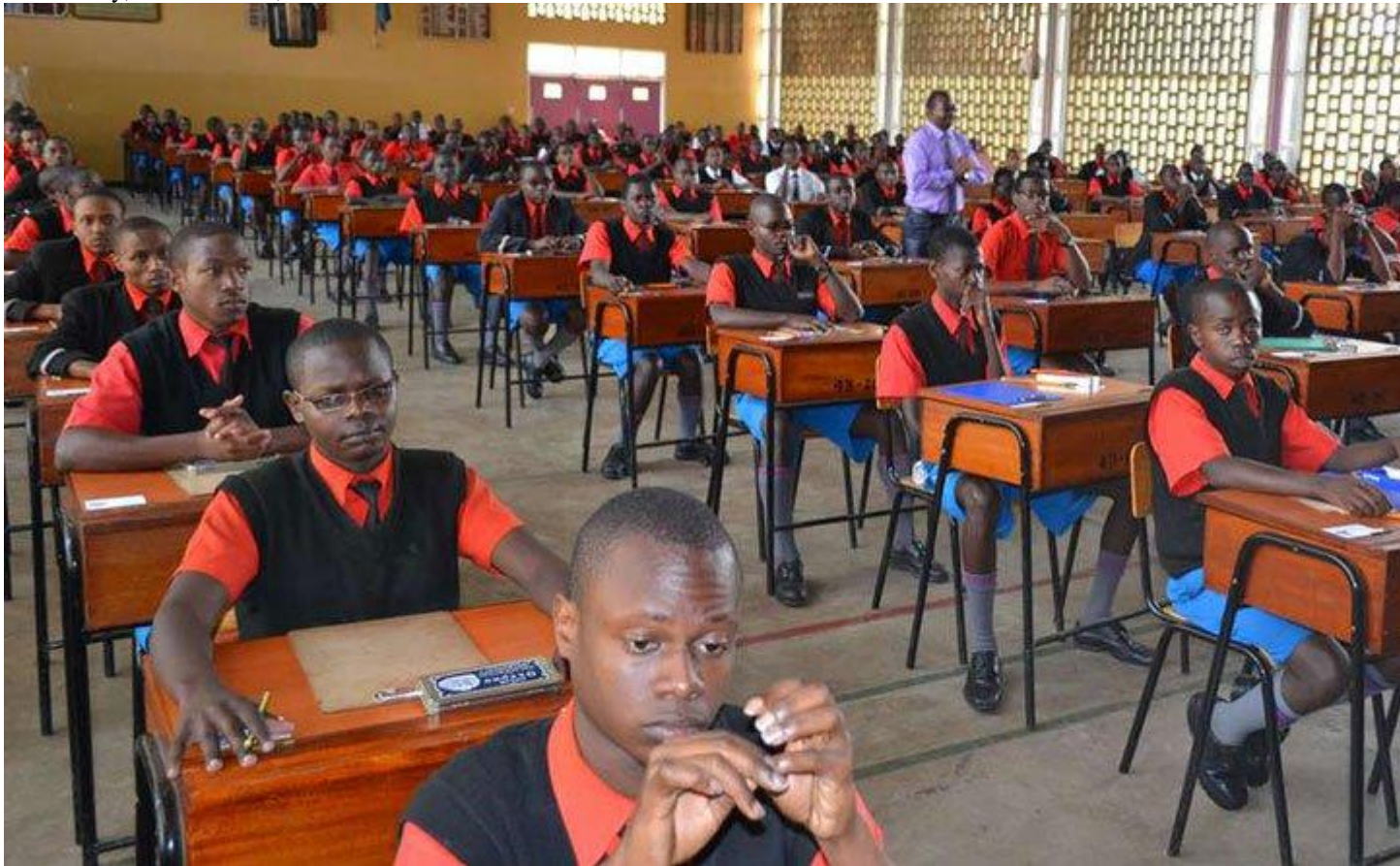


<https://www.businessdailyafrica.com/lifestyle/pfinance/Are-examinations-true-measure-intelligence/4258410-4236726-5nu1afz/index.html>

## Are examinations true measure of intelligence?

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Starehe Boys Centre students during a past Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination. FILE PHOTO | NMG

As more than 500,000 candidates anxiously await their Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination results released yesterday, what is the meaning of true intelligence? Can we capture intelligence in standardised tests? Psychologists debate different aspects of intelligence, but in general academic wherewithal falls into one's intelligence quotient.

However, many of us can remember a few smart high scoring students from our secondary school days who wound up leading lacklustre unrewarding careers. As highlighted on March 7, 2014, in the *Business Daily*, 'Exam scores do not fairly represent true abilities', preparation for

standardised tests as well as most undergraduate and post-graduate education only nominally prepare students for the real world.

Among many issues with formal schooling systems in Kenya that punitively foster convergent thinking rather than divergent thinking, the KCSE fails to capture key indicators of a student's future success revolving around emotional intelligence and social intelligence.

The most popular non-academic aptitude, emotional intelligence, construct exploded onto the academic and corporate stage in 1990 with a seminal research study conducted by John Mayer and Peter Salovey. A cacophony of social scientists as well as laymen, such as journalists, have ever since trumpeted emotional intelligence as the solution to human-centred problems within organisations.

Emotional intelligence entails understanding other people's emotions while controlling the power that one's subconscious unleashes, often irrationally, on their own emotions. Have a boss who notices you are going through a difficult week without you having to point it out? She is likely high on emotional intelligence. Ever experience a coworker who showed imperfect timing at every turn always making comments and suggestions at the wrong time given the mood of the listeners? Then he, in all likelihood, suffered from low emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence combined with intelligent quotient and social intelligence form reasonable predictors of one's career success. Dozens of Kenyan consulting firms, from briefcase nincompoops to credible large entities, offer some level of emotional intelligence training and coaching. However, can emotional intelligence even change? Emotional intelligence does not comprise a personality trait that is locked in someone by a certain age in childhood.

Despite the hundreds of millions of shillings spent on emotional intelligence training each year in Kenya, evidence shows only negligible results.

While after the training ends, participants can often recite definitions of emotional intelligence and some simple signs of how to spot it in others, but training provides virtually no benefit to actually boosting a trainee's own emotional intelligence.

Think of emotional intelligence enhancement coaching in light of a weight loss analogy that proves exceedingly difficult. Possible? Yes. Likely? No. Evidence derived from researcher Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic shows that some level of change can occur in one's emotional intelligence, but a participant must put in exceptional amounts of time with copious efforts to boost his or her emotional intelligence even by small amounts.

The vast majority of trainees fail to put in any reasonable effort towards self-change. Inasmuch, one-on-one coaching proves more effective in boosting employee emotional intelligence, but still efforts often fail because employees neglect to put in their own substantial time, effort, and struggle into the fight.

So, in the end, managers and trainers end up harping at employees for low emotional intelligence, employees get fed up, and the employee leaves or gets terminated from the firm.

Back to predicting success, unless KCSE and university examinations investigate emotional comprehension and social setting skills, we will fail to accurately forecast a pupil's aptitude for future career success and direct him or her towards appropriate specialised learning paths.

*Dr Scott may be reached on [scott@ScottProfessor.com](mailto:scott@ScottProfessor.com), or on Twitter: @ScottProfessor*