using meaningful activities in their classrooms, promoting conceptual understanding in different subjects offered and emphasizing process rather than product during problem-solving sessions among others.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Kenya Educational system has expanded significantly since independence, secondary education has played a significant role in supplying man power needed for economic growth and development in Kenya by creating a class of educated leaders, planners expect secondary schools and instructions of higher learning to produce the critically needed middle and higher level man for enhancement of socio – economic development (Herbison and Myers 1964).

This explains why Kenya spends substantial amount of money in education. The Government continues to increase resources allocated to education thus in 2004/2005 financial year gross expenditure for Ministry of Education estimated to be Kshs 86,123.14 Million representing an increase of 12.2% from Kshs 76,724.78 million. Higher education accounted for 12% of the total expenditure recurrent expenditure for higher education increased by 30.3% (Republic of Kenya 2005).

However, developments cannot be achieved without addressing the issue of quality teaching. According to Sifuna (1973) there was an attempt to tackle the problem of the quality of Kenyan teachers as early as 1938 when the Christian Missionaries made a proposal for re-organization of teachers training. He further noted that a committee headed by hock hart reported on a design to expand the teacher training. The general feeling was that unless the

expansion of the teacher education kept pace with the overall rapid growth in the educational system, there was bound to be a problem with educational standards. Abidha (1983) and Ochanda (1983) also shows the fact that the quality of the teacher determine the success of any educational system and the level of educational performance and achievements in examinations. This view is also upheld by the national committee on Educational objectives and polices (Republic of Kenya, 1976, 109), which states "the qualitative attributes of the teachers are of paramount importance in determining the quality of education in which intellectual developments of the child is based".

The Education office noted that while performance in other subjects was above average, that of mathematics and sciences was much below the average. The quality of the teaching force, alongside the completion rates and transition rates, are some of the key determinants of efficiency and effectiveness at any level of Education (MOEST 2000). According to UNESCO (1964), whatever the pattern of teaching may be, the teacher's part in it is the most important single factor. Given these views, the researcher intends to examine whether there exists a relationship between teacher factors such as experience, qualification, motivations attitudes and contact hours with the students performance.

It's upon such a background that this study was undertaken given the competence of the researcher in teaching mathematics having witnessed the problem of poor performance of mathematics in his school of study.

1.2 Statement of the problem

According to the Ministry of Education, science and technology (MOEST) report of the third Teacher Education Conference in Njoro (1995), the teacher's performance heavily depends on a number of factors including professional training, attitude, academic background and the education infrastructure of the institution as well as staff development programmes that are in place at a given time. According to data obtained from District Education Office (District Education Office) teaching is likely to be wanting as reflected in the poor performance of students in KCSE results of 2008. It's upon such a background that this study seeks to explore teacher factors responsible for the poor academic performance of students in Kuria East district, Kenya.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 General objective

The objective of this study was to determine the relationship between teacher factors and students performance in KCSE (Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education) in Kuria East District, Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

This study was intended to:

1. Determine the factors affecting student's performance in Kenya certificate of secondary education.
2. Determine the relationship between teacher experience and students performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education

3. Find out the relationship between teacher qualification and student performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education

1.4 Research questions

1. What factors are affecting student's performance in Kenya Certificate of secondary education?
2. What is the relationship between teacher experience and students performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education?
3. What is the relationship between teacher qualification and student performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education?

1.5 Significance of the study

The findings of the study:-

Will provide information to be used by Ministry of Education policy makers to identify teacher factors that can be associated more with high performance in national examinations among students

Will enable policy makers make provision for improving teacher quality with increased knowledge on the relationship between teacher factor and achievement among students in KCSE.

Will Increase awareness of the head teachers, board of governors and PTA and teachers on teacher factors associated with high performance national examinations.

Will provide an objective evaluation of the teacher quality necessary for high achievement and provide a meaningful basis for training, retraining and or in servicing of the teachers for improvement in achievement so as to reduce wastage through repetition and to increase enrolment in the mathematics and science course which will increase efficiencies, promote industrialization and increase productivity of the country.

1.6 Scope of study

The research was aimed at investigating the causes and effects of poor relationship among staffs within an institution and how they affect performance. The research was conducted within Kuria East district. The schools targeted were sampled from selected secondary schools in Chinato division, Kuria East district and a satisfactory sample collected. The research process took three months that is between May 2011 up to August 2011

1.7 Limitations of the study

In conducting this study, a number of challenges maybe encountered, including:

- Attitudes Towards the Exercise – Some respondents maybe unwilling to freely share the information (especially negative information). This is mainly true at the local level because of fear of not knowing whether the information could go to their superiors with negative repercussions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter gave reference to what other scholars have written about science as a subject and the problems encountered by students in studying it. The literature review in the study concerned the factors influencing the performance of students in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education. The literature review helped the researcher in data compilation, statistics analysis as well as in understanding the problem. The materials used in the review included magazines and journals on teaching methods, newspapers articles and education related websites over the internet.

2.2 Teacher length of experience and performance of students in secondary education

Besides the view by Parmay (1979) that there is an efficiency “freeze” by teacher after fifteen years of teaching experience, a study done by Thias and Carnoy (1972) in Kenya show that teacher experience is better predictor of examination performance than is the formal qualification of the teaching staff. They however hasten to add that this may not be due to the accumulated years of experience but probably due to the respect accorded to the older from the young generation in African societies and the fact that senior staffs are rarely transferred compared to the younger staffs.

Bridges (1986) Eshiwani (1986) and Ojwang (1995) from their studies confirmed that students with experienced teacher do better than those with less

experienced teacher. Can the government then reserve to training on job and cut training costs to make education more cost effective.

But Alexander and Simmon (1980) say experience is more associated with achievement of students only at the secondary level and further research is necessitated. Conducting this production function with teacher variables will enable me to discover the best combination of teacher characteristics (input) that can be functionally associated with performance (output). In the case of Kenya, the literature review shows that no study has examined the input output relationship at the school level with particular attention to teacher variables. This study tends to fill this gap as well as provision of a rationale for re-training and professional re-orientations services for serving mathematics teachers for the educational planners and ensure cost effectiveness in the education system.

2.3 Teacher qualification and achievement of students in secondary education

Teachers should have high mastery of subject content by going through formal education, which is beyond the level of his students (Psacharopolous 1985) this is supported by Caillods (1989) who found teachers with more post secondary education to achieve more with their students than teachers with less post secondary education.

The economist is much more interested in the relationship between input and output of the school systems as a measure of its productivity and efficiency

(Beeby, 1966) school quality can be seen at the level of materials inputs allocated per each school pupil and the level efficiency with which material inputs are organized to raise pupils performance (Eshiwani 1993).

The teacher is therefore a central input in the school system whose role on determining achievement needs investigation. Teacher certification and academic qualification are particularly important at upper secondary level (Alexander & Simmon, 1980).

This view is supported by Husen (1978) who says that there is a positive association between teacher training variables and standard learning. They are convinced that training teachers do make a difference and that teachers qualifications, experience and amount of Education and knowledge are truly to students achievements.

Maundu (1986), Twoli (1986) Sifuna (1989) and Ojwang (1995) found significant effect of teacher qualification on achievement of students. But Thias and Corney (1972) on the other hand revealed zero correlation between teacher qualification and student examination scores in Kenya, Egypt and Paraguay. Psacharopoulos (1985) also points out that students do almost as well when studying under untrained teacher as they do when studying under trained graduate from university.

Jones (1997) studied the effect of trained and untrained teacher in classroom performance in Barbadoes and established that trained teachers do not have advantage over untrained teachers in classrooms performance. Therefore the

need to confirm the effect of training on students achievement which will help the government to justify the huge expenditure on teachers training. The past studies stress education on qualification but even after achieving almost 100% teacher training for secondary level, the achievement in mathematics has remained low deteriorated to the detriments of girls.

2.4 Teachers motivation and performance of students in secondary level education

Teachers who spend time preparing lessons and marking homework and class work tend to achieve better result than those who don't (Colloids 1989).

Government need lift the teachers morale though most cannot afford monetary incentives, but by improving in rewards, career opportunities, initiatives and in service preparations, status and prestige by attracting high quality recruits and retaining talented practitioners in teaching and leadership posts (UNESCO 1994).

But teachers hardly spend any time preparing their lessons, they often don't use schemes of work nor do they keep records of work covered by pupils. Discipline relies too heavily on punishment. (CASTME International Formal of Education Development 2001, 361- 374)

Otieno (1997) studying the role overload among secondary school teachers in Nairobi found a significant relationship between role overload and achievements of students. He says that job stress is a major factor in low

teacher morale, poor performance, absenteeism and high job turnover. Teachers experiencing job stress have low morale and are not in a position to provide quality teaching. Both female and male workers in human service fields may experience same amount of stress but do cope differently, Malach and Jackson 1978 cited in Otieno (1997).

This calls for the investigation on how much the teachers of mathematics is motivated to participate in subject panels, external examination marking, co-curriculum activities, regular teaching, frequent testing lesson preparation and remedial teaching which facilitate high achievement in examination and consequently quality outputs.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the methods that the researcher used to select the geographical areas, from which research was carried out and methods of selection of respondents. It also explains the methods that were used to collect process and analyze data.

3.2 Research design

The study used a case study as a research design. Given the duration of the study, the researcher used a case study.

3.3 Study population

The study was carried out in Chinato division in Kuria East district, Kenya. The respondents to the study were teachers and students from the selected secondary schools

3.4 Sample size and selection

The respondents were drawn from selected secondary schools. The respondents to the study were teachers and students from the school.

3.5 Sources of data and data collection methods

This study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected using questionnaires, which were given to teachers. These were self administered since all the respondents were literate.

In carrying out research the researcher had an introduction letter from the course administrators which he took to the schools under study.

3.6 Data processing and analysis

This involved three sets of activities which included editing, coding and frequency tabulations. Editing was done by looking through each of the field questionnaire ascertaining that every applicable question had an answer and all errors eliminated for the completeness accuracy and uniformity.

The researcher then proceeded to code various responses given to particular questions that lack coding frames, the researcher then established how many times each alternative response category was given an answer using tally marks which will later be added up. Data was then presented in frequency tables rendering it ready for interpretation. Quotations and field notes made from interviews were also included.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1.0 Introduction

In this chapter an attempt is made to interpret and explain the findings. Also key information enables to relate to the specific objectives and give a clear picture of the results.

4.1.1 Data analysis and processing

Table 1: on response rate of the targeted sample

Planned no of response	40	100%
Actual response	25	62.5%
Non Response	15	37.5%

Source; primary data

Response Rate = $\frac{\text{Actual response}}{\text{Planned No of response}} \times 100$

Planned No of response

$$25/40 \times 100 = 62.5 \%$$

Table 2: on non-response

Type of response	Planned Response	Actual Response	Non- Response
Teachers	10	7	3
Students	30	18	12
Total	40	25	15

Source; primary data

Respondents Analysis

4.2 Research question one on whether there is a relationship between teacher qualification and students' performance in Kenya certificate of secondary education

4.2.1 Teachers response

Majority of response represented by 86 percent indicated that most students are affected by the teacher's qualifications, while 14 percent indicated that students are not affected by the teacher's quality.

4.2.2 Students response

Majority of the students response represented by 67 percent indicated that they were affected by the teacher's quality, while 33 percent indicated that they were not affected by the teachers' quality.

Table 3: on whether teaching methods affect students' performance in Kenya certificate of secondary education

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NO	12	67
YES	6	33
Total	18	100

Source; primary data

4.3 Research question two on how effective are the teaching methods on students' perception of secondary level education

4.3.1 Teachers response

57% of the respondents said that the teaching methods were very effective towards student's perception of sciences, while 43% of the respondents said that the teaching methods used by the teachers were not effective to change the student's perception of secondary level education as difficult subject.

Table 4: on how effective are the teaching methods on students' perception of secondary level education?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	4	57
NO	3	43
Total	7	100

Source; primary data

4.3.2 Students response

Out of the 18 respondents 56 percent of the students said that the teaching methods were not effective to change their perception of subjects offered in secondary level education. While 44percent said that the teaching methods were very effective and played a vital role in changing their perception towards sciences.

Table 5: Responses to whether students are satisfied with the teacher's strictness when teaching sciences.

8 RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	10	56
No	8	44
Total	18	100

Source; primary data

4.4 Research question three on whether secondary level education is important in the technological field.

4.4.1 Teachers response

Out of 7 respondents 60 percent said that secondary level education is important for one to venture in the technological field while, 40 percent said it's not vital.

Table 6: on whether secondary level education is important in the technological field.

8 RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	4	57
No	3	43
Total	7	100

Source; primary data

4.4.2 Students response

Majority of response represented by 76 percent indicated that most students see secondary level education as important in the technological field. While 24 percent indicated that they do not see secondary level education as important in the technological field.

Table 7: responses to whether secondary level education is important in technological field

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	6	86
NO	1	14
Total	7	100

Source; primary data

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter an attempt is made to discuss the findings and come up with conclusions and the recommendations there to.

5.2 Discussion and conclusions

One of the main outcomes of the study is the confirmation it has provided that boys and girls are performing differently at secondary level education. The findings of boys outperforming girls at secondary level education agree with those of Githua and Mwangi (2003) in Kenya, Afrassa(2002) in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa(Kogolla,Kisaka,& Waititu,2004) similar findings were also reported in other studies(Koller,Baumert,& Schnabel,2001).These findings however, contradict those of Hanna(2003),Boaler(1997) and Vale,Forgasz,& Horne(2004).It seems that the ern world has succefully tackled the problem of girls underachievement in secondary level education as opposed to boys through different intervention programmes,while in the developing countries still remains to be done.

This study also aimed to determine the factors that impact on the achievement of student's in Kenya certificate of secondary examinations.

One of the findings of the present study relates to the method of teaching normally employed at secondary level education in Kenya. The method was teacher-centered, and student's were passive and on the receiving end. This phenomenon reflected the lessons described by nunes and Bryant

(Nunes&Bryant, 1997),and the descriptions of secondary level education classes in Mauritius(Griffiths,1998,2000,2002)

It seems that insufficient opportunities are provided to be involved in their own learning, and emphasises the procedures used for solving problems. It seems that the examination-driven curriculum in Kenya leads to a more teacher-centered curriculum.

Teachers were to be playing a fundamental role in influencing students learning at secondary level education, as noted by Hanna&Nyhof-young (1995).They also helped student's to develop a positive attitude towards secondary education and motivate them towards the subjects offered. The respect student's have for their teachers could be noted during the classroom observations and interviews. This supports the finding of Aldridge, Fraser and huang (Aldridge, Fraser, &Huang, 1999) concerning the respect student's had for their teacher in Taiwan.

It was also found that teachers were seen to be strict, and that student's appreciated the strictness, claiming that this helped them to have a displied class in which to learn mathematics. Evidence of this can be found in the transcripts of student's interviews.

Teachers were found to be acting as role models, were possessing sound leadership skills and were of helpful nature. However, there were teachers who had a gender bias in their own perception. as described by elwood(Elwood,1999),they tended to describe male student's as able in certain subjects such as mathematics and sciences and female student's as being uncertain and not possessing enough faith in their own ability.

These findings were common for average and low performing girls-findings which are in agreement with those of Tiedemann(2000) cases where negative messages were sent to girls about their performance in sciences by teachers were noted in the present study also.

Interestingly, parental interest and involvement in their children education is high in Kenya. The contributions of parents towards the children learning at secondary level education as discussed. It was found that students are conscious of their parental aspirations and this plays an important role in their motivation towards education. It should also be noted that parents support towards education in Kenya is no longer gender-biased now-as it used to be. Parents believe in the power of education and the success of their children depends to a great extent on their educational, success.

However, the way of attributing success and failure in secondary level education to boys and girls still followed the pattern as described by Raty et al. (2002) where the success of boys was attributed to talent, while the success of girls was due to more effort.

Peers were found to be influential in a child's learning at secondary level education and, in some cases, in decisions to proceed further with other courses and the learning at secondary level in general. This agrees to the findings of Opdenakker&Van Damme (2001), Sam&Ernest (1999) and Hoxby (2002).

Peer influence is not restricted to the classroom only or to school mates, but from a much larger group through private tuition. The practice of private tuition allows students of different regions, colleges, cultures and social classes to be together and consequently to form a larger peer group. This study also looked at the peer influence within the classroom towards the teaching and learning at secondary level education.

A correlation coefficient of 0.336 between attitude towards secondary level education and performance in the tests was noted in this study. However no gender difference in attitude towards secondary level education was observed. A positive attitude towards secondary level education and interest in the subject tends to motivate students into putting more effort into their, and consequently enhanced their academic performance.

Achievements, concerning success or failure in secondary level education, it was found that students attributed success primarily to efforts-evidence coming from the transcripts of students interviews as discussed. These findings agreed with the findings of Mooney and Thornton (1999) but no apparent gender differences were noted – contrasting the outcomes reports by Ernest (1994) and Leder, Forgasz and Swolar (1996). It can be deduced that Kenya girls are different to Australian and English girls in this respect.

Prior ability from primary level education was found to play an important role in the achievements of students as claimed by O'Connor and Miranda (2002). This is so because of the hierarchical nature of the subject concepts build on prior

ones. This finding proved to be important as the way subjects is being taught at upper and lower secondary levels should be taken into account. There are cases of schools in Kenya where inexperienced teachers are being sent to lower secondary classes and the more qualified and experienced ones deal only with upper classes. The subject concepts have to be learnt properly right from lower classes to ensure a solid base for the students to assist them in their learning of secondary level subjects at each successive level.

A summary of these factors that impact on the secondary level subjects performance of boys and girls in Kenya as identified through the present study. Another factor, language, was also found to play a major role in the teaching and learning at secondary level education . It was revealed in this study that students were having problems tackling word problems or problems related to application to real life situations. Similar outcomes were highlighted in a study conducted by zevenbergen (2001).indeed, there is considerable debate related to the issue of language and education in Kenya

5.3 Recommendations

Implications of the findings for the research and theory

The most direct impact of this study will hopefully be in the classroom and will help teachers to use the findings, in particular;

1. using student-centered teaching approaches
2. using meaningful activities in their classrooms
3. promoting conceptual understanding in different subjects offered
4. emphasizing process rather than product during problem-solving sessions
5. Promoting collaborative learning during classes.

6. Helping students to develop a positive attitude towards all subjects offered at secondary level education.
7. Motivating students in their learning of subjects offered at secondary level education.
8. Enhancing the academic achievement of all students.
9. Promoting equity in education.

Teachers will have evidence on how different strategies can be incorporated with success into their regular classroom transactions and within their schedule of work. One teacher, who was a respondent of the study, stated that using cooperative learning and student-centered methods would be very time consuming and that teachers would face difficulties in completing syllabus

As argued in the previous chapters, one of the main worries of teachers and parents is that syllabus should be thoroughly completed. All that is required is readjustment.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

This study has just touched upon relationship between culture and performance in secondary level education. Kenya is a multicultural country with a blend of different cultures and an in-depth study wherein the issue of gender and secondary level education in relation to ethnicity would be valued

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Dear respondent,

I'm a student from Kampala International University, College Open education and Distance Learning collecting data in relation to factors influencing academic performance of students in Kenya certificate of secondary education, I request for your cooperation and I promise not to take much of your time.

Please note that we do not mention people's names to ensure privacy and confidentiality.

Personal details

PART ONE; BIO-DATA FOR RESPONDENTS

A) Sex:

Male

Female

B) Age

Age bracket	Tick where appropriate
20-23 years	
24-25 years	
26-30 years	

31-35 years	
36-40 years	
41-45 years	
46 years and above	

C) Education level

Please indicate your educational level

Educational level	Tick where appropriate
Primary education	
Secondary education	
Tertiary/college level	
University level	

TICK WHERE APPROPRIATE

i) Do you like your profession?

Yes No

ii) Do you enjoy teaching ?

Yes No

iii) Is education important in the technological field? If yes give reasons.

.....

.....

.....

iv) What do you believe to be factors influencing the performance of students in National examinations?

.....
.....
.....
v) Which teaching methods do you employ at your school?

.....
.....
.....
vi) What problems do learners encounter from the above mentioned factors?

.....
.....
.....
vii) What in your opinion is the impact of the above factors on student's perception of secondary level education?

Thanks

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Dear respondent,

I'm a student from Kampala International University, College Open education and Distance Learning collecting data in relation to factors influencing academic performance of students in Kenya certificate of secondary education, I request for your cooperation and I promise not to take much of your time.

Please note that we do not mention people's names to ensure privacy and confidentiality.

Personal details

PART ONE; BIO-DATA FOR RESPONDENTS

A) Sex:

Male

Female

B) Age

Age bracket	Tick where appropriate
13-14 years	
14-15 years	
15-16 years	
16-17 years	

17-18 years	
18 years and above	

C) Education level

Please indicate your educational level

Educational/professional level	Tick where appropriate
Form one	
Form two	
Form three	
Form four	

TICK WHERE APPROPRIATE

iii) Do you like education?

Yes

No

iv) Do you enjoy learning ?

Yes

No

iii) Is education important in the technological field? If yes give reasons.

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iv) What do you believe to be factors influencing the performance of students in National examinations?

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v) Which teaching methods do you employ at your school?

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vi) What problems do learners encounter from the above mentioned factors?

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vii) What in your opinion is the impact of the above factors on student's perception of secondary level education?

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Thanks