

# Content Of Curriculum Enacted at Friends School Kamusinga and Lugulu Girls High School, 1964-1985

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***Abstract-*** *The paper was confined to the historical study of secondary school curriculum enacted at FSK and LGHS, 1964-1985, focusing on the subjects/contents of the curriculum at the target schools. This study adopted Critical Policy Sociology (CPS) otherwise referred to as Critical Policy Archaeology which was postulated by Trevor Gale in (2001) to excavate the sites and analyze the subjects of the curriculum at the target schools. The study adopted a historical research design. Data collection involved a critical review of relevant literature such as curriculum reform documents and oral interviews. Snowball sampling was adopted to select 24 participants. Data analysis and interpretation were done through internal and external historical criticism. Based on the literature review and documentary analysis, there was overwhelming evidence for Kenya to review education at independence since Kenyan education has its roots in the colonial past. From the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made: First, curriculum reforms/subjects enacted in the target schools were foreign subjects from English Grammar School of UK. They were rather irrelevant to the needs of the majority of Kenyans. Secondly, the State-controlled policy enactment process through MOE, KIE and TSC and excluded practitioners' voices. Hence, the State had power over teachers on policy formulation and implementation. Based on the findings of objective one, there is need to improve our curriculum policy (but caution should be taken especially with imported education policies and ideologies/values. Even when policies are culturally relevant, locally mediated and re- contextualized the result of transfer remains unpredictable.*

***Indexed Terms-*** *Content of Curriculum/ Subjects, Enacted.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Kivuva (2000) points out that the role of Education can be summarized as assisting in the establishment of the human resource base for the generation of wealth and more importantly, its application for the creative of a higher standard of living and improved quality of life. Therefore, education was viewed as a productive investment both to the individual and society. Sadly, during the colonial regime, Kenyans, as other Africans, experienced great discrimination economically, academically, socially and politically (Bogonko 1992; Otiende *et al*, 1992). This paper discusses how secondary school subjects were implemented at FSK and LGHS between 1964 and 1985. Its concern is hinged on education reforms characterized and influenced by the post-independence recommendation of the Ominde Education Commission (OEC hear after) in 1964. This was the first education commission in the independent Kenya.

Kamusinga (FSK) was established at the present site in 1957 by FAM Missionary Group (Nabiswa, 1999). The school stands on 55 acres of land, 2 ½ Km from Kimilili Town on the slopes of Mount Elgon (Inspection Reports, 1973 and 1981). In the sixties, 1963-1970, it had an excellent reputation for outstanding performance in external examinations, sports, drama, and choir (Inspection Report, 1971; Nabiswa, 1999). It has had a history of excellent academic results since its inception. FSK is celebrated and selected for study as one of the flagship schools both in terms of excellent academic performance and other co-curricular activities in the former Western Province.

FSK and LGHS are located in Bungoma County. The two schools were purposely selected for this study because: First, the research topic under study had not been documented in the target schools from 1964 to

1985. Secondly, the two schools were the first boy and girl schools in the region established by FAM Missions at FSK in 1957 and LGHS in 1962 (Nabiswa, 1997). That is, the schools were established in the colonial period and have had a lot of impact in the local community through their products and the country at large. Thirdly, the two schools have been flagships in academic performance since their inception to date, in the region. For example, Nabiswa (1999) stated that FSK posted very good “A” Level results in 1970. Out of 62 candidates, who sat for “A” Level examinations, 49 students or 80% attained the minimum university entry requirements.

For this reason, FSK and LGHS were purposely selected for the study since it has data that would cut across the two epochs: the colonial and post-colonial times. Again, FSK was among key schools in the Western Province of Kenya that FAM Missions and the colonial government had put much resource to implement secondary school curriculum. Since decolonization and Kenya’s independence, FSK has been the best performing school in the present Bungoma County. In view of this, there was need to study secondary school curriculum in the first decade of independence in Kenya focusing on Friend’s School Kamusinga and Lugulu Girls High School. This would aid in understanding trends of curriculum reforms in Kenya so as to avoid certain pitfalls that could derail efforts of future curriculum reforms in the country. The findings of the study would also help in identifying certain strengths and weaknesses. That is, the weaknesses to be avoided, whereas strength could be embraced in a bid to come up with sustainable implementation of curriculum reforms in Kenya.

## II. IMPLEMENTATION OF SUBJECTS /CONTENT OF CURRICULUM IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, 1964-1985

The context of curriculum enactment was based on an eclectic enactment conceptual framework Ball, et al., (2012). This was in a bid to understand policy enactment as a grounded account of the diverse variables and the dynamics of context. These theorists offered a framework that takes into account a set of the objective conditions of context, concerning a set of subjective interpretation dynamics of actors. Ball, et al., (2012:21) further suggested four overlapping and

interrelated contextual dimensions as school histories, professional cultures, values, and teachers’ commitment. External context such as degree and quality of local and support of authority were also key policy contexts in curriculum implementation.

Yishak and Gumbo (2014) analyzed the indigenization of curriculum planning and implementation in Ethiopia. The case study was on the Gamo ethnic group and focused on how they planned and implemented curriculum indigenization policies. It involved educational administrators at the central education ministry in Addis Ababa as well as participants from the Gamo tribe. The findings showed that indigenization of curriculum had been implemented but not comprehensively. There were still provisions aligned to national standards which militated against ethnic indigenization of curriculum in Ethiopia.

The policy cycle proved to be the powerful heuristic model to question the centrality of the state in curriculum policies, challenging a vertical conception of power that supports such centrality. The policy enactment model moved away from the concept of practice as a place of implementation to a dual simplicity of frontal resistance, or submissive acceptance (Keddie, 2013, Lopes, 2007). Thus, educational policies had a political agenda, which focused on performance, standards of the national curriculum which were produced through a top-down process of curriculum implementation in Kenya (Shiundu & Omulando, 1994). However, the top-down policymaking process is challenged in this study to have failed in achieving the intended results.

Theorists such as Bernstein (2000), Barthes and Ball, 1990, 1994, 2012) constructed the model of policy enactment, as a new perspective to challenge the vertical conception of policy by the state which excluded the practitioners and school contexts. Curriculum reforms recommended in the reports by Ominde, 1964 introduced subjects such as English, Literature in English, Mathematics, Swahili, Biology, Physics, History, Geography, Chemistry, Religious instruction, Physics-with-Chemistry and Physical Education in the secondary education curriculum (Gok, 1964/65).

According to Bagunywa (1980), the secondary school syllabus in Uganda, 1962-1975 had the following subjects: i) English; ii), Maths; iii) Biology; iv) Physics – with- Chemistry; v) Geography; vi) History; vii) Religious knowledge; viii) English literature; ix) Art; x) Music (Bagunywa,1980). These findings have a bearing on the current study with the similarity of the subject enacted between the two countries in the period.

### III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data collection is important in day-to-day life. Kombo and Tromp (2006) define this as the gathering of information to serve or prove some facts. Gale (2001) stated “what was important to uncover in any study was what was spoken, what position it was spoken from, and how this was mediated by the responses of others”. He, therefore, advocated for both documentary evidence and interviews as some of the ample sources of data collection. Qualitative data collection methods included the creation and collection of images (photographs and videos) and internet facilitated methods (such as e-mailing, interviewing, or inviting participants to creative blogs). This study, therefore, used documentary reviews, interviews, videotaping, and email interviewing as qualitative data collection strategies. The information that was obtained through oral testimonies and from documents was evaluated to ascertain credibility. In this regard, the data was exposed to internal and external criticism. In this study after the researcher identified the primary and secondary sources in the archives, as from November 2018 to January 2019, the sources were evaluated through a process known as historical source criticism. Bloch called this “the struggle with documents” (Bloch, 1953).

### IV. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Subjects implemented at Kamusinga and Lugulu Girls between 1964 and 1985. The interview and documentary evidence is presented in simple statistical forms, such as tabulation and percentages. Besides, interview data is presented in excerpts and verbatim as guided by research question one: “What subjects/curriculum did Friends School Kamusinga and Lugulu Girls’ High School enact between 1964

and 1985?” The participants were asked to present their views on policy enactment relating to secondary school curriculum/ subjects in the two schools, 1964-1985(What curriculum did you enact?). Several teachers admitted that policy enactment was a challenge that impacted negatively on the two target schools. This implied that teachers never understood what curriculum policy was. But this may have undermined their efforts to enact policy as was expected by the policymaker.

There were also developments in curriculum reforms about subjects learned. All the 4 Head teachers, 8 teachers, and 12 students who participated in this study from the target secondary schools, unanimously agreed that there were subjects implemented between 1964 and 1973. Thus, the two former Head teachers, who participated in this study from the target secondary schools, unanimously agreed that content of curriculum included the following subjects: English Language, Literature in English, Swahili, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, History, Domestic Science, Geography, Religious Instruction, General Science and Physics –with- Chemistry at “O” level which were implemented between 1964 and 1973 (O. I, Lusweti, 26/02/2019; Liko, 11/03/2019). Similarly, all the 8 former teachers supported the views of former head teachers regarding content of curriculum in the two schools.

The “A” Level Curriculum implemented at FSK between 1964 and 1973 had “A” level classes of both Arts and Science subjects. One former student said the content of curriculum included: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Geography, History, Swahili and General Paper (O.I, Kiveu, 14/03/2019). For LGHS, “A” level curriculum from 1964 to 1973, one former student said that the content of curriculum was as follows: Science, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and Biology. Arts included: Literature, English, Geography, and History, General Paper (O.I, Janet Kiveu, 20/04/2019).

The findings as presented above show that, English Language and Literature, Swahili, History, Geography, Religious Instruction, Physics- with - Chemistry, Biology, Physics, and Mathematics were implemented. Both at FSK and LGHS curriculum implemented between 1964 and 1973 for “O” level in this period included: “English language; Literature in

English, History, Geography, Swahili, Mathematics, Music and Physical Education.; Inspection Report of 11/03/1963; MOE letter to the school dated on 06/01/1971). About the content of curriculum offered, this finding is contrary to the assertions of Nabiswa (1996). He asserted that when FSK School was established in 1957 subjects that were being offered included, English language and literature/Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, and Trigonometry (Topics in Mathematics), History, Geography, Agriculture, Biology, Physics- with- Chemistry and Swahili (Bradley, 1987:88-89).

Data from interviews confirms that examination bodies determined what was taught, how it was taught including assessment and outcomes of the curriculum implementation in secondary schools in Kenya. One former student and teacher at FSK said: In 1964-1969 Cambridge Syndicates, but in 1969 Cambridge School Certificate was abolished. Then E.A.E.C. (East African Examinations Council) was established by three independent States of East Africa: Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. Also, E.A.C.E Council was to handle secondary education curriculum matters, including its evaluation from 1969 to 1979(O.I, Buyela, 04/05/2019, Teremi).

For Forms 5 and 6 “A” level curriculum at FSK, the subjects were: English, History, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Swahili, General Paper (Inspection Report, 1971). The letter written by the H/M of FSK and addressed to the Chief Inspector of Schools (CIS) dated 13:07:1978 corroborated the above content of curriculum at FSK, 1974-1985.

Table 1: Curriculum of FSK, 1974-1985, "O" Level and "A" Level Subjects

Subjects	Form
English	1-6
Mathematics	1-6
Biology	1-6 SSP 'O'LEVEL
Kiswahili	1-6
Physics	1-6 SSP 'O' LEVEL

Chemistry	1-6 SSP 'O' LEVEL
Geography	1-6
History	1-6
Agriculture	1-4
Physical science	1-4 – Traditional "O" level

Source: Letter written to the Chief Inspector of School (CIS) dated 13/07/1978

Drawing from Table 1, FSK implemented both Ordinary or Traditional subjects and SSP “O” Level Subjects, from 1974-1985. These findings were intadem with the assertions of Bagunywa (1980) who argued that donor agencies implemented SSP Science projects at “O” Level but not at “A” Level at FSK, 1964-1985. At LGHS, the CIS (Inspection Report, 1973) at the school shows the content of curriculum LGHS, 1974-1985 as shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Curriculum of (LGHS) From 1974-1985

Subjects of “A” and “O” Level, 1973.		
	Subjects	
1	English Language	10. Biology
2	History	11. Physics
3	Current Affairs	12. Chemistry
4	Geography	13. Domestic Science
5	Swahili	14. Physical Education (P.E)
6	General Paper	15. Health Science
7	Mathematics	16. Art and Craft
8	General Science	17. Music
9	Physical Science	18. Literature in English

Source: CIS, Inspection Report, 1973.

Analysis, synthesis and interpretation of data from oral interviews from former head teachers, teachers and students, primary documents such Inspection Reports point out that the subjects which were implemented between 1964 and 1985, were as follows: for “O” level, F1-F4: English, History, Geography, Chemistry, General Science, Physical Science, Domestic Science, Health Science, P.E, Swahili, Music, Health Science. To corroborate the data, primary sources/documents

analyzed in the period reveal that the content of curriculum that was implemented at LGHS was: English, History, Geography, Kiswahili, Mathematics, General Science, Physical Science, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Domestic Science, P.E, Health Science, Art and Craft and Music (Inspection Report, 1973). From the summaries in the documents, interview data from former teachers and students of (LGHS) indicate that the content of curriculum that was implemented between 1974 and 1985 was as follows: Forms 1 and 2 subjects were: Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics Alternative “S”, Home Science, Geography, History, C.R.E, Kiswahili, English Language.

### CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made: First, curriculum reforms/subjects enacted in the target schools were foreign subjects from English Grammar School of UK. They were rather irrelevant to the needs of the majority of Kenyans after independence. Secondly, the State-controlled policy enactment process through MOE, KIE and TSC excluded practitioners’ voices. Hence, the State had power over teachers on policy formulation and implementation. Therefore, most teachers were unable to be creative or use their professional skills, or be autonomous to enact policy in the two target schools, FSK & LGHS.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of objective one, there is need to improve our curriculum policy (but caution should be taken especially with imported education policies and ideologies/values. Even when policies are culturally relevant, locally mediated and re- contextualized the result of transfer remains unpredictable.

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