Cultural influence on the acquisition of science concepts and skills: a comparative study of pupils from four cultural communities in Kenya

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Abstract

Kenyan pupils come from varied cultural backgrounds that are likely to influence their acquisition of science concepts and skills. This study compared the achievement of pupils from four cultural groups on a science skills test and a science achievement test. The sample comprised 196 standard eight primary school pupils from the Kipsigis, the Maasai, the Abagusii and the Luo from Bomet, Trans Mara, Gucha, and Rachuonyo districts respectively. One Way ANOVA statistical technique was used to analyse the pupils' scores. The results indicate that a significant difference in achievement in the two tests was identified among some groups at the 0.05 level. Though there are indications of cultural influence, cultural factor alone as a variable could not explain the differences in achievement in the two tests between pupils from some cultural groups. This paper concludes by suggesting that other variables such as teacher characteristics, the effectiveness of different teaching approaches, the pupils' competence in the language used for instruction and the science teaching/learning resources available in schools be investigated in order to convincingly explain the differences in achievement that were identified.