

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Attitudes of teachers and students towards art and design curriculum: Implications for vocational education in Kenya**

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Accepted 22 September, 2009

Art and Design Curriculum taught in secondary schools in Kenya is intended not only to prepare learners for a vocation in Art and Design industry but also to complement literacy, scientific and factual subjects by awakening creativity in the individual. It is part of the government policy of diversification and vocationalization of the curriculum. However, enrolment of students in this subject has gone down to as low as one (1) student in form four classes in some schools. The number of schools offering Art and Design Curriculum has also gone down drastically since the inception of the diversified and vocationalized 8. 4. 4 system of education in Kenya in 1985. The 8 – 4 - 4 system is a structure of education in Kenya with 8 years of primary education, 4 years of secondary education and a minimum of 4 years of University education. The survival of this subject in the Kenyan School Curriculum is therefore worrying to the stakeholders. The attitude of the learners towards a subject of study greatly influences the readiness of learners to take it or perform well in it. This article is based on a study carried out in secondary schools in Nyanza province of Kenya. Objectives of the study were to find out the attitude of Teachers and Students towards Art and Design Curriculum and to determine the differences in attitudes between Teachers and Students. Respondents were 113 students taking Art and Design, 131 students who had dropped Art and Design and 15 teachers of Art and Design Curriculum. The findings of the study revealed that students who had dropped Art and Design Curriculum and Teachers of Art and Design Curriculum had negative attitudes towards the curriculum. Although students taking Art and Design liked the subject their reasons for this were not fully in line with the objectives of the curriculum. Some of the students were taking the subject for merely boosting their Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (K. C. S. E) result. Based on these findings, it is recommended that students be given proper career guidance on Art and Design Curriculum. The subject should also be made compulsory in Forms 1 and 2 to give early opportunity to students to identify their talents.

**Key words:** Art and design, talent, curriculum.

## **INTRODUCTION**

One of the legacies of the ancient western world to the present world is the system of education as practiced today. Art and Design has been offered in many countries as an optional subject. The idea that a curriculum is not compulsory just as it is in Kenya today certainly may not attract as many Students as the compulsory ones. This

creates attitudes towards such a curriculum either for or against (Naoye and Toshio, 2003).

Education in Africa has evolved from traditional systems through Western oriented adaptations to modern multi-faceted adaptations. A distinguishing feature being that traditional African models were integrated with little demarcation between the liberal and vocational fields as evidenced in the heavily academically oriented Western models Kerre and Kwende (1995). In the 1970s and 1980s educational systems in Africa came under strong

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criticism for being too theoretical and academic, ignoring the practical aspects that would prepare youth for productive careers (Kerre, 1991).

In response, most governments revised and at times overhauled their educational systems by introducing or expanding technical and vocational education as an integral part of general school curriculum where Art and Design curriculum was one of the subjects offered. The rationale for vocationalization of the curriculum with Art and Design include the personal development goal of educating “the whole person,” the social-political goal of providing equality of opportunity and catering for a wide range of talents (Lauglo and Maclean, 2005).

Many African countries have embraced Art and Design curriculum in their schools. In Botswana, Art and Design curriculum is offered as an optional subject in Junior Secondary School level (Form 1 - 3). Areas of study include: drawing, painting and sculpture. However, the Art and Design curriculum in Botswana still faces problems of implementation (UNESCO, 2001). The number of students able to study vocational subjects is still limited and the facilities are inadequate (Weeks, 2005). Nigeria and Ghana reviewed their educational system in 1982 and 1991 respectively with more clear policy mandates for technical and vocational education where Art and Design curriculum was one of the subjects to be offered to meet the needs of the people.

Francophone countries experienced similar reviews (Akyeampong, 2005). Senegal orientation law of 1991 included major innovations aiming at systemizing a permanent basic education and a better oriented technical and vocational education system. In Burkina Faso, technical and vocational education is strengthened in the general education policy framework where emphasis is placed on the mastery of professional and technical skill for industrial development and agricultural production whereby the Art and Design curriculum is offered (UNESCO, 1997).

A similar experiment has been tried in Kenya. Cultural diversity in Kenya presents varied views and attitudes towards artifacts. Some regard certain forms of artifacts as fetish. These views may be traced back to the colonial era when the introduction of Christianity regarded certain performances and presentations as a form of idolatry and incantation (Kiama et al., 2007). This attitude appears to have persisted and is indeed reflected in reports of most of the post-independence commissions of inquiry that have provided policy on education in Kenya. The thinking is particularly evident in the reports of education commissions: First, Kenya Educational Commission Report (Republic of Kenya, 1964), second, Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (Republic of Kenya, 1976) and Presidential Working Party on the Establishment of the Second University in Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 1981).

Although these reports coming after independence, expressed concern on neglect of practical and creative

activities, the cost of teaching vocational subjects in Kenya, with exception of business studies, has proved to be higher on average than that of teaching all other subjects (Mwiria, 2005). That this financing is shared by the government and parents (with the government paying teachers salaries and parents paying for consumables) has also been highly problematic. Popular subjects in Kenya –and those available at most secondary schools include Agriculture, Home Science and to a lesser extent, Art and Design. The popularization of vocational courses has not materialized (Mwiria, 2005).

The introduction of the 8 – 4 - 4 system of Secondary education in 1985 in Kenya, replaced the British 7 – 4 – 2 - 3 education structure, which was organized around 7 years of Primary education, 4 years of Junior secondary, 2 years of Senior secondary and a minimum of 3 years of University education. It was to respond to the challenges of national development and participation of the youth in the development of the country. With emphasis on vocational education, the 8 – 4 - 4 system of education was to ensure that the students graduating at every level of the school system would have some scientific and practical knowledge to be utilized for either self employment, salaried employment, further education or training (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Specifically, objectives of the Secondary school Art and Design Curriculum (Republic of Kenya (2008:231) are:

1. To produce artworks for aesthetic and utilitarian function through creative exploration of the principles and elements of Art and Design.
2. Express their emotions, feelings, ideas and experiences to communicate through works of Art and Design.
3. Explore the physical environment as a source of inspiration, ideas and materials to produce works of Art.
4. Acquire good craftsmanship as they develop a systematic approach in solving Art and Design problems and tasks.
5. Integrate acquired skills, concepts and attitudes to enrich their understanding of and performance in other fields of study and activities.
6. Exchange ideas and skills through group activities within the school, local communities and other institutions at National levels.
7. Apply contemporary technology in solving Art and Design problems.
8. Apply the acquired knowledge and attitudes for self-reliance in the world of work.
9. Appreciate their own and other people's artistic and cultural heritage.

While the government policy is clear on making Art and Design a popular subject in the secondary schools, low enrolment raises questions as to the reaction of Students and Teachers towards this subject. As Fullan (2001) notes, we have to distinguish between the official curriculum and the curriculum in use. Identifying and closing

this gap is the greatest challenge in education enterprise. In Nyanza Province, there has been a decline not only in the number of schools offering Art and Design curriculum but also the number of students taking the curriculum up to Form 4. Students enrolment in Art and Design curriculum has continuously declined, given that by 2007 some schools registered as low as 1(one) student in K. C. S. E. (M. O. E., 2007).

Politicians, the Ministry of education, curriculum developers at the Kenya Institute of Education and other stakeholders like the church and the community members are in dilemma as to whether Art and Design curriculum should be retained in the secondary school curriculum, pegged with Agriculture, Woodwork, Metalwork, Building Construction, Power Mechanics, Electricity, Drawing and Design, Aviation and Technology and Home Science (Wanjira, 2009). The school administrators have the authority to decide on which curriculum to include among the existing ones. The clustering of subjects into various groups by the Ministry of Education specifies the optional subjects the students in the 8 – 4 – 4 - system of education should choose or not to choose at all, based on their interest (M. O. E., 2008). The required secondary subjects are categorized into groups as follows:

Group 1: English, Mathematics and Kiswahili.

Group 2: Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Physical Sciences and Biological Sciences.

Group 3: History and Government, Geography, Christian Religious Education, Islamic Religious Education and Hindu Religious Education.

Group 4: Home Science, Art and Design, Agriculture, Woodwork, Metalwork, Building Construction, Power Mechanics, Electricity, Drawing and Design and Aviation Technology.

Group 5: French, German, Arabic, Music and Business Studies.

Students are required to take all the subjects in group 1 and at least two subjects from group 2. They are also required to select subjects in the other three remaining areas. The selection of subjects depends upon what the individual schools offers. This in turn depends upon the resources and the teachers available in the individual schools. Art and Design curriculum is shunned by educators and stakeholders and considered of low status with the changing needs of societies (Mwiria, 2005). Choice is a matter of preference and is largely determined by attitudes. Understanding the attitude is critical to understanding the choices made by the students and administrators in Art and Design Curriculum in relation to other subjects. Similarly, reasons for the choice are important starting points towards institutionalization of the curriculum in the schools. The purpose of the study used in this article was to investigate the attitudes of the teachers and the students towards Art and Design curriculum. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- 1) Investigate the attitudes of students towards Art and Design Curriculum.
- 2) Find out the attitudes of teachers towards Art and Design Curriculum.
- 3) Determine the differences in attitudes between teachers and students towards Art and Design Curriculum.

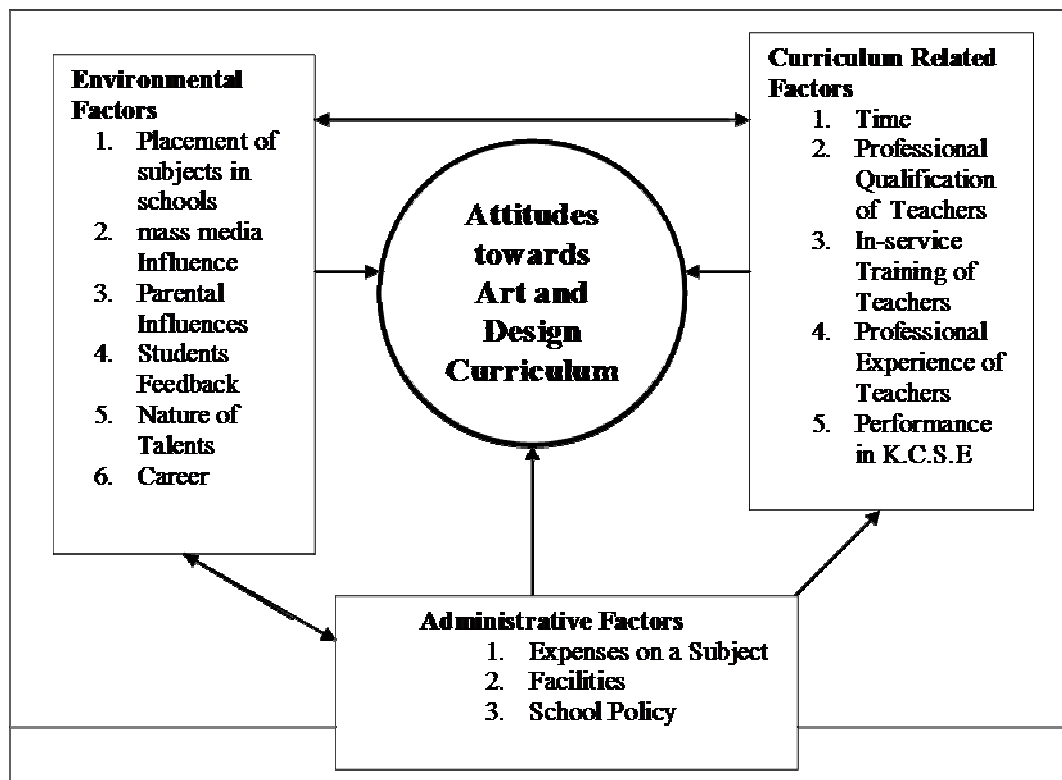
The conceptual frame work used in this study was based on theory of attitude formation and change as discussed in the works of various scholars such as Haber (2005), Robert (2001) and Tesser (1993). Attitudes impel people to react to objects, situations or propositions in ways that can be called favorable or unfavorable (Guilford, 2004). Therefore the attitudes of students and teachers towards Art and Design Curriculum can be favorable or unfavorable due to various factors as indicated in Figure 1.

Contemporary Psychologists observe that attitudes are not innate or inborn. They are learnt and organized through experiences as children develop. Sprint hall (1987) enumerates two general sources of attitudes: external influences such as exposure, parents, peer, teachers, the mass media and students' feedback. The initial experiences that mould an individual's attitude are those that are offered by parents and close members of the family (Orodho, 1990). Parental values, attitudes, aspirations and interest are transferred to their children. Presumably as the child grows older, he/she encounters attitudes opposed to those of his/her parents and adopt at least some of them.

The second general source is internal influences due to personal conflicts such as students making a choice of career to pursue. Career choice is a complex exercise involving unconscious decisions that are constrained by culture and social traditions. Choices made by students are moderated by what happens in their schools, homes, cultural norms and labour market orientations (Kithyo and Petrina, 2002). Attitudes may also be formed as a result of other possible ways, namely, due to past experiences encountered, identification and due to ones past behaviour and actions. All these may be termed as environmental influences.

Attitude generally involves an emotional or affective component (for instance, liking or disliking), a cognitive component (beliefs) and a behavioural component (tendency to act towards these items in various ways). In other words, attitudes as described here indicate that they are strongly held beliefs, opinions and feelings, which are reflected in people's behaviours. Attitude also affects implementation of the objectives, content, methods of teaching and evaluation procedures of Art and Design Curriculum by the teachers, especially if the teacher's attitude is negative (Robert, 2001).

Similarly, the school administration may develop the behavioural, cognitive and affective components towards Art and Design Curriculum. The school policy may demand that Art and Design should only be offered in one stream out of five or six streams (Wagah, 2009). This hinders talent nurturing for the students who may not b



**Figure 1.** Factors determining attitudes towards Art and Design curriculum.

in the stream that offers Art and Design curriculum. Everybody can be an artist except that the talent is never given room to grow (Kiama et al., 2007). Art and Design curriculum is demanding, especially the practical part which carries 70%. If the school is not supportive in terms of facility provision and a conducive learning environment (Art Room), the development of a negative attitude may occur towards the curriculum. Problems causing serious constraints in the schools for vocational and technical education include lack of facilities, equipments and materials, insufficient and poorly trained teachers Kerre (1987). Poor reward for experts of art affects the development of the subject. Learners have very few role models to emulate, hence they lack interest in pursuing careers in these areas (Osako et al., 2004).

The triadic model of attitude sees attitudes as having three components, affective, behaviour and cognitive. The implication of the triadic model is that these three components form a system and are interdependent. A change in one component of the system should produce changes in the other components in order to maintain consistency Radford and Govier (1991), Feldman (1990). They further say that evidence exists that the cognitive and affective components of attitudes are closely related. The affective component encompasses our positive or negative emotions about something, that is, how we feel about it. The behaviour component consists of a predisposition or intention to act in a particular manner that is

relevant to our attitude. Finally, the cognitive component refers to the belief and thoughts we hold about the object of our attitude. Students may view Art and Design curriculum as a subject involving talent and hence this forms an attitude. Students' and Teachers' attitude toward Art and Design curriculum may consist of positive emotions (the affective component). An intention to drop or proceed with Art and Design curriculum (the behaviour component) and the belief that Art and Design is a curriculum for talented students (the cognitive component) reflects negative emotions.

Attitudes can also take different forms, especially in the process of change. For instance, they can be selective, biased, arouse effect when challenged or resist change in the face of new experience, for example the teaching experience from teachers coupled with in-service training may lead to positive attitudes. Attitudes are hypothetical constructs, they can not be directly observed and their existence is inferred from a person's behaviour. This behaviour can of course take many forms, for example, students dropping the Art and Design curriculum and schools doing away with subject. Behaviour can be revealed in a number of ways.

It may be a person's real life action, their verbal statements or their filling in of an attitude scale (Radford and Govier, 1991). An attitude scale provides fairly quick and simple methods of measuring attitudes. They also provide quantitative data which facilitate comparisons, which

**Table 1.** Sample frame.

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Total No.</b>	<b>No. Selected</b>	<b>%</b>
Teachers of Art and Design curriculum	17	15	88
Students Taking Art and Design curriculum	117	113	97
Students who dropped Art and Design curriculum	439	131	30

can be used in research and in statistical analysis. Implicit in the process of attitudes is the notion that they fall on a continuum and it is assumed that the scale of measurement is linear, that a higher score indicates a stronger attitude.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Secondary schools in Nyanza province. The province had 902 Secondary schools of which only 17 secondary schools offered Art and Design curriculum. Out of the 17 schools, 2 schools were used for a pilot survey. The results of the two schools used for piloting, were not included in the final analysis. The researcher also administered questionnaires to 117 students who were taking the Art and Design curriculum in Form four in Nyanza Province. Out of the 117 students taking the Art and Design curriculum, 4 were piloted with. The results of the 4 students used for piloting, were not included in the final analysis. The researcher administered questionnaires to 113 Art and Design curriculum students who were in Form four. Students who dropped Art and Design curriculum were 439. Systematic sampling was used to select 138 students who had dropped the curriculum. Out of the 138 students the researcher conducted a pilot survey with 7 students. Thus, 15 teachers, 113 students of Art and Design curriculum and 131 students who dropped the curriculum were used in the study as shown in Table 1.

Instruments of data collection were questionnaires, observation schedule and document analysis guide. The Likert Scale was used to measure attitude. The scale had 40 statements on issues of teaching and learning Art and Design. The statements covered objectives, content, methods and evaluation strategies. The documents analyzed were in school evaluation records, enrolment records and the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K. C. S. E) Examination results for the years 2003 - 2006. The observation schedule was visited to cross-check some of the information generated by the questionnaire.

Data collected through questionnaires was grouped into categories and sub-categories. Data was then analyzed by use of inferential and descriptive statistics. Although open ended questions were few, responses got from them were coded. Open ended questions were few because they were to cover the issues which the closed questions in the Likert Scale locked out. Once the coding was completed, the responses were transferred into percentages. This was then tallied to establish the frequencies, which were then converted into percentages. To determine the frequencies of the response, the number of respondents giving similar answers was converted to illustrate relative levels of opinion. This enabled the researcher to arrive at conclusions about all the research objectives.

In the Likert scale the respondents were required to choose one appropriate response from the statements; strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (UD), disagree (D), strongly disagree (SD), for every item. The items given, either implied positive or negative attitudes. For the purpose of scoring the responses were quantified as follows; Positively stated items, were scored as follows; SA = 5, A = 4, UD = 3, D = 2 and SD = 1. For the negatively stated items, scoring was reversed as follows; SD = 5, D = 4, UD = 3, A = 2, SA =

1. Mean score were worked out for all the items. In the interpretation of the scores, mean scores of above 3 denoted positive attitude, mean scores of below 3 denoted negative attitudes and a mean of 3 indicated neutral attitudes.

The observation of the state of the Art room and the facilities are crucial in curriculum implementation of any institution. Therefore observation schedule was used to collect data on attitude towards Art and Design curriculum. It was used to gather more data from the respondents as a follow-up technique on issues, which could not be gathered from the questionnaires. The commitment by various school administrations was observed from the state and level of equipment of the Art room. The researcher got permission from the head of the schools visited before taking the photographs. Photographs were taken and used to capture the state and the level of the equipments in the Art rooms.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Attitude of Students towards Art and Design curriculum

The 8 – 4 - 4 Art and Design curriculum in secondary schools Kenya is intended to equip students with knowledge skills and attitudes which will enable them to be self-reliant and to contribute to the national development (UNDP, 2008). The study used set out to establish teachers and students attitudes towards Art and Design curriculum in relation to programs objective, content, methods of teaching and evaluation procedures. Data concerning these were collected from 113 students of Art and Design curriculum as shown in Table 2. It was therefore the general mean score for students' respondents concerning each of the four elements of Art and Design curriculum that were considered to represent the general attitudes of each group of the respondents and to judge whether the attitudes were positive or negative.

### Attitudes of Teachers towards Art and Design curriculum

A study used was set out to establish teachers' attitudes towards Art and Design curriculum in relation to program objectives, content, methods of teaching and evaluation procedures. Data concerning these were collected from 15 teachers of Art and Design curriculum as shown in Table 2. From the data gathered, mean scores were calculated for every individual respondent concerning the four elements of Art and Design curriculum that the study investigated (objectives, content and methods of teaching and evaluation procedures). From the mean scores of the individual respondents, a general mean score for teachers

**Table 2.** Attitudes of Students towards the four elements of Art and Design curriculum (n =13).

Gender	Mean scores				
	Objectives	Content	Methods of teaching	Evaluation	Attitudes
Boys	4.22	4.05	3.89	4.45	Positive
Girls	4.62	4.29	4.43	3.63	Positive

**Table 3.** Attitudes of Teachers towards the four elements of Art and Design.

Elements	Total scores	Mean scores (n = 15)	Attitudes
Objective	42.41	2.83	Negative
Content	40.06	2.67	Negative
Methods of teaching	40.66	2.71	Negative
Evaluation procedure	34.39	2.29	Negative

teachers was calculated concerning each of the four elements of Art and Design curriculum. It was therefore the general mean score for teachers concerning each of the four elements of Art and Design curriculum that were considered to represent the general attitudes of the respondents, and to judge whether the attitudes were positive or negative. Any mean score above 3 was considered as a positive attitude while any mean score below 3 was considered as negative attitude towards the specific element of Art and Design curriculum.

It was found out that those teachers displayed negative attitudes throughout on the four elements of Art and Design curriculum as revealed in Table 3. This explained why the number of schools taking the curriculum was decreasing year in year out. It further explains why the number of Art and Design curriculum students registered as low as one student for K. C. S. E. examination.

### Differences in attitudes between Teachers and Students

The differences in attitudes was done by performing a paired samples t-test from the mean scores of the teachers and the students concerning the objectives, content, methods of teaching` and evaluation procedures of Art and Design curriculum in secondary schools.

When the mean scores of the teachers and the students concerning the four elements were compared, the t-value was as shown in Table 4. When this was checked in the standard t-Distribution table under 0.05% level of significance for a two-tailed test, it was proved that the statistical test was 2.26 for each of the t-value above. This implied that the statistical test was significantly different.

On the left of the photograph above where three students are standing, is the Art room in a secondary school in Nyanza Province Kenya, walled and roofed with iron sheets Figure 2. The study made observations that

**Table 4.** Differences in attitudes between Teachers and Students.

	t-Value	Statistical test
Objective	0.944	2.26
Content	0.938	2.26
Methods of teaching	0.079	2.26
Evaluation Procedures	0.381	2.26

the room which measures 10 by 10 feet may be able to accommodate less than ten students for a lesson. Therefore if more students were to be interested in the Art and Design curriculum it may not be possible a factor contributing to few students proceeding with the curriculum up to Form four. It can be observed that the laboratory on the right hand side is housed in a modern building in the same school.

The state of the buildings depicts the importance the school administration attaches to the curriculum. Similarly students may also form attitudes towards different subjects based on the state of the buildings housing the curriculum. An ideal Art room for a school should be the size of a secondary school class room, which can accommodate at least 40 students. It should also have a staffroom for Art and Design teachers, two stores and a toilet.

An Art Room should have two stores and a staffroom. One of the stores is used by students to store their tools and clay. The second store is used by the teacher to store Art and Design materials such as calligraphic pens, squeegees, screen mesh, water colours and wood work tools such as pliers, sandy papers, and mallet among others. The room used for teaching is combined with a display area. A sink of running water must be placed in one of the corners of the Art Room. The rest of the wall is used for display of students work.

Similar observations were also observed in a girl's



**Figure 2.** Art room with Rudimentary Facilities and a Chemistry Laboratory in a Secondary School in Nyanza Province.



**Figure 3.** Art room with Rudimentary Facilities and a Physics Laboratory in a School in Nyanza Province.

**Table 5.** Available facilities for Art and Design curriculum in Secondary Schools in Nyanza Province (n = 15).

	Calligraphic pens	Screen mesh	Shelves	Painting easels	Sink of water	Weavin looms	Assorted papers
Not available	12(84.6%)	13(93.3%)	10(69.2%)	11(76.9%)	10(69.2%)	10(69.2%)	8(53.8%)
Available	3(15.4%)	2(7.7%)	5(30.8%)	4(23.1%)	5(30.8%)	5(30.8%)	7(46.2%)
Total	15(100%)	15(100%)	15(100%)	15(100%)	15(100%)	15(100%)	15(100%)

school as shown in Figure 3. The Art room in the girls' school has been walled with timber as opposed to the physics laboratory in the same school which the researcher observed was housed in a storeyed permanent house and in a better condition which indicated the

Commitment of the administration on physics implementation. This creates the attitudes from the students and the teachers towards a curriculum.

It was established that various facilities were inadequate in schools offering Art and Design curriculum as

as shown in Table 5.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn with regard findings of the study:

1. The study revealed that the students who proceeded with Art and Design curriculum had positive attitude. Students inferred that they can earn a living through production of Art pieces. Through the development of talents drop outs at any level of Education can earn the country foreign exchange through the carvings in Kisii soap stone, Njiru stone, Clay, wood carving of realism, Cubism and abstract objects portraying the diverse cultures of the peoples of Kenya.
2. The study revealed that the attitude of the teachers was negative and that was why the students proceeding with the curriculum were few and schools offering the curriculum were reducing. Inadequate facilities and the size and state of the Art room created the negative attitudes.
3. There was significant difference between the teachers and the students' attitude towards Art and Design curriculum. The teachers had negative attitudes while the students had positive attitudes.

### Recommendations

Based on the foregoing conclusions, it is recommended as follows:

1. The Ministry of education should make the curriculum compulsory in form one and two in all schools in Kenya in order to tap the talents that may lead to creation of self employment to students who drop out at any level of Education in Kenya.
2. There is need for periodic in-service training of the teachers. Methodologies should be suggested for effective implementation of the programme and in- service workshops should be organized to equip teachers with the necessary skills to handle and effectively implement the new syllabus. One of the reasons why the 8 – 4 - 4 system was started in Kenya was to introduce technical and Vocational subjects to cater for students dropping at any stage of education. Therefore the ministry of education should ensure that the Art rooms and facilities used in implementing the curriculum are adequate.
3. There was a significant difference in attitude between the teachers and the students. Implementation workshops should be held by Kenya Institute of Education to familiarize teachers with areas of study, so that they have a common understanding of what is expected of them as well as the students in order to eradicate the negative attitudes that are killing the curriculum. National exhibitions

for Art and Design curriculum from all levels of education need to be organized by the Ministry of Education every year and the best performers among both the students and the teachers should be rewarded.

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