



## A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF CURRICULUM DYNAMICS MISMATCH ON THE LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT IN KENYA

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### Abstract:

The aim of the study was to conduct a critical analysis of the influence of curriculum dynamic mismatch on the labor market alignment. The study sought to analyze the type and quality of education reforms and innovations that have to be implemented in the education system. This looked forward to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current curriculum and determine what could be done and assist the proposed new curriculum about to take place in a few months' time. This would help to align the kind of education offered in our learning institutions and what is expected in the labor markets. The objectives of the 8-4-4 system were to prepare high school graduates for the world of work and provide a foundation for further training in relevant postsecondary institutions. The four dimensions of education in Kenya include; the personal dimension where learners acquire the desired knowledge and skills, the social dimension which involves interactions and socializing with others and the product dimension which is aimed at guiding the learning institutions in order to enable them produce graduates who have adequate skills and knowledge used as an input in the job markets. The Kenyan current 8-4-4 system needs to cater for and put emphasis on the product dimension. The study enabled the researchers to make appropriate recommendations that shall correct the situation. Researchers used qualitative research methodology with a content analysis design which involved intensive study of issues in the area of interest through the study of existing records. Relevant research findings as

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guidance for initial codes were applied. The critical method enabled the researchers to use a systematic analysis of the literature reviewed and discuss its validity and evaluate its worth. Through this research method, the researchers were able to come up with the recommendations on the ways alignment of subjects taught can be used in Kenyan school in a way to ease the ways to relevant job opportunities.

**Keywords:** curriculum dynamics mismatch, curriculum innovations, labour market alignment, job market, learners

## 1. Introduction

The curriculum offered in Kenya requires large investments in terms of time and resources by both the learners, parents and the Kenyan government as a whole. Many graduates end up not utilizing the skills obtained from their learning institutions and thus end up being employed in other fields in which they were not trained for. Bilbao (2008) who stated that curriculum refers to the sum total of all learning experiences of individuals not only in school but also in the society, suggests that the growth in educational output has decreased, the skills the learners attained have not yet increased and the skills required for the on job training and other requirements have rapidly increased and this has been attributed by the dissatisfaction which relates to work attitudes and poor skills related to the field of specialization. Structural unemployment being a form of employment caused by the mismatch between the skills that are demanded by the workers by their employers and the workers themselves can deliver. This type of unemployment in the labor market mismatches the employee qualification does not match with what is required in the job market which are brought about by either under employment or over skilling. Therefore, to ensure that there is no mismatch in curricula dynamics and the labor market alignment, the curriculum in place should try to factor in proper subject selection and assessments, internships, career guide and orientation to learners, unemployment has been experienced among our Kenyan youths to a great extent. More so, the labor markets are not able to get the required personnel to fit in the jobs since the skills required do not match with their job specialization.

On the contrary, many learners rote learn for the purpose of passing their examinations and they don't retain the knowledge acquired in their memory. Due to this employee qualification do not match the labor market requirements. In this article, the researchers analyzed critically the issues that have been brought about by

curriculum dynamics mismatch as well as the causes of the labor market dynamics are concerned.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Many curriculum dynamics have led to the mismatch on the labor market alignment in Kenya. These have influenced many factors such as the curriculum offered in our Kenyan schools which are too broad and exam oriented, the kind of assessments applied on learners the subject selection, internship courses and career guide and orientation programmes in learning institutions especially on the new students.

Examinations are the key indicators on the learner's ability to recall what he/she has been taught in the learning institution. After the summative examination, certificates are issued to the learners and these gauge whether the learner should proceed with higher education, training levels or whether to secure a job. But when it comes to representation in the top and middle management jobs in both private and public sector, very few graduates make to their expectation. The only way to address and resolve this problem is by helping students in purchasing with subjects which they can tackle in their career and program orientation to new students.

The current curriculum is too broad hence need to reform it to match with the labor market demands while all the efforts made in a bid to reform the current curriculum, the study therefore was a critical analysis of the influence of curriculum, mismatch dynamics on the labor market alignment. Currently, there have been pleas from Kenyan citizen pleading for the change of the current 8-4-4 system. Many Kenyans want to reform the education and have another system which is child - centered curriculum and more so, that which impacts the learners with all the domains which are psychomotor, cognitive and affective domains. This is opposing the current education system which is heavily concerned with the cognitive domain. A proposed new curriculum is the 2-6-6-3 which if successfully implemented, will look the classroom learner as the key player in the learning process whereas the teacher will be the instructor guide. If the current situation is not addressed, then the learners will keep on learning in a subject-based system rather than a competent-based system.

## **3. Purpose of the Study**

The aim of the study was to critically analyze the major influence of the curriculum dynamic mismatch on the labor market alignment in Kenya. The study proposed methods, ways and approaches that could be used to make appropriate adjustments

and polish it and possibly try to remove any barriers which might result in poor labor marketing. The researchers provided an understanding of the influence of these curriculum dynamics about the labor market.

#### **4. Objectives of the Study**

1. To critically analyze how curriculum dynamics like changes in the current education system.
2. To critically analyze his subject selection influences the labor market alignment in Kenya.
3. To critically analyze the career guide and orientation impacts on the labor market alignment in Kenya.
4. To critically analyze the subject assessment modes on the labor market alignment in Kenya.

#### **5. Research Questions**

1. How does change in education system influence on the labor market alignment in Kenya?
2. How does subject selection influence on the labor market alignment in Kenya?
3. To what extend do the career guide and orientation impact on the labor market alignment in Kenya?
4. How does a subject assessment mode impact on labor market alignment in Kenya?

#### **6. Significance of the Study**

Findings of the study may be useful to policy makers because policy making is an integral part of general educational planning. Educational planning is very essential because it needs the problems which produce demands on the education system. These problems include manpower requirements, increasing aspirations with different sections of the society and inequality between the demands of the economy and the educational products. It may also be beneficial to educational planners since the curriculum enhances and impacts learners with skills and the desired knowledge needed to be applied in the learning process. It may help them to detect the major changes on curriculum dynamics which impact on the labor market.

The study may also benefit the ministry of education because the research findings may help the MoE in promoting and coordinating long life education, training and research for Kenya's sustainable development. NGOs may also benefit since they extend education to under privileged children and help them to develop innovation that improves the quality of education. Business leaders may not be left behind; they will balance their roles in management and administration. It may also benefit administrators since they are the master planners and facilitators to plan strategies that ensure a product reflecting expertise.

## **7. Research Methodology**

Researchers used qualitative research methodology with a content analysis design which involved intensive study of issues in the area of interest through the study of existing records. Relevant research findings as guidance for initial codes were applied. The critical method enabled the researchers to use a systematic analysis of the literature reviewed and discuss its validity and evaluate its worth. Through this research method, the researchers were able to come up with the recommendations on the ways alignment of subjects taught can be used in Kenyan school in a way to ease the ways to relevant job opportunities.

## **8. Critique Literature Review**

### **8.1 The Impact of the Education System Change on the Labor Market Alignment in Kenya**

Previous researchers such as Kibet and Makau who advocated for integration of business education in teaching and learning process, policy makers and members of the public have a strong belief that the skills acquired in the learning institutions do not match the requirements needed for job entry and this has led to many Kenyan youths being unemployed. The changes in the curriculum system which affects the subject content and what learners have to acquire in their classroom setting is a big blow to many learners. This is because learners are forced to abandon what they had previously prepared for and learn on new content that have been brought forth. The end results are that whatever the labor market had put in place for the entry level to the job market especially on skills attainments may not apply to the affected learners in the system changed. Though the content may change, the skills required in the job market remain constant. Digital content is increasing day by day in this 21st century and given the quickly changing requirements for the skills in the digital economy, an efficient transfer

between the institutions must be ensured. Many of the innovations have not been implemented effectively on the quest for quality education according to Bunyi (2013).

### **8.2 A Critical Analysis of the Subject Selection Influence on the Labor Market Alignment in Kenya**

There is a big demand for the implementation of educational policies in alignment with the country's labor market. This has led to demand for a steady and competent market which should always be ready to absorb learners with equivalent and required skills. This is in agreement with Buchmann (2000) who after investigating on African educational systems found out that most African countries especially those with low income, their achievements did not meet the market demands.

Labor markets argue that the changes in curriculum have helped them to improve on the output. This is because, any reform or change in education system improves on the quality of education. Systems improve on the quality of education offered and this helps learners to better their cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills. The alignment on labor market enables graduates to fully explore their potential in the fields they are specialized in. Large numbers believe that curriculum dynamics in relation to the expectations of the labor market assists learners in their working skills and conditions. They believe that performing a job in which you are fully trained for or has the equivalent skills related to it, makes working enjoyable and one can maximally exploit her talents in it. According to Bunyi (2003) on the quest for quality education, many of the innovations have not been implemented effectively.

### **8.3 A Critical Analysis of the Career Guide and Orientation and Its Impact on the Labor Market Alignment in Kenya**

According to UoN module on curriculum development pg15, curriculum objectives are defined as the most immediate outcome of classroom instructions. Saylor and Alexander (1974) define curriculum content as "*Those facts, observations, data perceptions, ideas and concepts*". It is recommended that instructional goals and objectives should be stated at three domains of learning; the cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Benjamin Bloom (1956) states that the curriculum which entails all the activities done in a school setting, enables the learner and the instructor who is the teacher to work interactively.

Examinations are put in place in order to gauge the knowledge attained and the qualification of a learner in a prescribed course either in a private or public institution. Examinations take different forms such as objective tests, multiple choices, essay tests and aptitude tests. Examinations play a major role. They test cognitive, ability to recall, organization, analysis, evaluation and the ability to synthesis the contents of the

subjects studied; test the effectiveness and efficiency of the education system, teaching methods, materials, devices, strategies, the preparation and quality of teachers as displayed by student performance, are used as an incentives to study beside being used as an indicator of a student's progress and are used to select students for particular jobs, promotion or even demotion.

#### **8.4 A Critical Analysis of the Subject Assessment Modes on the Labor Market Alignment in Kenya**

Employment and training support for workers and companies require the necessary knowledge and skills matched to the labor market demand. The mismatch between the curriculum dynamics mismatch and the labor market are due to insufficiently flexible curricula. There is need to shape the current curriculum and align it with the labor market demands. According to Oluoch (2006), assessments are very vital in evaluating an ongoing curriculum. This is because through evaluating learners, one is able to gauge whether the project in progress is proceeding on well or whether it needs to be modified.

Teaching while enforcing assessments motivates the learners to read deeper on the content taught in order to attain the set goals and classroom target. Labor market mismatches where employee's qualifications does not match the requirements of the labor market and it may result from over-skilling or under-skilling or even over education.

The Kenyan government plans to overhaul the current education system and adapt a child-centered curriculum will enable learners to automatically get placements in the job markets since the curriculum will be friendly to learners and one that will enable them to learn interactively with the teacher and the content in place. To dissuade learners from rote learning that steeped the 8-4-4 where the key is to pass examinations, the proposed new system will focus on holistic learning that appreciates more than just books. Learners will be encouraged and tested on the domains as sports, drama and extra curriculum activities in a bid to make them all-round. According to Makau (1985), any curriculum implementation, evaluation should be employed on education planning and development.

### **9. Conclusions**

Critics of the subject- centered curriculum design are that; there is a high degree of fragmentation, there is no integration of content and automatic transfer of information is not possible.

Since those who leave schools and universities are no longer assured of job opportunities, measures should be instituted to deal with unemployment. This can be done by:

- Ensuring that changes in the education system should be effectively implemented in all learning institutions
- Guiding, assisting and counseling students to choose their career subjects wisely which align with their future career jobs in the market
- Proper guidance on learner's career guide and orientation programs
- Designing a better method of assessing the learners in the subjects, they undertake in order to gauge their progress.

## 10. Recommendations

The researchers recommend the following:

1. All learning institutions should ensure that all changes made in education system should be put in place and effected in all Kenyan educational institutions.
2. The ministry of education should ensure that teachers attend in service refresher courses for up to date information concerning any changes in the curriculum and this go hand in hand with the societal needs.
3. Policy makers should ensure that learners are guided in the right way and orientated as they join new learning institutions in order to let them stay informed in what takes place, how and when in the learning process.
4. The Kenya National Examination Council should put in place the subject assessment modes and curb any malpractices during the examination period.
5. Kenyan institute of curriculum Development in collaboration with market job stakeholders should work collaboratively to ensuring that the learning institutions are accepted in the job opportunities for the learners.

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