

## Influence of Guidelines Provided in Technical and Vocational Colleges in Continuous Assessment Tests on Trainee Academic Performance in Bungoma County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** Management of academic programmes in institutions is key to effective realization of college objectives. Principals and trainers are the planners and managers of activities that take place in colleges. The objective of the study was to establish whether guidelines provided in colleges on continuous assessment tests influence trainee academic performance in Bungoma county, Kenya. The study was guided by signaling theory. The theory posits that, one party, the sender, must choose whether and how to communicate (or signal) information, and the other party, the receiver, must choose how to interpret the signal. The theory applied to this study since it describes two parties who were the continuous assessment tests managers and the trainees. The study employed descriptive survey design. The sample size was 130 which consisted of Principals, Deputy Principal, Academic head of Department and selected Trainees obtained through random sampling. The study found out that most colleges were provided with guidelines for tests which significantly influenced trainee's academic performance while a small percentage stated that the management of continuous assessment tests influenced academic performance in institutions. The conclusions made from the study were, colleges in the county had come up with their own test guidelines, that the principal plays a key role in the provision of tests in colleges. It is recommended that colleges be given uniform test implementation guidelines

**Keywords:** Management, Academic, Guidelines, Performance, Assessment.

### 1. Introduction

The performance of Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs) is a significant determinant of academic success in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions. According to Kafui (2020), continuous assessment provides ongoing feedback that fosters academic growth by identifying areas of strength and weakness. CATs, therefore, play a crucial role in providing formative feedback essential for improving learning outcomes (Black & Wiliam, 2009). The guidelines provided for conducting CATs are instrumental in ensuring that assessments are fair, consistent, and effective in evaluating trainee competencies. Proper implementation of these guidelines leads to standardized assessment practices and improves the overall quality of education in TVET institutions (UNESCO, 2018).

Fullan (2000) in his address to the Ontario institute for studies in education, remarked that head trainers are part of the technical resources managing assessment

instruments, technology and work space. A study by the Wallace foundation, as stated by Wallace (2011) describes what effective principals do. It is believed that they perform the following five key functions. Shaping a vision of academic success for all trainees, creating a climate hospitable to education, cultivating leadership in others, improving instruction, managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement (Wallace, 2011), Guskey (2009) examined contributions by the principal as an assessment leader. He explained that principals create a conducive school culture and provide direction for school activities which include testing of trainees.

### Objective of the study

The main objective of the study was to investigate the influence of management of continuous assessment tests on academic performance in TVET institutions in Bungoma county, Kenya.

### Research Hypothesis

Management of continuous assessment tests have no statistically influence on academic performance in TVET institutions in Bungoma county, Kenya.

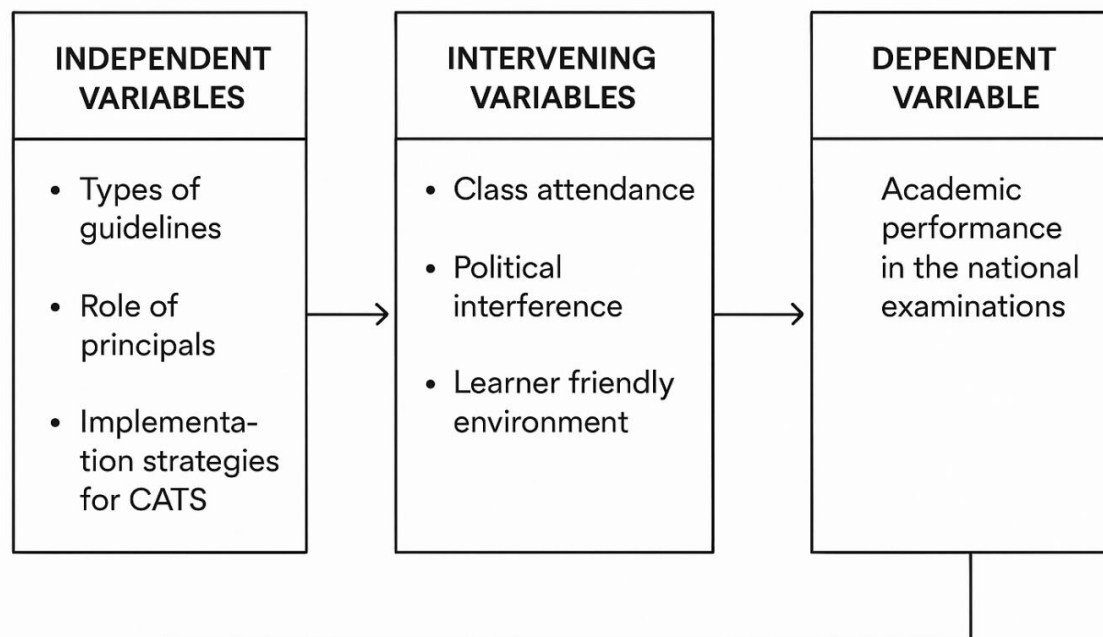
### Theoretical framework

The study was guided by the signaling theory which according to Kelland, explains that education only reflects inherent human signals to identify productive individuals. Signaling theory is useful for describing behaviour when two parties have access to different information. Typically, one party, the sender, must choose whether and how to communicate that

information, and the other party, the receiver, must choose how to interpret the signal.

Spence (1973), as the proponent of the signaling theory demonstrated that there could be too much information disclosure (signals) which may not generate the desired outcomes judged by the standard of social efficiency. The theory applied to this study since it describes two parties which can be the continuous assessment tests managers and the trainees.

### Conceptual framework.



**Figure 1. Relationship between the management of continuous assessment tests and Trainee's Academic Performance.**

The conceptual frame work was based on the signaling theory whereby the sender who are the principals and trainers, choose whether and how to communicate (or signal) the information which will be the type of guidelines provided. The framework brings out the intervening variables that influence both the dependent and independent variables.

## 2. Literature Review

A test, as explained by kagete (2013) is an assessment tool used in classrooms by trainers to measure what learners can do. Testing in school is usually done for purposes of assessment, to assign trainees grades (from tests in classrooms) or rank them in terms of their academic abilities. Other benefits of testing include

retrieval practice occurring during tests which can greatly enhance retention of the retrieved information). Repeated retrieved produced knowledge that can be retrieved flexibly and transferred to another situation. On-ended assessments (such as essay tests), retrieval practice required by tests can help trainees organize information and form a coherent knowledge base (Roediger et al., 2011). Information from various researchers show that testing in colleges and performance in CATS enhance trainees' academic performance.

The reason learning has been reduced to studying the text, particularly at the technical colleges' levels, is because the immediate goal of learning is to pass tests that open doors to higher education. Akrofi (2007) as cited by Boit et al., (2012) suggested that school success is determined almost

exclusively by high passing scores on examinations. These could be explained by the funnel-shaped nature of the educational structure in Kenya. The pyramidal structure makes access to higher education a literal uphill task, with examinations constituting the means for climbing that hill (Boit et al. 2012). Education leaders at all levels today are coming to recognize the importance of assessment results in effort to enhance trainees learning. The study therefore intends to investigate the influence of management of continuous assessment tests on academic performance in technical colleges.

Assessment is at the Centre of all educational activities and every activity in education looks on to assessment to establish its validity and effectiveness. The quality of assessment bears on the quality of educational inputs, processes and products and hence on the quality of education enjoyed by the society (Gichuru, 2014).

It is understood that assessments for learning can help guide improvements in teaching quality and spur advances in a variety of a trainee outcomes (Guskey, 2009). From the explanation above leaders greatly influence trainees' testing thus preparing them for future outcomes.

Njenga (2022) examined the influence of project-based assessments on academic performance in technical and vocational training institutions in Kenya. While not specifically focused on the submission of coursework and project marks, the study shed light on the importance of practical assessments in enhancing student learning and skill acquisition in TVET settings. The findings emphasized the positive correlation between project-based assessments and academic performance, highlighting the significance of practical evaluation methods in the TVET context.

Research done by Mantsose (2012) explains that assessment in colleges brings challenges such as policy

interpretation, assessment is time consuming and requires much paper work, planning for assessment and using a variety of methods, and brings about challenges regarding implementation of assessment. This study sought to establish the challenges that trainees and school managers in Bungoma County, Kenya, experience during tests.

### 3. Methodology

In this study, a descriptive research design was employed to explore the influence of guidelines provided in technical and vocational colleges on trainee academic performance. The target population for this study included principals, deputy principals, academic heads of departments, and selected trainees from various colleges.

The use of a descriptive research design enabled the researchers to gather detailed data on how these different groups (principals, deputy principals, academic heads of departments, and trainees) perceived the guidelines provided for continuous assessment tests. This design was particularly useful in capturing a snapshot of attitudes, opinions, and experiences related to the guidelines without manipulating variables or conducting experiments.

The data gathered from the respondents provided valuable insights into the clarity, relevance, adequacy, timeliness, and impact of the guidelines on trainees' academic performance. Through the descriptive analysis, the researchers could summarize and present these perceptions, providing a comprehensive view of how various stakeholders in technical and vocational colleges experience and evaluate the guidelines in relation to continuous assessment tests.

### 4. Findings

A total of 130 individuals were targeted to participate in the study, and 104 questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 80%.

#### Descriptive Analysis - Influence of Guidelines Provided on Trainee Academic Performance

	Mean	Std. Dev
The guidelines provided by my college for continuous assessment tests are clear and easy to understand.	3.74	1.156
The guidelines provided by my college are relevant to the content covered in the continuous assessment tests.	4.09	1.045
The guidelines provided by my college are adequate for preparing for the continuous assessment tests.	4.13	1.021
The guidelines for continuous assessment tests are provided well in advance to allow sufficient preparation time.	3.89	1.101

The guidelines for continuous assessment tests are helpful in supporting my academic progress.	4.07	1.058
The guidelines provided by my college for continuous assessment tests are consistent across different courses.	4.01	1.127
The guidelines provided by my college positively impact my academic performance in continuous assessment tests.	4.05	1.095

#### Source Field Data (2025)

The mean scores indicate that trainees generally find the guidelines clear, relevant, and adequate for preparing for continuous assessment tests. Specifically, the highest mean scores were found for statements about the relevance (4.09) and adequacy (4.13) of the guidelines, suggesting that most trainees believe the guidelines effectively cover the content and help them prepare for their assessments.

However, while the guidelines are seen as mostly clear, the slightly lower mean score (3.74) for clarity indicates that there might be room for improvement in making the guidelines more easily understandable. The standard deviation for clarity (1.156) further supports this, showing that there is some variability in how trainees perceive the clarity of the guidelines.

Additionally, the guidelines are generally seen as helpful in supporting academic progress, with a mean of 4.07, and as having a positive impact on academic performance, with a mean of 4.05. These results suggest that the guidelines not only assist in preparing for tests but also contribute to the overall academic success of the trainees.

There is, however, a notable variation in the perception of consistency across courses, as indicated by the higher standard deviation (1.127) for the statement about consistency. This suggests that some trainees feel the guidelines are not applied uniformly across different courses, which may lead to inconsistencies in how the guidelines are experienced.

In conclusion, while the guidelines are generally seen as effective, there is potential for improvement in their clarity and consistency across courses. Overall, trainees believe that these guidelines positively impact their performance in continuous assessment tests, making them a valuable resource in supporting academic success.

#### Inferential statistics

##### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.861 <sup>a</sup>	.741	.739	2.03743

a. Predictors: (Constant), Guidelines on Trainees

#### ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3782.712	1	3782.712	410.006	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	977.955	101	9.226		
	Total	4760.667	102			

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Guidelines on Trainees

## 5. Discussion

The inferential statistics demonstrate a robust and statistically significant relationship between the guidelines provided to trainees and their academic

performance. The R Square value of 0.741 indicates that the guidelines account for 74.1% of the variability in academic performance, which is a strong proportion,

suggesting that the guidelines play a critical role in influencing trainee success. This implies that well-structured, relevant, and clear guidelines are integral to improving performance outcomes in continuous assessment tests.

The F-statistic of 410.006 and a p-value of 0.000 (less than the typical threshold of 0.05) confirm that the regression model is highly significant, meaning the relationship between the predictors (guidelines) and the dependent variable (academic performance) is not due to random chance. This further emphasizes the importance of the guidelines in affecting academic performance.

The standard error of the estimate of 2.03743 indicates that while the model is effective in predicting academic performance, there remains some unexplained variation in performance, meaning there may be other factors influencing academic success that are not captured by the guidelines alone.

In conclusion, the statistical analysis reveals that the guidelines provided to trainees have a strong, positive, and statistically significant impact on academic performance. The findings suggest that improving the quality and consistency of these guidelines could substantially enhance trainee outcomes in continuous assessment tests, making them an essential component for fostering academic success in technical and vocational education.

## 6. Recommendations

Colleges should enhance the clarity and accessibility of the guidelines to ensure that they are easily understood by all trainees. Additionally, standardizing the guidelines across all courses would ensure consistency and fairness. It is also recommended that guidelines be provided well in advance to give trainees sufficient preparation time.

Furthermore, a feedback mechanism should be implemented to allow continuous improvement of the guidelines based on input from trainees and faculty. Training for faculty and staff on how to effectively communicate and implement the guidelines is also crucial for ensuring their success. Finally, monitoring and evaluating academic performance in relation to the guidelines will help colleges assess their impact and make data-driven decisions for future improvements.

## 7. Suggestion for future research

Future research could explore several key areas to enhance the understanding of how guidelines influence academic performance. First, investigating the impact of digital guidelines could provide insights into whether online or digital formats improve engagement and performance compared to traditional paper-based guidelines. Second, examining the role of trainee

feedback in refining guidelines could shed light on how dynamic adjustments based on student input impact academic outcomes. A longitudinal study on the long-term effects of guidelines would help assess whether their benefits are sustained over time or require updates to remain effective. Lastly, a comparative study across different educational institutions could determine whether institutional factors, such as resources and faculty training, influence the effectiveness of academic guidelines. These research directions would contribute to optimizing guidelines and enhancing academic performance in technical and vocational education.

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