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## **Examining the Effect of Adherence to Administrative Procedures and Guidelines of Setting Examinations on the Quality of Examinations in Public Universities in Kenya**

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## Examining the Effect of Adherence to Administrative Procedures and Guidelines of Setting Examinations on the Quality of Examinations in Public Universities in Kenya

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## Abstract

University examinations play a significant role in evaluating the teaching and learning process and therefore have an impact on both teaching and learning outcomes. However, there is a widespread perception that the quality of examinations in universities in Kenya is declining. This study sought to critically examine the effect of adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines of setting examinations on the quality of examinations in public universities in Kenya. The study used the mixed method research design. The study combined phenomenological research design for qualitative data and cross-sectional survey research design for quantitative data. Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to select the sample for the study. The researcher purposively sampled 5 universities from the 31 public universities in Kenya. The total number of academic staff in the 5 sampled universities was 4,134. The study sampled 5 Examination Administrators/deputy Registrar Examination and Administration, 5 Registrar Academic and Students' affairs (RASA), 5 Quality Assurance Officers/Directors, 10 Deans of faculties, 10 Heads of Departments and 207 academic staff (lecturers). A total of 242 respondents were involved in the study. Data collection instruments included questionnaires, interview guides and document analysis guide. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented through frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviations and inferential statistics by conducting a correlation and multiple regression. Qualitative data was organized into themes to make meaningful conclusions of the study. The study found a statistically significant mean difference between adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines and the quality of examinations in public universities in Kenya. The study concluded that the academic staff does not adhere to the administrative procedures and guidelines on setting examinations set out by the Commission for University Education (CUE). The study therefore recommends that university administration should provide funds to train the university academic staff on administrative procedures and guidelines of setting examinations in order to improve the quality of examinations in public universities in Kenya.

**Keywords:** *Adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines, quality of examinations, public universities.*

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Policies and practice guidelines related to assessments play an important role in the process of setting examinations. A study on policies and practices of tertiary assessment by Meyer, Susan, Lynanne, Malcolm, Helen, Richard and Patricia (2010) revealed that policy and practice guidelines in regard to assessment are important in order to make the assessments manageable, valid and equitable and ensures that integrity required by stakeholders of higher education institutions is maintained. The study focused on policies and practices of tertiary assessment in general. The current study went deeper into the policies especially on the adherence of administrative procedures and guidelines of setting examinations in public universities in Kenya.

Examination malpractices are mostly caused by lack of adherence to examination procedures and guidelines. A study by Onah (2013) found that one major cause of examination malpractice was lack of adherence to the guidelines and procedures of administration of examinations in the university. The study used only one university and used only quantitative methods to collect data. This current study expounded the scope by using five universities and using both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data from both the academic staff and academic administrators in these universities. The study also focused mainly on forms and causes of malpractices in examinations but did not link it to the adherence to the setting examinations practices. This study investigated how universities ensured validity, credibility and reliability of examinations through the administrative procedures of setting examinations.

A similar study related to examination malpractices was carried out by Akaranga and Ongong (2013) in two public universities in Kenya, University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University revealed that among the many causes and forms of examinations malpractices, lack of adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines of setting and administration of examination was a major cause of malpractices. The study used only quantitative methods of data collection and focused on forms and causes of examination malpractices. The current study used more universities in Kenya, used both qualitative and quantitative methods and was specific on the adherence of administrative procedures and guidelines of setting examinations.

Management of assessment systems is also part of adherence to the guidelines and procedures of setting examinations. A qualitative case study to establish how the University implements organizational change to facilitate the adoption of an assessment management system was carried out at Michigan-Dearborn University in the USA (Morris, 2016). The study found out that effective communication of the assessment expectations and tasks is important in facilitating the adoption of assessment management systems. The study used faculty from one university and used a case study method. This current study used more universities, more faculty members and utilized a mixed method research design.

A study by Awofala and Babajide (2013) investigated the attitudes of 339 preservice Science, Technology and Mathematics (STM) teachers towards continuous assessment practices in Nigeria within the blueprint of a descriptive survey research design in a conventional university. The study found that the college continuous assessment policies are difficult to implement due to lack of proper reporting systems along the administrative line. The study further found that lack of proper implementation of policies and proper reporting line for monitoring has led to drop in the validity, credibility and reliability of examinations and students qualifications and in this way stakeholders had lost confidence of employing graduates from Higher Education institutions in Nigeria. The study further argues that clear policies on examination administration enhances integrity and credibility of the institutions of higher Education and enhances the overall quality of examinations which results to enhanced confidence to stakeholders in regard to graduates from universities and other institutions of higher learning. This current study used more sources of data, academic staff and academic administrators to get information on adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines of setting examinations.

A study to investigate the adherence to quality management procedures in universities was carried out by Bitange (2007) and Bitange, Magutu, Mbeche, Nyamwange, Onger and Ombati (2010) at the University of Nairobi. The study found that quality management was extensively applied at the university academic processes and to a very great extent defined its processes to ensure its academic and educational products meet the Commission for University Education (CUE) regulatory requirements. The study recommended formulation of new ideas to respond to the ever changing environment in higher education. The study only used one university, used only quantitative method of collecting data and focused more on the quality management of the academic processes in the university. The current study used five universities, used both qualitative and quantitative methods in collecting data and specifically focused on adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines of setting examinations.

The University of Cambridge International Examinations Code of Practice (2008) gave various factors to be considered when setting an examination paper. They included; validity of conforming, validity of avoiding irrelevant effects, validity of question choice, discrimination and coverage, accuracy of content and level, rubrics and layout, practicability factors, impact factors and bias-free which are all to be considered as a matter of procedure and guidelines. Stating that, marking scheme should be developed alongside the question paper in sufficient detail to serve its purpose. That marking scheme should conform with question paper, conform with syllabus/intention of the assessment, facilitate reliability of marking, facilitate discrimination, development and format at each stage, and there will be a single definitive version of it at each stage. The current study looked for the evidences that all required documents are referred to during setting of examination and that expected documents were submitted during setting of examination in the public universities in Kenya.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Universities in Kenya are at the centre of the education-workplace continuum and therefore are supposed to be characterized by high quality and excellence in examinations (CUE, 2014; World Bank, 2011). However, there is a widespread concern regarding the quality of examinations especially in public universities in Kenya (Obwogi, 2011; Eucharia, 2012; Mbirithi, 2013; Munene, 2013). It seems that there is inadequate knowledge on administrative procedures and guidelines on setting university examinations (Gudo *et al.*, 2011; Akaranga & Ongong, 2013; Bunyi, 2013; Nyangau, 2014; Waithaka, 2015; Mokamba, 2015; Munene, 2016). These studies focused on the role of institutional managers in quality assurance, quest for quality education, institutional response to globalization in higher education and examination malpractices. This presents a knowledge gap on research on assessing adherence to administrative procedures and guideline of setting examinations and quality of examinations as it featured in all scantily.

Most universities do not seem to enforce the administrative procedures in setting examinations and may not also follow the strict guidelines on both internal and external moderation of examinations. This situation may lead to low quality of examinations whereby papers are hardly representative of the entire curriculum, examination questions are continuously repeated and hence questions can be predicted. The quality of examinations would be affected and consequently the quality of university graduates. Universities would produce students with good grades but with poor skills, knowledge



and competencies in their subject areas. This has dire effects on their integration in the job market after graduation and the quality of services provided by university graduates (Njeiah, 2012; Munene, 2013; Muthamia, 2015). Academic administrators monitoring, evaluation, feedback and supervision of academic staff activities influence their work altitude and quality of examination (Morris, 2016). This study therefore, sought to critically assess the adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines of setting examinations and quality of examinations in public universities in Kenya in order to address this problem and seeks to fill the gap as information was scanty.

### **1.3 General Objective**

The primary goal of this study was to assess the adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines of setting examinations and quality of examinations in public universities in Kenya.

### **1.4 Research Hypothesis**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant mean difference between adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines of setting examinations and quality of examinations in the public Universities in Kenya.

## **2.0 Research Methodology**

This study used mixed method research design. In this design, both quantitative and qualitative data are collected at the same time and then analyzed concurrent and conclusions are drawn. This design generally uses separate quantitative and qualitative methods as a means to offset the weaknesses inherent within one method with the strengths of the other method. This method is preferred as it helps in reducing biases inherent in using only one method (Creswell, 2013). The study therefore applied phenomenological research design for qualitative and cross-sectional survey research design for quantitative inquiry.

Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to select the sample for the study. Creswell and Clark (2007, 2011) indicated that these methods use results from one method to elaborate, enhance or illustrate results from the other. Probability or random sampling is used to ensure the generalizability of findings by minimizing the potential for bias in selection and to control for the potential influence of known and unknown confounders (Creswell, 2013). This was used to select academic staff. Non-probability sampling was used to purposively select five public universities and academic administrators using criterion of inclusion strategy. According to Kothari (2008, 2011) the main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable answer the research questions. The sample being studied is not representative of the population, but for researchers pursuing mixed methods research designs it is acceptable.

The researcher purposively sampled 5 universities from the 31 public universities in Kenya. The total number of academic staff in the 5 sampled universities was 4,134 people. A sample of 207 respondents which was 5% of the sampled population was used for the study as it had support from literature. According to Dell, Holleran and Ramakrishnan (2002), the simple rule of the thumb is that 5% of a sample population of between 1001 and 5000 people should be an appropriate sample

size for a study. The researcher proportionately selected academic staff from the Agricultural Education and Extension and Business Studies departments in each of the 5 universities. The researcher purposively sampled the Deans of faculties of Agriculture and Business and the heads of department of the Agricultural Education and Extension and Business Studies in each of the 5 universities. This resulted to a total of 10 deans of faculties and 10 heads of departments who were involved in the study. All the examination administrators or Deputy Registrar Examination and Administration; Registrar Academic and Students Affairs (ASA); and quality assurance officers or Directors were purposively selected in each of the 5 universities making a total of 15, and grand total of 35 academic administrators who were involved in the study. Therefore a total of 242 respondents were involved in the study. The study used questionnaires, interview guides and document analysis guides to collect data.

### **3. 0 Study Findings**

The study determined the level of adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines of setting examinations by establishing the frequency of application of various administrative procedures and guidelines of setting examinations among the surveyed universities. According to Meyer, Susan, Lynanne, Malcolm, Helen, Richard and Patricia (2010) adherence to policies and practice guidelines in regard to assessment are important in order to make the assessments manageable, valid and equitable and ensures that integrity required by stakeholders of higher education institutions is maintained. All universities have examination policy documents detailing the processes of design, delivery, administration and management of examinations. The Policy outlines the required conduct of students and staff undertaking examinations, and directs them to University rules, standards, codes, policies, guidelines, procedures and other requirements which specify acceptable and unacceptable conduct before, during and after examinations. A five point measurement likert-scale was used to determine how each statement manifested itself within the universities and the results were as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines of setting examinations (n=167)

Adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines of setting examinations	N	C		R		S		RA		NA		Mean	SD
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
I develop questions using course content/ course outline	167	118	70.7	0	0.0	4	2.4	45	26.9	0	0.0	4.683	.5159
I develop questions using learning objectives	167	100	59.9	60	35.9	5	3.0	0	0.0	2	1.2	4.533	.675
I develop questions using previous paper analysis report	167	41	24.6	25	15.0	22	13.2	22	15.0	15	9.0	3.545	1.259
I develop questions using table of specification	167	48	28.7	49	29.3	18	10.8	26	15.6	26	15.6	3.401	1.439
I assemble and deliver examination with marking scheme	167	107	64.1	41	24.6	2	1.2	9	5.4	8	4.8	4.377	1.079
I assemble and deliver examination with course outline	167	97	58.1	46	27.5	8	4.8	7	4.2	9	5.4	4.287	1.098
I assemble and deliver examination with table of specification	167	38	22.8	52	31.1	16	9.6	28	16.8	33	19.8	3.204	1.466
I review and validate examination questions using course outline	167	116	69.5	41	24.6	3	1.8	4	2.4	3	1.8	4.575	.802
I review and validate examination paper marking scheme together with the question paper during internal moderation	167	84	50.3	49	29.3	15	9.0	9	5.4	10	6.0	4.126	1.157
I review and validate examination questions using table of specification	166	42	25.3	50	30.1	24	14.5	23	13.9	27	16.3	3.343	1.413
Analyze examination moderation results and revise the examination questions accordingly	167	80	47.9	63	37.7	10	6.0	10	6.0	4	2.4	4.228	.974
I establish the passing score for the examination using the criterion- reference method	167	50	29.9	45	26.9	24	14.4	18	10.8	30	18.0	3.401	1.465
<b>Overall Mean Score</b>	<b>167</b>		<b>45.9</b>		<b>28.4</b>		<b>7.6</b>		<b>11.1</b>		<b>9.1</b>	3.975	1.112

*NB: C=Constantly; R=Regularly; S=Sporadically; RA=Rarely, NA=Not at all*



The results presented an overall mean score of 3.975 and standard deviation (SD) of 1.112 as far as adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines of setting examinations on quality of examination in public universities in Kenya. This is a moderate consideration which depicts that lecturers moderately adhere to the procedures and guidelines of setting examinations. The results concur with Bitange, Magutu, Mbeche, Nyamwange, Onger and Ombati (2010) study on investigating the adherence to quality management procedures in universities with specific reference to university of Nairobi who found that quality management was extensively applied at the university academic processes and to a very great extent defined its processes to ensure its academic and educational products meet the Commission for University Education regulatory requirements.

On the individual level of adherence, it was revealed that academic staff constantly developed questions using course content/ course outline as shown by a mean of 4.683 and standard deviation of 0.5159. It was also established that examination questions were constantly developed using the learning objectives as represented by ( $M = 4.533$ ,  $SD = 0.675$ ). This implies that the overall examination should be consistent with the learning outcomes for the course. There are a number of ways to review and prioritize the skills and concepts taught in a course. The lecturers focus on the most important content and behaviours that they have emphasized during the course (or particular section of the course). This is done by identifying the primary ideas, issues, and skills encountered by students during a particular course/unit/module. The distribution of items should reflect the relative emphasis given to content coverage and skill development (Gronlund & Linn, 2011). This therefore implies that the teaching staff does not observe the required setting and administering of examinations totally.

It was moderately found that examination questions were developed using previous paper analysis report as indicated by a mean of 3.545 and standard deviation 1.259. However, those administrative procedures that revealed least mean score implying less applicability includes academic staff developing questions using table of specification (Mean=3.401,  $SD=1.439$ ), academic staff assembling and delivering examination with table of specification (Mean = 3.204,  $SD= 1.466$ ), academic staff reviewing and validating examination questions using table of specification (Mean=3.343,  $SD=1.413$ ), and academic staff establishing the passing score for the examination using the criterion- reference method (Mean=3.401,  $SD=1.465$ ). This implies that even if table of specification and criterion-reference method are within procedures and guidelines to be followed within the university, academic staffs do not use them which also imply that the administration does not put much emphasis for their use during setting and administration of examinations. This can also be attributed to low level of lecturers' preparedness on setting of examinations thus impairing them to use as they lack enough knowledge and skills on the importance of their applicability.

Fair and accurate grading depends on the development of effective and well-designed examinations and assignments as described in the procedure. Just as important to the process is the approach taken to assigning grades. Criterion-referenced grading focuses on the absolute performance against predetermined criteria. Criterion systems assume that grades should measure "how much" a student has mastered a specified body of knowledge or set of skills. The findings corroborate the McKeachie and Svinicki (2006) who indicated that Criterion-referenced grading has several drawbacks. For instance, students may perceive as arbitrary the system by which cut scores are determined in criterion systems (such as, an A grade is 90% and above, thus 89% is a B grade) and may aggressively

pursue faculty for “extra credit” assignments or lobby for additional points. Criterion systems also require instructors to consider the relative difficulty of each assessment and weight them accordingly where more difficult or comprehensive assessments should be given more weight. In a poorly designed criterion system, a student who performs well on simple, less rigorous assessments (quizzes, homework) may achieve a higher grade than a student who performed well on more difficult assessments (midterm/final examinations) if the simple assignments are weighted more heavily in the final grade calculation (Tine, 2013). Criterion systems are sometimes seen as contributors to grade inflation, as it is possible for all students to achieve grades of A if they meet the criteria for proficiency.

The deans/heads of departments were required to respond to questions concerning procedures used in setting examinations in their faculty and departments. They gave varied responses as outline; lecturer in common unit all set an examination then meet and decide and agree on one then goes to internal moderation before it is taken to examination office and that they use examination manual, course outline, education objectives, Bloom taxonomy, departmental board moderate before examinations are taken to examination office. It was further indicated by majority that lecturers set handwritten examinations then hand them to the head of department who organizes both internal and external moderation before they are handed over to examination office for typing. They further indicated on the procedures and guidelines that there is notification of the timelines for setting examinations, internal moderation, external moderation and proof reading before typing and storage.

Further the study probed the ways the universities apply standards and guidelines on administrative procedures of setting examinations. The Deans and Heads of Departments revealed that they applied all according to the regulation of the university, ensured adherence to university and the CUE guidelines on lecturer to student ratio. One of the Dean from University C was quoted saying:

We apply standards and guidelines on administrative procedures of setting examinations, use guidelines on setting examinations, use the guidelines on moderation and guidelines on administration of examinations. We also appoint and recommend internal and external moderation and apply procedures and guidelines during setting of examinations, during moderation process and during examination supervision. See our academic year calendar is here for when each activity is scheduled (A3, 27/7/17).

The deans were probed to show documentary evidence on adherence to the procedures and guidelines of setting examination for quality of examination. The following documents were produced either as hardcopy or shown as an intranet documents and ticks were done on the document analysis guide followed by a tally for frequency. The summary is presented in the Table 2.

**Table 2: Documents on standards and guidelines on administrative procedures of setting examinations as evidenced by the deans/heads of departments (n=20)**

Types of procedures and guidelines documents	Frequency	Percentage
Guidelines on setting examinations	18	90.0
CUE guidelines on administration of examinations	20	100.0
Appointment and recommendation of internal and external moderation	13	65.0
Procedures and guidelines during setting of examinations, moderation process and examination supervision.	15	75.0

The results showed that as far as ways in which they retain and maintain standards and guidelines on administrative procedures of setting examinations. The deans/heads of departments, maintain evidence on guidelines on setting examinations (90%), CUE guidelines on administration of examinations (100%). They further have maintained documented evidence on appointment and recommendation of internal and external moderators (65%) and on procedures and guidelines during setting of examinations, moderation process and examination supervision (75%). Hence the study establishment of availability of documents which are retain and maintained to be used for guiding the procedures of setting examination was with ease as most of policy documents are in the internet hence easily to be availed within manageable time.

The ISO certification process also had played a major boost as most of the dean/head of department just picked the documents as they had been prepared for that purpose. The study revealed that the evidence for appointment and recommendation for internal and external moderators was the list retained and maintained, this was due to further probe to be shown the list of appointed internal and external examiners or either their appointment letters. This was deduced to show that something was not right with internal and external moderation as the documents were not readily available.

Shahmandi, Ismail, Samah and Othman (2011) indicated that to be effective, deans and heads of departments require certain competencies to perform the necessary roles in order to lead. Effective heads of departments need the skills and abilities to lead their respective departments within the universities towards excellence. Roles of heads of departments as effective academic leaders utilize various leadership styles according to certain situations, possessed the required competencies and assumed certain roles when appointed as Deans and Head of Departments in various universities. As such it is important that a systematic leadership development programs should be developed to ensure academic leadership effectiveness.

Tasopoulou and Tsiotras (2017) further argues that ways of applying standards and guidelines on administrative procedures of setting examinations can bring considerable outcomes of enhancement, improvement and transformation in higher education systems. This study thus provides exemplary standpoints and practices for the pursuit of excellence in Kenyan public universities in order to gain additional knowledge and paradigm on quality examinations improvement that can lead to excellence in the learning outcomes and also the study is in suggestion that the identification and presentation of several ideas and tools which can successfully be applied to universities as guidelines on administrative procedures of setting examinations in order to achieve excellence by using benchmarking practices like guidelines on setting examinations, guidelines on delivery and assembly of examinations, guidelines on administration of examinations, appointment and recommendation of internal and external moderators and procedures and guidelines during review and validation of setting of examinations, moderation process and examination supervision.

The study examined if the universities adhered to administrative procedures and guidelines in setting examination. One of the registrars academic and students' affairs from University E indicated:

Guidelines on setting of examinations, guidelines on administration of examinations, appointment and recommendation of internal and external moderation and procedures and guidelines during review and validation of setting of examinations, moderation process and examination supervision are there. Examination Administrative Policy is here and strictly adheres to the procedures which are audited to ensure compliance. Other measures include examination policy, certification process and identify gaps approved to consultations (C5, 11/7/17).

These sentiments were further supported by deputy registrar, examination and administrations from all Universities who unanimously described the administrative procedures for setting examinations to be as follows:

It involves the course lecturer setting examinations then forward to the head of department for moderation arrangements before they are forwarded to examination office for typing, printing or photocopying and storage. Adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines improve examination standards and also ensure the learning objectives are achieved and examined.” (B5, 7/7/17),( B4, 12/7/17), (B3, 26/7/17) and (B2, 17/7/17) and the course lecturer sets the examination then forwards to the chairman, setting of examinations by departments as per the calendar dates specified, ensuring principles of setting examination are adhered to, the internal examiner moderates the examinations before being sent to the external examiners, moderation of the drafts by the departments, the comments from the external examiner are incorporated and then send to the examination office for printing and photocopying, timing of issuing examinations, ensure information is available to students ( B1, 20/7/17).

On the provision of documents for analysis to confirm the narration on the administrative procedures for setting examination, the physical evidence for internal and external moderation was not availed by all. Instead the deputy registrar, examination and administrations referred them to be with the Dean/head of departments who initially had referred them to be at the examination centre. This

showed concurrence with a study by Munene (2013) where administrators were not involving academic staff as they prepared ISO certification documents instead were done using external consultancy to meet the certification purpose for use as a marketing tool for the universities. Hence document policy papers availability with academic administrators whose implementation by academic staff cannot be evidenced despite the documents giving well explained details on what should be done. This was not in line with item response theory which requires each step of setting examination to be having a validation mechanism and analysis of each and every item in the question paper. It was not also in line with the validity theory which requires examination papers to be validated by both internal and external moderators with documentation for verification. It also showed inconsistency with the management –oriented evaluation theory which intends to serve institutional leaders by meeting the informational needs of the managerial decision makers. Management – oriented evaluation theory stipulates there should be provision of useful information for decision making to the programme leaders which then can be shared downwards to improve the programme implementers and overall performance for quality on student outcome.

The responses given by the academic staff were to the positive as per knowledge of expected. This was expected as the procedure guidelines have been provided and shared by CUE to universities to use and follow. This knowledge of the procedure contributed to positive responses on them. The procedure and guideline being an audited document it has been shared with the academic staff for knowledge of expectations. Despite adherence to administrative procedure and guidelines of setting examination having positive responses overall (3.975) from the academic staff on how they use them during question development, assembly, review and validation, analysis and determining question pass mark there were hardly no physical evidence to see as attachments.

The academic administrators who are the dean/head of departments, deputy registrar examination and administration, registrar academic and student affairs gave different narration on how examination are set, assembled and delivered, reviewed and validated. This contrasted with Shaw, Greene and Mark (2006) who emphasized that information needs identified by the programme leaders shape the evaluation purpose and questions. The unanimously narration by all deputy registrar examination and administration was in concurrence with Draft (2007) who said institutions consider the processes by which structures, including schemes, rules, norms and routines become established as authoritative guidelines for social behaviour. This was due to their response being based on the ISO certification procedure guideline for setting examinations. The study showed evaluation informational gaps from the academic administrators and academic staff on what is documented on the procedure guideline and what is actually done. The study also revealed lack of monitoring of the procedure adherence as per documentation and lack of evidence for each activity done.

To the administrators as also confirmed by registrar academic and students' affairs university

Examinations are set by course lecturers who forward to dean/ head of departments for determination of who is to moderate both internal and external. C5 (7/7/17). This was echoed by Quality Assurance officer in university D adding that: Not all course lecturers were involved with internal moderation, but are involved during proofreading after the examination is typed. D4 (12/7/17).



This was unlike what majority of academic staff had ticked as a response in Table 1. The dean/ head of department confirmed that they received question papers without any other attachment during examination setting unlike what academic staff had said. That after examination is administered to the student, is when the academic staff provided the marking scheme as they returned the booklets and not before the paper is done. The dean school of business from university D said:

We do not receive course outline from the lecturers at any given time as it is expected that the people to check on the quality of the papers as internal and external moderators are expert in that cluster area and should know the content (A4, 10/7/17). This was also echoed by the counterpart in the school of Agriculture on the same day as practice confirmation.

The knowledge of what is required to have been provided and what is actually provided and done was on the contradiction. As presented by the implementers, academic staff and those who are to monitor and evaluate, academic administrators. The dean/ head of department are not able to provide the physical documents for confirmation. The academic administrators did not mention on any documents used as reference when setting examinations. To them the lecturers set and submit the set examination for further processing. It is paramount to note that setting examination is an activity which requires reference materials for content validity like course content broken down to course outline showing each topic learning objectives and outcomes (Crisp, 2013). Setting examination requires use of analyses feedback of the previous question papers showing the strength and weakness which were noted to be improved on and availability of at least three previous administered currents past papers to avoid repetition of questions (Crisp & Johnson, 2006).

Learning objectives and expected outcome acts as a guide for domains of learning to be tested and relevant action verb for the question to be asked. Question should test for knowledge which uses the mind/head, strategies and skills which use the hands and dispositions, values and feelings which use the heart (3H). This provides the simplified layman explanation of the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domain of learning to be examined. To be effective examiner one needs the procedure and guidelines and tools to measure that they have covered all the content and levels as required. Among the tools are table of specification according to blooms taxonomy, course outline with well spelt learning objectives and moderation checklist (Anderson & Krathwolh, 2001). Question paper should be set alongside the marking scheme which enables for the gauging of the weight of the paper in term of the time required to achieve the tasks and appropriateness of the questions to the responses expected. Marking scheme if well-developed also help on marks allocation per question and point on key marking area.

It is important to note that the lecturers do not need to have the notes to set examinations. This is the reason why examination should be submitted within the first two to four weeks after the start of the semester. This is with the expectation that the lecturers are aware of the documents to be used for setting examinations as reference point. From the interview with dean/ head of department it was coming out that the lecturers mostly use course content and not extracting course outline, which is detailed and which should be shared with the learners in advance to take control of their learning and to prepare well for the examination. The lack of course outline which should have learning objectives per topic which are specific makes it difficult to use appropriate action verbs to test the right domain. This made the researcher to go further and get some of the past papers from the library with deans'



permission. The few accessed question papers some of them had questions that were not specifically measurable to how many responses they were asking per item and were open for student to just discuss or explain without indication for limit. This left the student to use their own wisdom and judgment according to marks allocated per question to try and give responses to match the question marks indicated.

This concurs with study by Mesfin and Abebaw (2015) who gave lecturer-related challenges of assessment as lack of appropriate preparation and plan, poor evaluation and grading system of lecturers and lack of clear mark allocation for each question. In the same support Teklebrhan and Samuel (2015) gave lecturer-related challenges of assessment as orientation gap upon the merit of assessment in supporting students learning success and lecturers' poor awareness about assessment. Takele (2012) argues that majority of lecturers use assessment for grading system (summative) rather than for students learning improvement (formative), lecturer's failure to employ assessment as a component of their teaching (Abiy & Alemayehu, 2015). Whereas Birhanu (2013) said lecturers lack skills of assessing students' performance.

It was established that examination malpractices are mostly caused by lack of adherence to examination procedures and guidelines. This concurred with study by Onah (2013) on the forms and causes of examination malpractices in Nigeria universities. The study x-rayed the forms as well as causes of examination malpractices in Nigerian universities. The study found that one major cause of examination malpractice was lack of adherence to the guidelines and procedures of administration of examinations in the university.

The study then determined if there any significant relationship between adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines of setting examinations and quality of examinations using the t-test statistic. This was done by testing the following hypothesis;

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant mean difference between adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines of setting examinations and quality of examinations in the public universities in Kenya.

The t-test statistic and P values assess whether the means of two groups are statistically different from each other. In this case it compares the statistical mean differences between adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines and quality of examinations. The decision rule was that reject H<sub>0</sub> when p-value is lower than the critical level of significance (0.05) and t statistic value is greater than 1.96. Fail to reject the H<sub>0</sub> when the p value is greater than 0.05 and statistic value is less than 1.96. The results are indicated on Table 3.

**Table 3: One-Sample Statistics for adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines of setting examinations**

<b>One-Sample Statistics</b>				
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>
Adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines	167	3.9757	.64035	.04955

**One-Sample Test**

	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</b>	
					<b>Lower</b>	<b>Upper</b>
Adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines	80.234	166	.003	3.97573	3.8779	4.0736

The results given (df= 166, p<0.05)

Since the p value was  $0.003 < 0.05$  and the t value  $80.234 > 1.96$ , it was concluded that there is significant difference between the means. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative accepted. This therefore, means that adherence to administrative procedures had an influence on the quality of examinations. Further output presents an estimate for the mean difference between the two means (3.97573). Therefore, on examining the effect of adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines of setting examination on quality of examinations, we can say level of adherence to administrative procedures and guidelines has an evident direct effect on the quality of examinations. Falchikov (2013) argues that there has been rapid growth in administrative procedures and guidelines focused on course-level issues such as improved learning outcomes and quality of examinations, such administrative procedures are needed to guide universities in strategically adopting and implementing those procedures and guidelines that are geared towards improving the quality of examinations.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

Based on the findings, the study concludes that lecturers do not use table of specification and criterion-reference method which also imply that the administration does not put much emphasis for their use during setting and administration of examinations. This could be due to lack of skills in psychometric which deals with assessment, as none of the university mentioned that the lecturers were trained on them. Hence, good knowledge on how to do all the procedure as documented and implement them should be enforced. Let the procedure get monitored for adherence of all the steps without short cut. The deans/ heads of departments are generally overseers during setting of examinations, moderation process, during examination supervision and administration. They should ensure all relevant reference documents are availed for examination quality validation.

#### **5.0 Recommendation**

Based on the study findings and conclusion, the study recommends the Government through the Ministry of Education to provide resources and ensure that appropriate experts are available to support the development of the right procedures and guidelines of setting examinations and the experts are used to train on the same in all universities as scheduled short courses. The identified experts should have content developed on for example, course and programme design, teaching skills and competencies required in assessment of student learning, using technology in teaching and assessment development among others.

The university administration through quality assurance director should ensure the provision of an effective venue for discussions and experience sharing on teaching, learning and assessment practices that is visible and valued by the academic community, either at institution, faculty, department or programme level that is inclusive of all levels of academic staff qualification together. This will encourage learning among peers on how to set quality examinations that measure learning objectives holistically, will encourage healthy relationships, mentorship and benchmarks.

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