

Effect of Innovative Assessment Methods on Academic Performance of Students in Selected Public Senior and Secondary Schools in Marsabit County, Kenya

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Abstract

Purpose: To examine the effect of innovative assessment methods on the academic performance of students in selected public senior and secondary schools in Marsabit County, Kenya.

Methodology: A descriptive research design and a mixed-methods approach were used. The population comprised 43 public secondary schools with a total of 13,531 students. The sample size comprised 309 students, who answered a structured questionnaire. The study conducted a pilot test in Wajir County to assess the validity and reliability of the data collection instruments. The validity of the instruments was ascertained by the use of experts from the Department of Education and also when constructing the questionnaires to align with each objective. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The data from questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, namely percentages, means, and standard deviations, which helped summarize the key findings. Further, statistical analyses, such as correlation analysis, were also conducted.

Results: The results revealed that the various innovative assessment methods used by teachers included CATs, assignments, quizzes, practical activities, presentations, projects, oral questioning, and end-of-term examinations. These innovative assessment methods improved students' confidence and motivation, as they had the opportunity to receive timely feedback. The Pearson correlation coefficient for the innovative assessment method is $r=0.538$, at $\alpha < 0.003$ and a 99% significance level. Therefore, since the significance value was less than 0.05, the study rejected the null hypothesis.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Innovative assessment methods had a significant effect on academic performance, improving students' engagement, motivation, confidence, and understanding. Nevertheless, the study found that inadequate technological resources and funding hindered the consistent implementation of innovative assessment methods in selected public senior and secondary schools in Marsabit County, Kenya. MOE is recommended to provide adequate funding to secondary schools to enable them to acquire ICT infrastructure for implementing technology-based assessments.

Keywords: *Innovative Assessment Methods, Academic Performance, Students, Public Senior and Secondary Schools, Marsabit County, Kenya.*

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1. Introduction

In an era when educational systems are under increasing pressure to improve learning outcomes, the adoption of instructional innovation strategies has become a critical factor in students' academic performance. Therefore, as schools increasingly adopt innovative assessment methods, understanding how these instructional innovations influence students' academic performance has become essential. This is in line with the fourth sustainable development goal, which seeks to enhance equitable quality education as a foundation that empowers a student for professionalism and exposure to lifelong opportunities (Obiageli et al., 2024).

Therefore, obtaining basic education is not only a right but a critical component needed by a student for personal growth and development. This means that in its implementation, basic education is enhanced through innovative approaches by teachers to support the modern-day learning process (Ventista & Brown, 2023). Academic performance is defined as students' ability to acquire knowledge and apply it in various learning processes to attain educational goals (Brew et al., 2021). In the process of acquiring knowledge, secondary school students have experienced several academic performance challenges related to the integration of instructional innovation strategies in the learning process. According to Dancsa et al. (2023), it has become hard to implement practical learning through consistent interaction with digital tools in secondary schools in Slovakia. This is due to limited ICT infrastructure, which motivates students to improve their desire for engagement, leading to low performance.

Globally, Pew Research (2021) indicated that during the pandemic, 14% of American high school students lacked internet, hence were forced to use public WIFI, while 16% did not have a computer to do their assignments. Ultimately, this forced 27% to use cellphones to do assignments. Furthermore, Basar (2021) revealed that the current system of learning considers innovative education as an alternative method of learning, hence lacking prioritization in the context of secondary schools in Malaysia.

In a regional nation like South Africa, Mitchell et al. (2024) posited that the general academic performance of students had declined due to a lack of professional development among teachers, particularly in IT skills. This has made it difficult to have a reliable IT support system within the secondary school environment to support students when faced with an innovative challenge. Locally, teachers' resistance to incorporating technology in the classroom has caused most secondary schools to underutilize ICT resources (Emojong, 2024). Furthermore, in Marsabit County, a past study by Aga (2022) recorded low lesson attendance in secondary schools due to the nomadic nature of the households. Therefore, this problem requires modern-day innovation in teaching and assessment methods, which is the focus of the current study.

1.1 Problem Statement

If proper instructional innovation strategies are used in curriculum implementation, students' academic performance in public secondary schools is expected to significantly improve as a result of effective assessment methods, meaningful integration of technology, and well-trained teachers who can deliver engaging and learner-centered instruction. Therefore, it is expected

that the administration develops high-quality, innovative instructional strategies that improve the learning process, thereby improving the academic performance of secondary schools.

However, the situation in Marsabit County was characterized by high dropout rates among secondary school students, which had limited their opportunities to fully benefit from educational innovations implemented in schools. A report by Usawa Agenda (2023) showed that 24.9% of students in Marsabit County had dropped out of school, comprising the second highest level among public secondary schools, after 27.2% from Mandera County. This, therefore, denied the students an equal opportunity to undergo a quality learning process that involved the implementation of the curriculum by technologically trained teachers, who used innovative strategies such as the incorporation of technology and creative assessment approaches to spur improved academic performance.

Globally, Rahman (2023) assessed how Bangladesh's secondary schools had integrated technology and its impact on their progress. Regionally, Nshimiyimana and Andala (2024) focused on how students were performing in mathematics as a result of the implementation of CBC in Rwanda. Locally, Anyanga and Kwaba (2024) and Emojong (2024) considered professional training of the teachers and technological use, but within the context of other regions like Homa Bay and Teso North.

Failure to address the high dropout rate of students in secondary schools will lead to increased illiteracy rates within Marsabit County, hence failing to cope with the innovation transition taking place in the nation's industries. Therefore, poverty rates may be increased due to poor educational qualifications among residents of the county. The researcher therefore intends to carry out a study to establish the effect of instructional innovation strategies on academic performance in selected public senior and secondary schools in Marsabit County, Kenya

1.2 Purpose of the Study

To examine the effect of innovative assessment methods on the academic performance of students in selected public senior and secondary schools in Marsabit County, Kenya.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

H₀1: Innovative assessment methods have no significant effect on the academic performance of students in selected public senior and secondary schools in Marsabit County, Kenya.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

Cognitive theory was developed by Piaget (1936), and it focused on comprehending the various mental capacity processes that come into play when a child is learning to influence their behavior. Therefore, the emphasis on thinking capacity, memory, and processing information enabled a person to act in a certain expected or unexpected manner. The decision-making and problem-solving attributes were major outcomes of one's thought structured through the learning process (Rohmad et al., 2024). Therefore, through the integration of educational innovation, secondary schools provided an environment through which students were exposed to different learning processes within the context of the approved curriculum (Nirere & Dushimimana, 2024).

Being in a capacity to learn requires continuous engagement with an experienced teacher who provides academic insights meant to invoke critical thinking rather than just attain the pass mark in examinations. According to Wu and Yu (2025), creative thinking and problem solving

among the students were inspired through quality learning processes that blend tacit and explicit knowledge from the teachers. This included continuous assessment methods, technology integration, teacher professional development, and curriculum implementation.

2.2 Empirical Review

Yusoff et al. (2025) explored how classroom-based assessment was implemented in Malaysian secondary schools. A qualitative research methodology was used to select 62 respondents via random sampling. Semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis were used in the collection of data. The results of the study were that teachers actively engaged with classroom-based assessment practices, as demonstrated by their ability to incorporate various assessment methods such as project-based assessments, task sheets, and ongoing evaluations (Yusoff et al., 2025). Further, it was revealed that CBA was a crucial tool in teaching and learning, providing real-time feedback and insights into students' development, proficiency, and mastery of curriculum objectives. However, Yusoff et al. (2025) did not explain how professional development programs were implemented to equip teachers with comprehensive assessment literacy and strategies.

Regionally, Dadzie et al. (2024) examined how the academic performance of students was affected by literacy and quality assessment. A cross-sectional research design was used to randomly sample 129 respondents who were core mathematics educators. Questionnaires were used to collect data. The study found that teachers with high classroom assessment practices had a significant impact on students' academic performance. Moreover, Dadzie et al. (2024) found that teacher assessment practices provided high-quality feedback to students before, during, and after learning, and that this feedback significantly affected students' performance.

Locally, Omuna (2024) examined how Kenya's secondary school students' English reading skills were acquired as a result of assessment methods. A descriptive research design was used to gather information from 40 English teachers and 20 public secondary schools. Questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations were used to collect data. The results of Omuna (2024) were that comprehension tests, book reports, essay writing, diagnostic reading, and oral presentation were effective methods of assessing English reading skills, and as a result, they improved students' academic achievements significantly. Furthermore, Omuna (2024) revealed that the most frequently used methods were comprehension tests and diagnostic reading, which helped determine if the readers understood the main ideas, inferences, and vocabulary in context. Moreover, it was established that when teachers used diagnostic reading, it helped in the detection of reading difficulties such as Dyslexia early, thus providing timely support and success. Nevertheless, Omuna (2024) failed to show how lack of interest in reading affected the acquisition of reading skills.

3. Methodology

A descriptive research design and mixed-method approach were used. The population comprised 43 public secondary schools with a total of 13,531 students. The sample size comprised 309 students, who answered a structured questionnaire. The study conducted a pilot test in Wajir County to assess the validity and reliability of the data collection instruments. The validity of the instruments was ascertained by the use of experts from the Department of Education and also when constructing the questionnaires to align with each objective. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The data from questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, namely percentages, means, and standard deviations, which helped

in summarizing the key findings. Furthermore, a correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationships among the variables.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate

The study collected data from 309 students, and the response rate is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Response Rate

Respondents	Sampled	Response	Percentage
Students	309	269	87

Table 1 indicates a response rate of 269 (87%) students. Generally, the response rate was high, making the response considered successful. A response rate of more than 70% is considered adequate to allow analysis and interpretation of the results (Brooks et al., 2022). The high response rate strengthened the reliability of the results regarding the effect of instructional innovation strategies on academic performance in selected public senior and secondary schools in Marsabit County, Kenya.

4.2 Reliability Results

A pilot study was conducted in Wajir County, where the study instruments were tested and found fit to be used in the main study. Table 2 provides results.

Table 2: Reliability Results

Instrument	Cronbach's Alpha
Innovative Assessment	0.861
Academic Performance	0.878
Average	0.869

According to Table 2, the average Cronbach's alpha is 0.869, with the individual coefficient for innovative assessment having a value of 0.861, and academic performance is 0.878. Based on the findings, all variables had coefficients greater than 0.7, indicating that the instruments used in this study were reliable. According to Andersson et al. (2024), a coefficient of 0.7 or higher is considered acceptable and indicates a strong correlation between the two sets of results. An average of 0.845 indicated that using the results from the main study provided consistent outcomes, thereby enhancing their suitability. When reliability was high, as observed in the current study, it indicated that the tools would be vital in enabling the study to examine the effect of instructional innovation strategies on academic performance in selected public senior and secondary schools in Marsabit County, Kenya.

4.3 Descriptive Results of Academic Performance

The organizational performance of selected junior public secondary schools in Marsabit County, Kenya, was the dependent variable in the study. The measured indicators were improved KSCE examination scores, higher completion rates, and lower dropout rates. The table used an ordinal Likert scale, with 1 indicating strongly disagree, 2 indicating disagree, 3

indicating neutral, 4 indicating agree, and 5 indicating strongly agree. Table 3 provides the results.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Academic Performance

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S. D
N=269							
I actively get involved with class discussions and activities	7 (2.6%)	6 (2.2%)	9 (3.3%)	79 (29.4%)	168 (62.5%)	4.47	0.875
My class assignments are always completed on time	95 (35.3%)	102 (37.9%)	48 (17.8%)	15 (5.6%)	9 (3.3%)	2.04	1.029
When exams approach, I perform well academically	23 (8.6%)	10 (3.7%)	132 (49.1%)	79 (29.4%)	25 (9.3%)	3.27	0.987
Most of the subjects taught in school I am able to understand them	30 (11.2%)	17 (6.3%)	121 (45.0%)	77 (28.6%)	24 (8.9%)	3.18	1.061
I set personal goals to help me improve on my performance	8 (3.0%)	17 (6.3%)	133 (49.4%)	77 (28.6%)	34 (12.6%)	3.42	0.896
When I don't understand a concept, I usually seek assistance from my teachers	6 (2.2%)	14 (5.2%)	34 (12.6%)	96 (35.7%)	119 (44.2%)	4.14	0.980

As per Table 3, the majority of the respondents, 168 (62.5%), strongly agreed and 79 (29.4%) agreed, with a mean of 4.47 and an SD of 0.875, that they actively got involved with class discussions and activities. Additionally, 119 (44.2%) strongly agreed, and 96 (35.7%) agreed on a mean of 4.14 and an SD of 0.980, that when they didn't understand a concept, they usually sought assistance from their teachers. However, 95 (35.3%) strongly disagreed, and 102 (37.9%) disagreed, with a mean of 2.04 and an SD of 1.029, that their class assignments were always completed on time. From the students' perspective, it was clear that, through the implementation of instructional innovation strategies, teachers were able to involve them in class discussions and other activities.

This increased their participation in the learning process and enhanced their concentration, leading to improved academic performance. Additionally, the results point out that the students had established a rapport with their teachers to the point that they were able to inquire about difficult areas in learning. This interaction improved their confidence and knowledge levels. Over time, it translated to improved academic performance. Despite the level of classroom interaction between teachers and students, the latter were still unable to complete their assignments on time. Previous studies have explained the causal reason for this outcome, particularly in Marsabit County and other ASAL regions. According to Aga (2022), increased challenges and poor parental backup to learning affected the students' ability to attain the required tasks on time in secondary schools. According to Brew et al. (2021), personal dedication and indiscipline cases were attributed to a lack of attainment of required academic

demands among students in Marsabit County, hence affecting their academic performance. Guyo et al. (2022) linked increased poverty rates and socio-cultural responsibilities to low academic performance and declining attainment of classroom requirements.

4.4 Descriptive Statistics of Innovative Assessment Methods

The study aimed to examine the effect of innovative assessment methods on the academic performance of students in selected public senior schools and secondary schools in Marsabit County, Kenya. The indicators measured were competency-based assessments, technology integration, self- and peer assessments, regular feedback, and a student-centered approach. Table 4 provides the results.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Innovative Assessment Methods

Statements N=269	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S. D
Our learning is examined by different types of assessments.	7 (2.6%)	11 (4.1%)	28 (10.4%)	91 (33.8%)	132 (49.1%)	4.23	0.97
Competency-based assessments motivate me to work harder and stay focused on my studies	16 (5.9%)	24 (8.9%)	38 (14.1%)	65 (24.2%)	126 (46.8%)	3.97	1.23
Feedback from teachers helps me improve academically	12 (4.5%)	28 (10.4%)	129 (48.0%)	59 (21.9%)	41 (15.2%)	3.33	1.00
Frequent self and peer assessments help identify my strengths and weaknesses	33 (12.3%)	26 (9.7%)	116 (43.1%)	69 (25.7%)	25 (9.3%)	3.10	1.10
Use of technology has helped me understand topics better	119 (44.2%)	74 (27.5%)	19 (7.1%)	27 (10.0%)	30 (11.2%)	2.16	1.38
Positive feedback on my results boosts my confidence	14 (5.2%)	13 (4.8%)	21 (7.8%)	80 (29.7%)	141 (52.4%)	4.19	1.11

Table 4 shows that most of the respondents (132, 49.1%) strongly agreed and 91 (33.8%) agreed that their learning was examined by different types of assessments, with a mean of 4.23 and an SD of 0.972. Notably, 141 (52.4%) strongly agreed, and 80 (29.7%) agreed, with a mean of 4.19 and an SD of 1.110, that they felt more confident when they got positive feedback on their results. Nevertheless, with a mean of 2.16 and an SD of 1.378, 119 (44.2%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and 74 (27.5%) disagreed that the use of technology has helped them understand topics better. The students' response regarding innovative assessment methods indicated that the teachers had incorporated diverse examination techniques.

The methods proved effective, as the students became more confident, especially when they received the results on time. This showcases the positive contribution of assessment methods towards supporting increased learner interest and overall academic performance. However, the results also showed that understanding had not increased as a result of incorporating technology into the learning process. Mustafa et al. (2024) found illiteracy in digital learning to be the major contributor to low utilization of technological tools. Obiageli et al. (2024) established that the absence of ICT infrastructure had led to limited knowledge of how to use technology.

The results underscored the need to integrate technology into the daily learning process to increase awareness and understanding of its use, thereby improving academic performance. According to Emojong (2024), ICT infrastructure has been lacking, especially in Marsabit County, leading to low adoption of learning and overall interest in supporting innovative instructional strategies.

4.5 Pearson Correlation of Innovative Assessment Methods

The study had a research hypothesis stating that Innovative assessment methods have no significant effect on the academic performance of students in selected public senior and secondary schools in Marsabit County, Kenya. Table 5 provides the results of correlation analysis.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation of Innovative Assessment Methods

		Academic Performance	Innovative Assessment Methods
Academic Performance	Innovative Assessment Methods	1	.538
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	269	269
Innovative Assessment Methods	Pearson Correlation	.538	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	269	269

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

As shown in Table 5, the Pearson correlation results for innovative assessment methods indicate $r = 0.538$ ($\alpha < 0.003$). This indicates that the correlation was less than 1 and the significance was less than 0.05, allowing the study to reject the null hypothesis. It means that whenever secondary schools adopted innovative assessment methods like formative assessments, CATs, assignments, and consistent classroom feedback, student academic performance improved significantly. Through innovative assessment methods, teachers were effectively informed about students' learning weaknesses, enabling them to provide much-needed support early on. The diversity of assessment methods enabled students to participate in the process, improving their understanding of the lessons. The students were able to assess their academic strengths and weaknesses through the assessments and evaluation. This led to continuous monitoring of personal progress in the learning process. Awuor et al. (2025), Dadzie et al. (2024), Omuna (2024), Senjiro and Lupeja (2023), and Wu and Yu (2025) found

that formative and learner-centered assessments had a positive influence on academic performance, critical thinking, and classroom participation

4.6 Summary

The results revealed that the various innovative assessment methods used by teachers included CATs, assignments, quizzes, practical activities, presentations, projects, oral questioning, and end-of-term examinations. These innovative assessment methods improved students' confidence and motivation by providing timely feedback.

5. Conclusion

Innovative assessment methods had a significant effect on academic performance by improving students' engagement, motivation, confidence, and understanding. The use of various assessment methods, such as tests, quizzes, projects, and practical tasks, improved students' confidence in addressing individual academic weaknesses. The role of teachers in providing continuous feedback to students and remedial support strengthened their effectiveness in improving the learners' understanding, leading to improved academic performance. Nevertheless, the study found that inadequate technological resources and funding hindered the consistent implementation of innovative assessment methods in selected public senior and secondary schools in Marsabit County, Kenya.

6. Recommendations

The school management and TSC should empower the teachers to use diverse innovative assessment methods in schools. Empowerment should be achieved by supporting teacher training in formative assessment methods, feedback delivery, and competency-based evaluation. MOE is recommended to provide adequate funding to secondary schools to enable them to acquire ICT infrastructure for implementing technology-based assessments. Secondary school teachers are advised to maintain consistency in providing timely feedback that helps students identify their mistakes on assessments and how to improve their performance.

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