

Education Quality and the Kenyan 8-4-4 Curriculum: Secondary School Learners' Experiences

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Abstract:

This article explores the implementation of Kenyan secondary education in rural Western Kenya, focusing on learners' experiences. One of the key challenges to educational quality is shown to be the size and breadth of the secondary education curriculum. Learners are in school 12 hours a day with those approaching their final exams working three to five additional hours at home, often with little access to light sources. In school, there are also pedagogical implications with a reliance on rote learning as teachers 'rush through the syllabus'. It is suggested that this is part of the continued legacy of the 8-4-4 system, introduced in 1984 with one aim of widening the curriculum to prepare learners for formal and informal post-education employment opportunities. Conclusions suggest a review of the 8-4-4 structure and greater attention in discussions of education quality of learners' lived experiences in socio-economically disadvantaged communities.

Keywords:

Kenya, Secondary education, Curriculum, Education quality