

# The Impact of Curriculum Content and Community Support on Primary Schools' Academic Achievement in Central Nyanza Region, Kenya

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**Abstract:** *Performance of primary schools in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education Examinations (KCPE) in Central Nyanza has been poor over the years. This has contributed to frustrations among parents, teachers, and community. This is because KCPE results are used for secondary school placement and other accountability purposes. The study sought to establish whether the curriculum content and parent/community support determine primary schools' academic achievement. The study was guided by the Transaction Theory of Teaching/Learning. The area of study was Central Nyanza Region, in the Counties of Siaya and Kisumu. The study employed the mixed methods approach and was conducted using descriptive survey design. The instruments used to collect data included questionnaire, interview guides and observation checklist. The sample was selected using stratified. Data was collected from 136 schools where 136 head teachers and 493 teachers were respondents. The author interviewed 36 teachers. The unit of analysis was primary schools' teachers. The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, such as measures of central tendency and percentages, were used to analyse the data. The General Linear Model was used to test the hypotheses. The level of significance was 0.05. The study found that the curriculum content influenced achievement. Another factor which determined schools' academic achievement was the parent/community support. The study recommended that syllabus coverage should be monitored regularly and the schools should be provided with adequate resources necessary for curriculum implementation such as classrooms. The community should also support teaching and learning in schools by encouraging their children to attend school regularly.*

**Keywords:** Curriculum Content, Community Support, Primary Schools Achievement, Kenya

## 1. Introduction

### Curriculum Content and Primary Schools Academic Achievement

#### *Syllabus Coverage*

According to Wiles and Bondi (2011), curriculum is a vehicle which the society uses to transmit its learning intentions. It is a contract between the school, parents and the learners. The head teacher should ensure that its implementation in the primary schools is monitored. Wiles and Bondi (ibid.) suggests that a head teacher can appoint a curriculum coordinator to assist him/her to ensure that there is quality delivery of the curriculum to improve student learning and therefore enhance achievement. The author also suggests that head teachers should encourage the teachers to use the syllabus in planning and preparations.

Head teachers can significantly contribute to learning in primary schools by regular supervision of teaching. In a study conducted in Imenti South, Meru County, Kenya, it was found that in primary schools where head teachers supervised syllabus coverage, pupils did very well in internal examinations. In schools where syllabus coverage is only 70%, pupils' performance was not good (www.uonbi.ac.ke).

According to Kafu (2010), many teachers rush to complete the syllabus. Teachers skip some topics and even avoid teaching non examinable subjects in the curriculum such as

Physical Education (PE). This behaviour does not support effective learning but contributes to poor achievement in primary schools. In their rush to complete the syllabus, during the teaching, teachers do not take into consideration the slow learners and this contributes to disparity in performance of schools.

Kamande (2013) indicates that the reason the syllabus is not covered in the specified period is due to time wastage. She indicates that in Kenyan schools, lessons do not start promptly and they are not taught consistently and in an election year, curriculum content coverage would be affected by interruptions. She quotes the late Minister of Education, the late Hon. Mutula Kilonzo, who had the following to say about syllabus coverage:

If lessons begin promptly and consistently during the given term dates, I don't think it will inconvenience syllabus coverage. However, in case of a presidential runoff, elections should be held on a weekend to minimize effect on curriculum content coverage (Kamande, 2013, p. 12).

Oluka and Okurot (2008) have found out that poor academic achievement by learners was affected by lack of completion of the syllabus. They note that poor syllabus coverage is affected by poor understanding of the curriculum content, poor interpretations, lack of materials such as teacher guides and poor curriculum management due to lack of planning, inadequate time to prepare the schemes of work and lesson plans. Kelly (2009) asserts that imposition on pupils of a

curriculum that is alien and which is not relevant to their needs is bound to affect their achievement. Kelly (ibid.) further argues that a curriculum plan should be supported by pupils' assessment and evaluation of teachers.

#### ***Difficulty of the Content and Schools Achievement***

Shiundu and Omulando (1992) indicate that in centralized systems of education like Kenya, the curriculum regulates what is supposed to be taught in schools. When the Curriculum is poorly interpreted in one school, while it is properly interpreted in another school, there will be differences in academic achievement between the two schools. According to Farrant (2007), curriculum content can be a determinant of achievement in schools where teachers don't understand the content of the curriculum. The teachers must be thoroughly familiar with the syllabus design in the areas where they are teaching. The teachers should be knowledgeable about the objectives, content and scope of the subject.

Tyler (1949) notes that one major cause of poor performance among pupils in primary schools is the teachers lack of understanding on why educational programmes exist and why certain subjects are taught in schools and why they are in the syllabus. Tyler (ibid.) is in agreement with Farrant (ibid.) that teachers' understanding of the syllabus can assist them to select and prepare appropriate materials and organize the learning experiences to enable the learners excel in their academic work. Tyler (ibid.) also proposes that process, input and product evaluation should be done through terminal examinations.

Oluca and Okurot (2008) have found out that pupils' achievement in Teso, Uganda, is affected by challenges in the interpretation of the syllabus. This leads to substandard teaching activities. They also observe that teacher guides are lacking, leading to poor preparation of lesson plans and teachers do not prepare any schemes of work.

Ornstein and Hunkins (1998) suggest that teachers should be involved in curriculum development to enable them evaluate their own failings and learners about the programme. The teachers should be the ones to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and work on it. They are best suited to know whether the objectives are being achieved or not. Teachers should be the key drivers in school based curriculum development activities. The comments show that where teachers are not involved in curriculum development poor syllabus interpretation is bound to take place leading to poor performance.

Shiundu and Omulando (1992) underscore the place of teachers in curriculum development by arguing that teachers should be involved in various stages of curriculum development such as writing books, organizing seminars and piloting of materials. They observe that failure to involve them in this critical activity results into poor curriculum interpretation in primary schools. Shiundu and Omulando (ibid.) have overlooked the aspect of involving parents, pupils and teachers in curriculum development matters. Poor perception of the 8-4-4 primary curriculum is due to the fact that pupils and parents have been ignored. There is need to

involve teachers in curriculum development. This will enable them to solve challenges which come with curriculum implementation.

The Kenya National Examinations Council (2007) report, which reviewed the performance of pupils who sat for KCPE in the year 2007, explains the trends in performance in each subject. The report explains how teachers need to interact with pupils so as to get the best results possible. This study treats the variables that influence achievement independently. The KNEC report further shows that for teachers to achieve good results, they must cover the syllabus. The findings in the report are crucial since they explain the relationship between examinations and the curriculum content.

#### ***Depth and Width of the Content and Schools Achievement***

Teachers have had a problem with primary education curriculum content because topics to be covered in some subjects are too wide. This affects teaching and learning. This shows that the effect of scope of content on pupils' achievement in KCPE examinations is an area which needs to be investigated further so as to provide solutions to the problem. The delays in solving the problem are causing untold frustration to pupils, teachers and parents. Tanner and Tanner (1995) are of the view that, in the selection of content during the curriculum design process, teachers should be involved in determining the topics to be taught in a particular subject and class. Curriculum designers in various subjects found in primary curriculum should closely work with teachers. This enhances linkage and support for teachers. Teachers need to be provided with a clear action plan to implement the syllabus. Tanner and Tanner (ibid.) insist that a good syllabus should incorporate variables such as, time to be covered, sequence (order) and balance.

Shiundu and Omulando (1992) explain that what goes into the curriculum for primary school education in Kenya is heavily influenced by powerful forces that control the school system. These forces normally work through Education Commissions. In Kenya, where a centralized system of government is practiced, central authorities have a lot of influence over curriculum planning. The Mackay Commission revised the national goals of education which led to revision of primary education curriculum. The revised national goals of education placed emphasis on economic development and therefore, there was need to review the curriculum to reflect these changes.

Shiundu and Omulando (ibid.) outline extensive stages that should be followed in translating national goals of education into a viable curriculum design. Challenges that teachers face in covering the primary school education syllabus can be traced to poor involvement of teachers in selection of content. They indicate that in the selection of content, curriculum designers should consider feasibility, learnability and usability of the content. They should find out whether or not there are adequate resources in the school system to support the implementation of the content. The ability of teachers to teach a new subject introduced should be taken into consideration. The selection of content should also consider the whether the content is interesting to the learner

and its viability. If this is not done, learners are bound not to identify with the content and hence perform poorly. They further indicate that the reasons why there are challenges with curriculum content is because the process of designing the curriculum is often rushed or done in secrecy.

### ***Subject Centred/Broad fields Curriculum and Schools Achievement***

Analysis of Kenya Primary school syllabus shows that the following subjects are offered: Math, English, Social Studies, Kiswahili and Science. The syllabus also includes other subjects which are not examined such as: music, Art/craft and physical education. Taba (1962) says that in subject-centred design, content represents knowledge in the subject area while the broad fields' curriculum design contains content which has been merged from various subjects for example Social Studies as a subject taught in primary school in Kenya, contains content from history and government.

Oluoch (2006) indicates that one of the disadvantages of integrated subject design is that, it leads to poorly selected content and poor organization of content. This confuses teachers leading to poor teaching and therefore contributes to poor achievement. As a primary teacher who has taught in primary school for several years, the researcher in the present study has often experienced the challenge of teaching Social Studies whose content contains subjects such as geography, history and government. Some of the topics are not related to each other this has posed a huge challenge to teachers.

### ***Sequencing of the Subject Content and Schools Achievement***

Tanner and Tanner (1995) observe that teachers should be involved in the selection of content of various subjects and how best to order various topics as this makes it easy for them to teach the subjects and also makes the curriculum to be functional. It has been recognized that top-down approaches are the major cause of curriculum implementation failures in Africa. The context is mostly ignored. There is need to encourage the teachers to adapt the curriculum and encourage high fidelity which is likely to take place in schools when teachers are satisfied, when there is frequent supervision and more ownership of the curriculum by the teachers. There is also need to ensure that curriculum design caters for sequencing, progression and pace for learning matter (World Bank, 2008).

The revamped Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development can do its best to ensure that the primary school curriculum is improved by regularly reviewing it as captured in one of its core functions (Government of Kenya, 2013). Poor achievement in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education Examination in Kenya continues to concern parents, teachers, educational authorities and pupils. There was need for a study to account for curriculum content and parental and community support factors with respect to how they influence academic achievement and to further understand how these factors have contributed to inadequate learning in Central Nyanza Region, Kenya.

### **Parent Support and Schools Achievement**

The home is a contextual variable which determines achievement among schools. Kigotho (2010) explains that children engaged in excessive home chores generally do not complete their assignments in time as they spend many hours doing chores such as collecting firewood. These observations are important as they shed light on how sickness of learners affects their achievement. Whenever the annual examination results are released community do not look at whether the learner was unwell or not during the examination period, instead, the candidate is quickly blamed for failing. Keriga and Bujra (2009) explain that the state of the economy at the learner's home/community can be significant determinant of pupil academic achievement. They observe that children coming from poverty ridden homes have a problem in attending school regularly.

Mashile (2010) posits that academic achievement of pupils is affected by parenting style. He observes that learners coming from homes where parents use authoritative parenting style create conducive learning atmosphere. This is necessary for academic self-actualization. Parents need to help, control and support the learners at home. The study is important as it supports the current study by shedding light on the role of parents in learning. The study sought to explain how parents can work with teachers to improve pupils' academic achievement. Thomas-Richmond (2013) posits that one way of involving parents in the education of their children is by enhancing schools-home partnerships. Through this approach, parents are trained to understand their role as in caring for their children and supporting their education.

According to Vidonyi (2008), one of the reasons private schools do well compared to public schools is because parents in private schools monitor the learning of their children. They pay high fees and would like to get the value for their money. Vidonyi (ibid.) observes that parents are willing to sponsor their children for trips so that they can maximize learning. Wiles and Bondi (2011) observe that other than school conditions such as classes and textbooks, social components can either distract or contribute to success. According to them; language ability and parental involvement in the child's education affects pupils' academic achievement. Pupils coming from well to do families are known to do very well in school. Possibly they have enough models at home. Wiles and Bondi (2011) affirm that homes have a lot of influence over children when it comes to learning. Parents can affect the children's learning, they can raise standards and they can give children responsibilities at home.

Gomez (2013) argues that the school needs to involve parents in the learning of pupils at an early age especially at the pre-school level; the involvement contributes to better achievement in primary schools. Parents should also display a positive attitude towards all the subjects the pupils are taking in primary schools. Since Gomez (2013) focuses on how the parents can help learners, there is need for further investigation on how the parental support can be harnessed to improve teaching and learning in primary schools. The author sought to describe how the relationship between

school and home should be structured to enable the learners to excel in school. Similarly Kibet (2008) posits that teachers whose children learn in the same schools where they teach can be a bad example to their children when they overprotect the children. This promotes indiscipline leading to poor achievement. It also ruins professional relationships between teachers.

### **Community Support and Schools Achievement**

Involvement of parents in the education of their children is important as parents can encourage their children to do well in school, they can also assist the children with home work and talking to the teachers when the children are not doing well. The home from where pupils come from has a significant effect on their achievement. He observes, for example, that the children who are not supported from home had poor reading levels and poor vocabulary as they entered school. He also observes that when parents get involved, it reduces risk of poor academic achievement (Murithi, 2003).

Orido (2011) identifies HIV/AIDS as another factor that contributes to poor achievement by pupils in primary schools. He explains that there are over 1.2 million pupils who have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS. This experience affects their learning hence their achievement. The article also mentions how age contributes to poor achievement and what can be done to eradicate repeating in primary schools. The Ministry of Education has been known to issue threats year in and out yet the problem of repeating is still a menace to pupils in primary schools.

Moreover, Byamugisha (2010) has conducted a study in Uganda to examine the effects of school environmental factors on pupils' achievement and found out that the following home factors affect achievement of pupils: age of the pupil, size of the household, gender of the pupil, mother's education, pupils' absenteeism and repetition of the pupil. Muchiri (2013) observes that the top bottom schools from Embu come from an area where female genital mutilation and early marriages is a problem. Muchiri also notes that parents in the community were not willing to allow their children to take part in remedial classes for weak pupils. Many parents in the community were generally uncooperative. Many parents were not willing to support provision of physical facilities because Free Primary Education was providing the funds.

According to Okoth and Okoth (2012), Busia County did very well in KCPE of 2011 because teachers, parents and pupils worked very hard. The schools had to struggle through a lot of odds such as lack of staff, dropouts and poverty in the community. Understanding how the community/parental support influences teaching and learning in schools helps in reducing the blame game when the KCPE results are released.

In order to involve the communities in the education of their children, the ministry of education in Kenya has launched a primary school report card. Parents are supposed to use the document to report about school facilities, access to text books, assignments given to pupils and instructional materials available to pupils (NTA, 2012). According to a

study conducted by Oluka and Okurot (2008), communication between the school and the community was very poor. Parents show no interest in their children's education; many parents have no expectation for the pupils (ibid.). This generally contributes to poor achievement. Pupils interviewed by Oluka and Okurot (ibid.) indicated that they did not receive adequate support from parents in terms of buying uniforms and other materials.

Wasanga *et al.* (2010) have found out that between 2010 and 2011 support given by the community to primary schools in Kenya had declined. The major areas of decline include maintenance of physical facilities, supply of furniture and stationary, teacher motivation and building of primary school facilities. Benford and Newsome (2006) indicate that in areas where a community is poor; they are not able to supplement government grants. They also observe that mismanagement of funds is a serious problem in rural areas. They further observe that in Fiji, performance of ethnic Fijians is higher as compared with the performance of Indo Fijians because ethnic Fijians have generally a negative attitude towards their children's education. He also found that socio-cultural practices among the Ethnic Fijians also affected pupils' academic achievement.

According to Otieno (2013), poverty in Kilifi County is so high that parents are forced to withdraw pupils from primary schools to marry them off. The parents are so poor that they are not able to pay volunteer teachers who are hired to alleviate staff shortages. Lack of good models in the community can affect achievement of pupils in primary schools because pupils in primary schools require models to emulate. Lack of models affects their desire to excel in learning. A community that has a small population which has attained secondary and university education may lack adequate models. In return this will affect achievement in primary schools (Juma *et al.*, 2012).

According to Kose (2008), the 2008 election violence in Kenya affected teaching/learning in primary schools in Central Nyanza region. During the violence, there were no classes for the whole of January (ibid.). The worst affected were candidates sitting for examinations. The primary schools located in Kisumu city had their teachers and pupils roughed up and some students even lost their lives. The conflict led to massive transfer of teachers from the region to other areas. It is difficult to divorce the school from the environment in which it is located and from time to time, whatever happens in the community will interfere with school operations as observed by Kose (ibid.). It took the intervention of the former Prime Minister, the then region's political kingpin, to persuade the community to allow primary schools in the region to be reopened. There is need to investigate how the politics have influenced teaching and learning in primary schools in Central Nyanza region.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

The study was conducted in Kenya, Central Nyanza region. The area was selected because there are serious concerns from the parents, teachers, learners and politicians about achievement of primary schools in Kenya Certificate of primary Education (Ministry of Education, 2011; Abagi &

Odipo, 1997). The study used cross-sectional survey where current perceptions, beliefs about academic achievement were collected from primary schools in Central Nyanza Region. The design of the study was descriptive survey which allowed large amounts of data to be collected over a short period of time. It provided for numeric descriptions of some part of the population. It enabled the author to describe and explain relationships as they are.

The target population was primary schools in Central Nyanza Region. The author employed probability sampling procedure. The sampling techniques selected for the study were stratified sampling and simple random sampling. These sampling techniques were used to select the schools from the target population. The primary schools in the region were grouped into counties and districts using the existing counties/administrative districts in the region. This was done to ensure equitable representation of the population in the sample. It further ensured that there was proportionate representation in the sample with a view of accounting for differences between the districts. Proportionate sampling was used to allocate a sample of 69(10%) primary schools to each district (strata) in the region. In the second stage the simple random sampling technique was used to draw samples from each district.

The study used questionnaires, observation, checklists, and interviews guide as the main tools for data collection. The mixed methods approach was used in data analysis - the study combined both qualitative and quantitative approaches in the analysis of data. The initial step in qualitative data analysis involved reducing dimensionality of the data. This was done by arranging the data in categories and themes. The process of data reduction also involved editing, coding and classifying data collected through the instruments. Quantitative data reduction involved summarizing the data by use of descriptive statistics such as percentages and measures of central tendency such as the, means, standard deviation, kurtosis and skewness. The questionnaire data was subjected to preliminary analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 20).

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Curriculum Content

The study investigated how the curriculum content affects academic achievement. The areas that are a problem to curriculum content such as the scope of the content, integration and sequence of content were investigated. The syllabus coverage was also investigated in order to determine its effect on primary schools achievement. The results were as presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Curriculum Content**

	Mean (head teachers)	Mean (teachers)	Std. Deviation (head teachers)	Std. Deviation (teachers)
Lack of monitoring of syllabus coverage has a negative influence on achievement	4.66	4.45	0.815	0.870
Curriculum scope	4.32	4.26	0.793	0.913

negatively influences achievement				
Integration of content from various subjects into one e.g. social studies negatively influences achievement	3.92	3.79	1.074	1.160
The order of content in some subjects has negatively affects achievement	3.61	3.43	1.203	1.314

**NB:** Mean of 4.0 and above in all the tables indicates very strong agreement with statement. Mean of 3.0-3.99 denotes strong agreement with the statement, while 2.0-2.99 denotes fair agreement and 1.0-1.99 denotes weak agreement. The means and standard deviation were calculated by use of SPSS (Version 20).

Table 1 shows that most of the head teachers (mean of 4.66 and standard deviation of 0.815) were in agreement that academic achievement in schools was influenced by poor syllabus coverage. It also shows that majority of teachers were in strong agreement that syllabus coverage has influence on achievement (mean of 4.45 and standard deviation of 0.870).

The findings agree with the observations made by Huitt (1994) in the Transaction Theory of Teaching and Learning that school processes such as teaching/learning can have an influence on achievement. Table 1 also shows that the head teachers were in agreement that the scope of the content influenced academic achievement in the region (mean of 4.32). The teachers were also in agreement that the scope of the content influenced academic achievement, with a mean of 4.26 and standard deviation of 0.913.

Furthermore, the results in Table 1 show that in subjects where broad fields curriculum has been applied such as social studies, head teachers agreed that integration affects achievement (mean of 3.92). The teachers were also in agreement (with a mean of 3.79 and standard deviation of 1.074) with this. This shows that teachers' views were widely spread as compared to the views of the head teachers the about how the broad fields curriculum has affected academic achievement.

Moreover, Table 1 shows that both the head teachers and teachers were in agreement that the content of various subjects taught had an effect on academic achievement of pupils in Kenya certificate of primary examinations, which later affects schools' achievement. These findings are consistent with observations made by Verspoor (2008) that, no matter how good curriculum content is, if it is not taught as required, the performance of learners will be affected when they are exposed to examinations. Verspoor (ibid.) further observes that the school system is littered with curriculum innovations which are poorly implement due to poor monitoring by head teachers and therefore contributing to poor achievement by schools all over the world.

Most of the class eight teachers interviewed indicated that they did not complete the syllabus on time due to wide content in most of the subjects taught in primary curriculum.

They also complained that they had too much work load, which does not allow them to concentrate on teaching.

In the interview conducted by the author, the teachers indicated that pupils have difficulties understanding subjects like Social Studies because it is made up of subjects such as History, Geography and Government. The concepts from these various subjects appear difficult when integrated into one subject and they would have preferred that each of the subjects making up social studies be separated. They further indicated that the integration has caused too much workload for teachers and pupils. They also observed that any time there is any emerging issue, the curriculum developers

quickly introduce it into the primary curriculum without following curriculum development cycle.

### 3.2 Parent/Community Support

Among the factors that affect school achievement are the parent/community factors. The schools exist within the communities and they must get support from the community for the schools to achieve their goals. The study sought to investigate how the parent/community factors influenced teaching and learning. The results were as presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Parent/Community Support**

	<i>Mean(head teachers)</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Mean(teachers)</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
Age of the parent has a negative influence on achievement	3.62	1.155	3.50	1.407
Community is negative about primary school curriculum	2.91	1.318	3.27	1.275
Politics have negatively affected achievement of pupils	3.64	1.170	3.37	1.349
Community imposition of high goals and standards on the pupils contributes to high achievement	3.67	1.155	4.04	1.052
Community parenting style has a negative influence on the pupils' achievement	4.22	0.899	4.22	0.894
Social gatherings such as Discos/dances have a negative influence on pupils' achievement	4.54	0.903	3.97	1.287
Poverty in the community negatively influences achievement	4.44	0.819	4.34	1.003
Non Compliance with learning time as specified by the curriculum, term dates and timetable contributes to poor achievement	4.05	1.031	4.12	1.183

Table 2 shows that social activities were, as influential factors, affected learning in primary schools with a mean of 4.54 and standard deviation of 0.903. Poverty in the community was another factor which both the head teachers and teachers agreed was a major contributor to poor academic achievement (mean = 4.44 and mean = 4.34 respectively). Table 2 also indicates that politicians had an influence on school activities (mean = 3.67). The findings also show that the teachers and head teachers were of the view that if parents and community can impose high learning standards, the schools can do very well in examinations. The results from the table further show that community parenting style has influence on teaching/learning (mean = 4.22).

These findings indicate that the community and parents have profound influence on achievement of schools. This can be observed from the strong agreement among the respondents. This shows that teachers on their own cannot do much without the support of the parents. It is the responsibility of the parents to acquire for the pupils things like books which are not provided by the school. In the interview conducted by the author, majority of the teachers indicated that many parents could not control their children, this contributed to high rate of absenteeism especially during market days. Teachers indicated that during market days in places like Kisendo, Regea, Got Kokwiri, Mutumbu, Sondu, Pap Onditi and Ugunja, pupils absented themselves from schools to help parents sell different types of merchandise such as vegetables and fish. This high rate absenteeism affected pupils' achievement. They strongly felt that the head teacher needs to work with the community to solve this problem.

The findings on Table 2 are consistent with observations made by Wanyonyi (2010) who indicates that socio-cultural

activities in the community such discos, weddings and burials can have a negative effect on education. Similarly, Keriga and Bujra (2009) observe that it is the responsibility of parents to provide pupils with basic needs such as food, uniforms and learning materials. Moreover, Otieno (2008) indicates that academic achievement of primary schools can be affected if there are political and religious interferences in the management of primary schools by the community. He observes that clanism can also be a major problem in the running of schools especially when the community prefers their own to be the head teacher. Majority of the teachers interviewed asserted that social events such as discos affected pupils learning in the following ways; many pupils who attend social activities such as discos are tired by the time they come to school. It also contributes to sex escapades which affect female pupils; moreover, pupils do not have time do assignments.

### 3.3 Parents Meetings

Efficient management of a school is a combination of many factors. Team factor is critical. This involves not only the collaboration between the school head and the teacher but also the collaboration with the parents as well. As regards this, the study sought to establish whether the head teacher had regular parents meetings to discuss issues of learning with parents. The results regarding this were as presented in the Table 3.

**Table 3: Parents Meetings to Discuss Academic Achievement of Learners**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	130	96.6
No	6	4.4
Total	136	100.0

Table 3 indicates that majority of schools, 130(96.6%), held regular meeting with parents to discuss academic achievement of the learners. This result shows that the school heads recognized the fact that the parents were important to the improvement of the academic achievement of the learners in their schools. This might be through the regular PTA meetings that are held by the schools annually. It is worthy to note that parents may not be able to provide much guidance and help their children's performance improve when they are ignorant of what happens in school. In Table 4, these meetings are usually held more than thrice a year. This was revealed by majority of the head teachers, 79(58.1%).

**Table 4:** Frequency of Parents Meetings

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
More than thrice a year	79	58.1
Once a year	9	6.6
Twice a year	14	10.3
Thrice a year	34	25.0
Total	136	100.0

This shows that the school leadership recognizes the importance of constantly involving the parents and the community in decisions regarding the school. Kituyi (2012) notes that parents' interaction with teachers enables them to know the problems, which their children are encountering in school and what may be done to deal with the problems before it is too late. It would also put pupils' on alert and study in school, as they would know that their parents would inquire about their achievement.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the researcher concluded that the curriculum itself, its implementation, is a determinant of primary school pupils' academic achievement in Central Nyanza region. In Kenya, the curriculum centralized. Arising from the findings, it is further concluded that parents/community have been a determinant of achievement in primary schools in Central Nyanza region. Firstly, parents have poor control over their children for example they allow them to participate in social activities like attending discos and dances. Secondly, they encourage pupils' to absent themselves from school. Thirdly, they do not provide schools with educational materials required in curriculum implementation such as classes. All these are at the expense of their children's academic achievement.

Based on the above conclusions, it is recommended that there should be periodic monitoring of the syllabus coverage by the head teachers and quality assurance officers. There should also be regular evaluation of primary education curriculum to address issues of integrating scope. With regard to parent/community support, the community should be sensitized about the need to support primary schools by:

- 1) Putting up decent classrooms
- 2) Hiring additional teachers to supplement the ones the government has posted to their schools
- 3) To provide facilities like desks
- 4) To provide instructional materials required by the pupils

Moreover, social events such as discos and dances, which interfere with pupils' education, should be regulated in the region.

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