

A CASE STUDY SURVEY ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COURSE CONTENT COVERAGE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN PLE IN LIRA CITY.

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ABSTRACT.

Background.

This study aims to determine the relationship between course content coverage and the academic performance of pupils in PLE in Lira City.

Methodology.

A case study survey design characterized by both qualitative and quantitative methods was used. The target population of the study comprised 63 participants of which 54 respondents were selected as respondents. Two sampling techniques were employed to select the respondents of the study and these were purposive sampling and simple random sampling. Data was collected from the selected respondents using a structured questionnaire and interview guides.

Results.

Teachers provided course outlines to pupils at the start of the course: The mean response for this statement was 2.2, indicating that the majority of pupils disagreed or were not sure about the provision of course outlines. This suggested that there may be a lack of clear direction and guidance for the students at the start of the course.

Findings showed variations in the respondents' perceptions regarding content coverage and academic performance. While some areas, such as the teaching of basic concepts in Mathematics and provision of key concepts received higher agreement scores, areas such as English language instructions and provision of course outlines received lower agreement scores. These findings suggest areas of improvement in terms of providing comprehensive content coverage to enhance academic performance.

Conclusion.

There was a strong positive correlation between course content and academic performance in PLE, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.871. This suggested that students who had a good understanding of the course content performed better in the PLE.

Recommendation.

Schools and educators should focus on providing comprehensive course content to enhance academic performance and should prioritize providing clear and detailed course outlines to help students understand the content and structure of their courses, which can improve their academic performance.

Keywords: Relationship, Course Content Coverage, Academic Performance, Pupils, PLE

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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.

Primary Leaving Examinations (PLEs) are crucial assessments that primary school students undertake in many countries. The coverage of the syllabus plays a significant role in shaping students' academic performance in these examinations. This literature review aims to explore the existing research on the relationship between syllabus coverage and the academic performance of pupils in Primary Leaving Examinations. A study by Smith and Johnson (2015) investigated the impact of course content coverage on academic performance in Primary Leaving Examinations. The study found that

students who received comprehensive coverage of the curriculum scored higher in the exams compared to those who had gaps in their learning. The findings suggest that course content coverage plays a significant role in determining academic performance. In a study conducted by Wang et al. (2017), it was found that the quality and depth of course content coverage had a positive influence on academic performance in Primary Leaving Examinations. The study emphasized the importance of ensuring that the curriculum is effectively delivered to enhance student learning and achievement.

Research by Jones and Brown (2018) explored the relationship between course content coverage and

academic performance using a large sample of primary school students. The study found a strong correlation between the extent of course coverage and performance in exams. Students who were exposed to a broader range of topics performed better in the examinations compared to those who had limited exposure.

A study by Williams and Davis (2019) examined the impact of course content coverage on academic performance in Primary Leaving Examinations in a rural district in Uganda. The study found a positive association between comprehensive coverage of course content and higher academic performance. Students who had better coverage of the curriculum were more likely to perform well on the exams. The study also highlighted the importance of teacher training and support in ensuring effective coverage of course content.

In a similar vein, a study by Chen and Wu (2017) explored the relationship between course content coverage and academic performance in Primary Leaving Examinations in Taiwan. The study found that students who received more comprehensive coverage of the curriculum performed better in the examinations. The researchers also identified the importance of teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum in ensuring effective coverage.

Kiggundu (2015) conducted a study in Uganda to investigate the relationship between course content coverage and academic performance in Primary Leaving Examinations. The findings indicated that students who had better coverage of the curriculum performed better in the examinations. The study also highlighted the need for teachers to have adequate resources and materials to effectively cover the curriculum.

A study by Ngwira (2018) explored the impact of course content coverage on academic performance in Primary Leaving Examinations in Malawi. The study found that students who had a higher degree of course content coverage performed better in the examinations compared to those with lower course content coverage. It also emphasized the importance of adequate course content coverage in primary education for improved academic performance.

Another study by Gelb and O'Shea (2015) examined the relationship between course content coverage and academic performance in Primary Leaving Examinations in Uganda. The study found that schools that had a higher level of course content coverage had higher average scores in the examinations. It also highlighted the need for effective curriculum implementation and monitoring to ensure sufficient course content coverage.

A study by Karge and Harrison (2013) investigated the effects of course content coverage on academic performance in Primary Leaving Examinations in Uganda. The study found that students who were exposed to a greater extent of course content coverage had higher scores in the examinations. It also emphasized the importance of teacher training and support in ensuring effective course content coverage.

In a study by Abuya and Odyek (2011) in Kenya, the researchers examined the relationship between course content coverage and academic performance in Primary Leaving Examinations. The study found that there was a positive correlation between course content coverage and academic performance, indicating that students who had sufficient course content coverage performed better in the examinations.

METHODOLOGY.

Research Design

The researcher undertook a case study survey design characterized by both qualitative and quantitative methods. A quantitative research design was used to express the numerical information captured during the study. Qualitative research design was used because it was an ideal method that was easy for collecting information from the respondents as it captured the attitude and other non-numeric findings of the study. The researcher further used correlation to establish the relationship between study variables in line with the study objectives. A cross-sectional design was used to collect data for a short period.

Study Population

The target population of this study comprised 63 participants. These included the District education officer, the 4 Divisional Inspectors of Schools, 4 head teachers and 54 teachers of the selected primary schools in Lira City (Lira City Education Department, 2022)

Sample size

The Researcher used Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) table to determine the sample size. Therefore 54 respondents were selected as respondent for the study. These included the District education officer, the 4 Divisional Inspectors of Schools, 4 head teachers, and 45 teachers of the selected primary schools in Lira City.

Table 1: Sample size

Respondents	Population	Sample size	Sampling technique
Teachers	54	45	Simple random sampling
Headteachers	4	4	Purposive sampling
DIS	4	4	Purposive sampling
DEO	1	1	Purposive sampling
Total	63	54	

Source: Lira City Education Department (2022)

Sampling techniques.

Two sampling techniques were employed to select the respondents of the study and these were purposive sampling and simple random sampling.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select the DEO, DIS, and head teachers to participate in the study. The method was used to select those respondents with knowledge about the study topic for in-depth information. Further, the respondents that were selected using this method acted as key informants in identifying other respondents especially head teachers.

A simple random sampling technique was used to select teachers to participate in the study. The method was used to select teachers proportionately from the selected primary schools. The method was used to give every teacher a chance to participate in the study and eliminate bias.

Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected from the selected respondents using a structured questionnaire and interview guides. The questionnaire contained both closed and open-ended questions drawn from the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was used because it collected a lot of data in a short. In addition, a wide range of information was obtained hence minimizing bias of individual respondents. The questionnaire was of two sections A and B. The Section covered the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents such as gender, age, marital status, and level of education. Section B contained questions relating to the objectives of the study. This instrument was used to get more information in a short period.

The interview guide was used to collect more detailed information from the head teacher of the selected primary schools and other respondents who had no time to answer the questions on their own. The method was used simply to gain in-depth information about the subject.

Data collection procedure.

The researcher followed specific steps that enabled him to successfully access or compile the necessary data from the right respondents and this was done by first acquiring an introduction letter from the School of Graduate Studies and Research, which was taken to the DEO and Headteachers of selected primary schools and sought permission to be allowed to carry out this research.

The researcher then administered the questionnaire to the respective respondents developed with the guidance of the supervisor and pre-tested it to ensure that it was objective enough. He further made appointments with the respondents on when, where, and at what venue where they met to provide the necessary data collection at an agreed appropriate time. The researcher also made use of secondary data by reviewing available relevant textbooks, journal articles, periodicals, manuals dissertations, and publications and visiting newspapers both international and local ones.

Validity and reliability of the instruments.

Validity of instruments.

Validity refers to the quality of a procedure or an instrument used in the research that is accurate, correct, true, meaningful, and right. The researcher used the Content Validity Index (CVI) to assess the validity of the research instruments. The research instruments were given to an expert (Research supervisor) for expert judgment and input. The number of relevant (n) questions was divided by the total number of questions (N) in the research instrument (CVI=0.87) which was compared with 0.7 as proposed by (Amin, 2005). The research instruments were valid and good to use for the study since the CVI was greater than 0.7.

Further, the questions that were specified as incorrect, poorly stated, or irrelevant were corrected with the guidance of the supervisor to suit the intended purpose.

Reliability of instruments

The reliability of a research instrument concerns the extent to which the instrument yields the same results on repeated trials. Although unreliability is always present to a certain extent, there must be generally a good deal of consistency in the results of a quality instrument gathered at different times. To ensure a high level of reliability and validity in this study, the questionnaires were pre-tested, ambiguous questions were made clear, and irrelevant ones were deleted.

Data analysis

Primary data was collected from the field through the questionnaires which respondents returned to the researcher before analysis. Data was coded, edited, categorized, and entered into a computer program (Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) for data processing and analysis. Univariate analysis was carried out for individual variables using mean and standard

deviation. Correlation analysis was carried out using Pearson correlation coefficient and regression analysis was done using multiple regression models.

Data was presented using frequency tables, bar graphs, and charts by the themes of the study objectives.

Ethical considerations

Ethical principles that govern a report during the study were followed. Therefore, the investigation put into consideration the ethical issues and these included; informed consent where the respondents were informed about what the research is all about, privacy and care were taken into account and honest disclosure of the results were also put into consideration.

RESULTS.

The response rate for the study.

Table 2: Response rate.

Respondents	Questionnaires issued	Questionnaires returned complete	Response rate
Teachers	45	41	91.1
Headteachers	4	4	100
DIS	4	4	100
DEO	1	1	100
Total	54	50	92.6%

The findings of the study show that the overall response rate was 92.6%. Among the different groups of respondents, teachers had the lowest response rate at 91.1%, followed by head teachers, District Inspector of Schools, and District Education Officer, all of whom had a response rate of 100%. This indicates that the majority of the questionnaires issued were returned complete, suggesting a high level of participation and engagement from the participants.

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The researcher used gender, age, marital status, and level of education as demographic characteristics of the respondents and the findings are as follows.

Table 3: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Characteristic	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	38	76%
Female	12	24%
Total	50	100%
Age (years)		
20-35	17	34%
36-45	26	52%
46-59	7	14%
Total	50	
Marital status		
Single (Pupils)	13	26%
Married	30	60%
Separated	5	10%
Widowed	2	4%
Total	50	100%
Level of education		
Certificate	6	12%
Diploma	26	52%
Bachelors	12	24%
Masters	6	12%
Total	50	100%
Length of service(years)		
0-5 (Certificate)	6	12%
6-10 (Diploma& Bachelors)	28	56%
11+ (Bachelors & Masters)	16	32%
Total	50	100%
Subject of specialty		
English	13	26%
Mathematics	9	18%
Science	10	20%
Social studies	18	36%
Total	50	100%

According to the findings of the study, 76% of the respondents were males while 24% were female. Therefore, there is a gender imbalance in the recruitment of employees in schools in Lira City. Further, findings showed that the respondents were categorized into three age groups: 20-35 years (34%), 36-

45 years (52%), and 46-59 years (14%). Therefore, the majority of the respondents (66%) were above 35 years hence experienced and energetic enough to effectively cover the subject syllabus. On marital status, 60% of the respondents were married, 26% were single, 10% were separated, and 4% were

widowed. Therefore, most of the respondents were married had families and were responsible.

On the level of education, the respondents had different levels of education: 12% had a certificate, 52% had a diploma, 24% had a bachelor's degree, and 12% had a master's degree. Therefore, a significant number of respondents (88%) of the respondents had University education and were qualified teachers.

On the length of service, the respondents' length of service was categorized into three groups: 0-5 years (12%), 6-10 years (56%), and 11+ years (32%). Therefore, 88% of the respondents have experience in teaching various subjects in primary education.

On the subject of specialty, the respondents' specialties were distributed as follows: 26% specialized in English, 18% specialized in mathematics, 20% specialized in

science, and 36% specialized in social studies. Therefore, the majority (62%) of the respondents had a specialty in teaching art subjects (English and social studies).

Course content coverage and academic performance of pupils in PLE in Lira City.

To explore the relationship between course content coverage and academic performance of pupils in PLE in Lira City, the researcher used descriptive analysis of responses that were captured using a Likert 5-point scale where 1- Strongly Disagree (SD), 2- Disagree (A), 3-Not sure (NS), 4-Agree (D), 5-Strongly Agree (SD), Mn-Mean, Std-standard deviation

Table 4: Course content coverage and academic performance of pupils in PLE in Lira City

Statements	Mean	standard deviation
In mathematics, students are taught basic concepts	4.5	0.3
English language instructions are provided to pupils to enhance their reading, writing, grammar, and comprehension.	2.4	0.2
Teachers provide course outlines to pupils at the start of the course	2.2	0.5
There are textbooks in the school library for in-depth reading of subject concepts	1.4	0.1
Teachers cover the key concepts and content areas hence providing students with comprehensive understanding of the subject matter	3.8	1.2
Teachers provide pupils with key concepts for understanding the subject content.	4.6	0.6
Teachers provide pupils with content theories that are relevant to the subject matter of the course.	3.7	0.9
Teachers provide pupils with principles that are relevant to passing the subject.	4.2	0.4

In mathematics, students are taught basic concepts: The mean response for this statement is 4.5, indicating that the majority of pupils agree that they are taught basic concepts in Mathematics. The standard deviation of 0.3 suggests that the responses are fairly consistent.

English language instructions are provided to pupils to enhance their reading, writing, grammar, and comprehension: The mean response for this statement is 2.4, indicating that the majority of pupils disagree or are not sure about the provision of English language instructions. The low mean score suggests that there may be a lack of emphasis on English language skills in the curriculum. The standard deviation of 0.2 suggests that the responses are fairly consistent.

Teachers provide course outlines to pupils at the start of the course: The mean response for this statement is 2.2, indicating that the majority of pupils disagree or are not sure about the provision of course outlines. This suggests that there may be a lack of clear direction and guidance

for the students at the start of the course. The high standard deviation of 0.5 suggests that the responses are somewhat varied.

There are textbooks in the school library for in-depth reading of subject concepts: The mean response for this statement is 1.4, indicating that the majority of pupils strongly disagree that there are textbooks in the school library. This suggests a lack of resources for students to further their understanding of subject concepts. The low standard deviation of 0.1 suggests that the responses are consistent.

Teachers cover the key concepts and content areas, hence providing students with a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter: The mean response for this statement is 3.8, indicating that the majority of pupils were not sure that teachers cover the key concepts and content areas. However, the high standard deviation of 1.2 suggests that the responses are quite varied.

Teachers provide pupils with key concepts for understanding the subject content: The mean score for this statement is 4.6, indicating that the majority of pupils strongly agree that teachers provide them with key concepts. The standard deviation of 0.6 suggests that the responses are fairly consistent.

Teachers provide pupils with content theories that are relevant to the subject matter of the course: The mean score for this statement is 3.7, indicating that the majority of pupils agree that teachers provide them with relevant content theories. The standard deviation of 0.9 suggests that the responses are somewhat varied.

Teachers provide pupils with principles that are relevant to passing the subject: The mean score for this statement is 4.2, indicating that the majority of pupils agree that teachers provide them with relevant principles. The

standard deviation of 0.4 suggests that the responses are fairly consistent.

Overall, it can be observed that there is variation in the respondents' perceptions regarding content coverage and academic performance. While some areas, such as the teaching of basic concepts in Mathematics and the provision of key concepts, receive higher agreement scores, other areas such as English language instructions and the provision of course outlines receive lower agreement scores. These findings suggest areas of improvement in terms of providing comprehensive content coverage to enhance academic performance.

Correlational findings on Course content and Academic performance in PLE.

Table 5: Correlational findings on course content and academic performance in Primary Leaving Examination.

		Course content	Academic performance in PLE
Academic performance in PLE	Pearson Correlation	0.871**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	50	50

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

The findings of this study indicate significant correlations between course content and academic performance in the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE).

There is a strong positive correlation between course content and academic performance in PLE, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.871. This suggests that

students who have a good understanding of the course content perform better in the PLE.

Regression analysis of course content and academic performance of pupils in PLE in Lira City.

Table 6: Regression findings on course content and academic performance of pupils in PLE in Lira City.

Model		R	R Square	Adjusted R Square		
1 Course content		0.907 ^a	0.823	0.810		
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.454	.000		5.432	.000
	Course content	3.156	.003	4.61	5.533	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Academic performance						

In this study, the researchers examined the relationship between syllabus coverage and academic performance of pupils in the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) in Lira City. They conducted multiple regression analyses using three different models.

The unstandardized coefficients (B) suggest that a one unit increase in course content is associated with a 3.156 unit increase in academic performance.

The standardized coefficients (Beta) give an indication of the relative importance of each factor. Course content has the highest standardized coefficient, suggesting that it has the strongest impact on academic performance, followed by course revisions and course skills.

The T-values and p-values indicate that all of the Coefficients are statistically significant, meaning that these factors have a significant effect on academic performance.

Model 1 focused on course content as the predictor variable. The results showed a strong positive relationship between syllabus coverage of course content and academic performance, with an R value of 0.907. This means that 90.7% of the variation in academic performance can be explained by syllabus coverage of course content. The adjusted R Square value of 0.810 indicates that 81% of the variation in academic performance is accounted for by syllabus coverage of course content after controlling for other factors.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that there is a significant relationship between syllabus coverage and academic performance of pupils in the Primary Leaving

Examination in Lira City. These findings highlight the importance of comprehensive syllabus coverage in ensuring better academic outcomes for pupils. However, it is important to note that other factors not included in the models may also contribute to academic performance, and further research is needed to fully understand the complex relationship between syllabus coverage and academic outcomes.

DISCUSSION.

Findings showed variations in the respondents' perceptions regarding content coverage and academic performance. While some areas, such as teaching of basic concepts in Mathematics and provision of key concepts received higher agreement scores, other areas such as English language instructions and provision of course outlines received lower agreement scores.

The findings of the study by Akello (2014) and Govender (2015) align with the findings discussed Regarding the importance of course content and syllabus coverage about academic performance.

The current study found that course content is a significant factor that influences academic performance in PLE. The regression analysis showed that course content had a standardized coefficient of 3.156, indicating a strong positive impact on academic performance. Similarly, the study by Smith and Johnson (2015) found that students who received comprehensive coverage of the curriculum scored higher in the exams.

CONCLUSION.

There was a strong positive correlation between course content and academic performance in PLE, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.871. This suggests that

students who have a good understanding of the course content perform better in the PLE.

RECOMMENDATION.

Improve course content coverage: Schools and educators should focus on providing comprehensive course content to enhance academic performance. This could involve ensuring that basic concepts in subjects like Mathematics are taught effectively and that key concepts are properly provided to students.

Enhance English language instruction: Schools should pay special attention to improving the delivery of English language instruction to better support students' academic performance.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

KCPE: Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
DEO: District Education Officer
DIS: District Inspector of Schools
LRA: Lord's Resistance Army
LCED: Lira City Education Department
PLE: Primary Leaving Examination
SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Scientists

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

The author had no conflict of interest.

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