

Art has been taught in Kenya secondary schools for many years and has been part of the Forms 1V and VI examination curriculum (KCSE and KACSE) in 7-4-2-3 system of education. With the introduction of the 8-4-4 (first O level examination (KCSE) in 1989) the status of Art and of the other practical subjects has officially been put on a level with that of academic subjects. Despite this, there are still attitudes and related misconceptions that tend to rate Art as a subject of low importance on the grounds that only poor learners in academic subject perform well in Art.

Art educators blame such attitudes and misconceptions for the very few learners who take art up to 'O'level examinations and the little fund allocated to the development of the subject. These attitudes and conceptions, therefore, need to be investigated to establish their prevalence and validity. Such investigations can be useful in rectifying the misconceptions and alleged implications, situation before the attitudes, if prevalent and valid, could assume such proportions as the jeopardize the national goals under the 8-4-4 system of education.

This study did not set out to investigate whether attitudes and misconceptions influence the alleged implications but rather to find out the prevalence or otherwise of each in its own right. The research covered the old system of education, 7-6-2-3, with reference to the selected secondary schools in Nairobi Province at the time of this work the 8-4-4 curriculum was being implemented at the primary level.

Data was collected in two ways. First, by administering questionnaires to respondents believed to be closely associated with the teaching and learning of Art in secondary schools. Secondly, by extracting the required information from school records. Analysis and interpretation of data were based on comparing Art and academic subjects in respect of:

- (a) The subjects' importance,
- (b) Learners' performance,
- (c) Learners' choice of subjects for 'O'level examinations, and
- (d) Allocation of funds to the subjects.

Although the findings confirm that there is a tendency to consider Art as of low importance, some learners who perform well in Art also perform well in academic subjects. However, the results show that many of the learners who perform well in Art in Forms 1 and 11 do not choose the subject for their KCSE examinations. The results also show that Art is not adequately funded to enable its development. The findings further suggest that Art is not taken seriously both at school and national levels.

It is recommended that further research regarding attitudes, misconceptions and alleged implications towards Art be undertaken by concerned individuals or groups in order to provide empirical evidence for better understanding of problems facing Art and hence look into ways of changing these attitudes and misconceptions so as to provide a fair assessment of Art in schools and society as a whole.