

Comparing the reliability of the conveyor belt system of marking with the traditional marking system

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In Uganda, Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) conducts Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE), whose results are mainly used to select pupils for post primary education. As such, it is imperative that UNEB maintains high standards of validity and reliability of PLE. Since its inception, in 1980, UNEB has used the Traditional Marking System (TMS), in which one examiner alone marks all the questions on a candidate's script. There were concerns about the reliability of marks obtained by using TMS, as inconsistencies in marking were sometimes discovered while scrutinizing scripts with suspected malpractice.

In the year 2003, UNEB piloted at PLE the use of a marking system, it called the Conveyor Belt System (CBS) of marking. This system confines an examiner to marking a set of questions that have been assigned to him/her and passes the script to the next examiner, who marks another set of questions. Following this, a study was conducted to compare the mark-quality of CBS and TMS. Specifically the study objectives among others were to: estimate reliability to conveyor-belt marking system (CBS) and the traditional marking system (TMS); determine the deviations in the examiners' marks from the team leaders' marks in the CBS and the TMS; list advantages and challenges of the CBS; and recommend some ways of improving management of the CBS.

This paper will highlight the key findings from the study.