SOCIO- ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND PUPILS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KAKUZI DIVISION, THIKA DISTRICT KENYA

A research Report Presented to the Institute of open and distance learning in partial fulfillment of the requirement for The award of Bachelor of education arts of Kampala international university

BY

FRANCIS N. WAKIMANI
BED/ 8957/51/DF

NOVEMBER 2008
DECLARATION

I, declare that the material in this book has been done entirely by my effort and has not been presented elsewhere for any academic qualification.

SIGNED

FRANCIS N. WAKIMANI

DATE:

22/8/08
APPROVAL

This research report is submitted for examination with my approval as a University Supervisor.

Signed

Mr. PETER MAKI
SUPERVISOR

DATE: 23-08-08
DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my wife Ann Kahaki Njoroge and my children Virginia Njoki, Peter Kimani, Perpetual Wairimu and John Kiarie.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First of all I would like to thank my supervisor Mr. Peter Maki for being there for me whenever I needed him and also offering advice where necessary.
I would like also to thank my wife for all she has done for me as regards my research.
To the respondents who returned the questionnaires and those who were cooperative to me may God bless you.
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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to investigate social economic background and pupils academic performance in rural primary schools in kakuzi division, Thika district Kenya

Specific objectives were to determine the factors affecting academic performance of rural primary school learners in Kakuzi division, Thika district in Kenya in relation to: poverty, Cultural beliefs, parental attitudes and family structure

The methods used for data collection were questionnaires to the teachers and focus group discussions with the pupils

The findings from the study indicated that low economic status which was supported by 50%, Cultural beliefs 45%, parental attitudes 70% and family structure 80% are among the social economic factors that affect academic performance of pupils.

The study recommended that the government should make sure that devises means of helping children from rural areas attain education. For example bursaries can be organized to help children from poor families.

Teachers should not ignore children who are with drawn instead should try to find out the problem and devise means to solve it. For example children from single parents
CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background of the study

The development of education, to fight ignorance and enhancing economic growth is one of the major priorities the government of Kenya. Immediately after independence in 1963 the session paper number ten of 1965 of African socialism and its application to planning in Kenya set a policy and for fighting illiteracy, ignorance and poverty in the country. Government of Kenya (1965)

Since then the education sector has been subjected to more that ten reviews by the state funded special commissions and working parties. The major reviews include the 1964 Ominde commission, the 1976 Gachathi report, the 1981 presidential working party on the establishment of the school public university, the presidential working party on education and man power training for the next decade and beyond, and the 1998 master plan on education and training task force. Government of Kenya (1964, 1976, 1981, 1998)

The reviews indicate the extent to which the government and other stakeholders have gone in search for a policy framework and laying strategies to make the education serve the nation and meet the country’s development needs.

Despite the efforts by the government education policies there are some factors hindering this noble cause. It’s upon such a background that the study will be undertaken to investigate the socio economic background of students in relation to their academic achievement.
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

The study investigated the socio economic factors affecting academic achievement of rural primary school in Kakuzi division. From the researcher’s personal teaching experience, these could be serious factors and yet there is no evidence that they are given the deserving attention. This lack of attention the most important drive to high academic performance has driven the researcher to carry out the study.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the study was to investigate Social-Economic background and children’s academic performance in rural primary schools in Kakuzi Division Thika District Kenya.

Specific objectives.

Specifically the study sought to;

1. Determine the profile of the respondents with regard to:
   1.1 age
   1.2 gender
   1.3 academic level

2. To determine Social-Economic background and children’s academic performance in rural primary schools with regard to:
   2.1 Economic status
   2.2 Cultural beliefs
   2.3 parental attitudes
   2.4 family structure
1.4 Research questions
1. What is the relationship between poverty and academic performance of rural primary pupils?

2. What is the relationship between cultural belief and academic performance of rural primary pupils?

3. What is the relationship between parental attitudes and academic performance of rural primary pupils?

4. What is the relationship between family structure and academic performance of rural primary pupils?

1.5. Scope of the study
The study was conducted in Kakuzi Division in Thika District under the topic ‘socio-economic background and pupils academic performance in rural primary schools’. The study was conducted from December 2007 to April 2008.
1.6. Significance of the study
The study will benefit the following:

The ministry of education will be able to allocate more funds in terms of bursaries especially to the pupils from poor socio and economic background.

The district supervisors will be able to identify the communities abilities and try to organize the communities for seminars and workshops to empower them knowledge with skills on how to alleviate and promote education.

The teachers will devise ways of encouraging and assisting pupils from poor families.

Parents will understand better their roles and work for the betterment of their community by supporting education.

Schools will take into consideration the importance of feeding programs in schools and also realize that nutrition is important in the improvement and better performance in class.

Parents will therefore learn the importance of nutrition and therefore review their feeding habits.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

2.0. Introduction

Heyneman's (2001) findings of weak effects of family background not
with standing, there is significant evidence that family factors are
important for educational outcomes in the developing world. Research
in China has examined the role of socio-economic status, family size
and structure, and family decision-making processes in an attempt to
explain how they relate to educational inequalities in developing
countries. Of course, the relationship between family socio-economic
status and school achievement is complicated in contexts where
enrollment and attainment themselves are conditional on family
economic circumstances.

2.1 Economic factors and pupils academic performance

Case studies using culturally specific measures of class have found
significant effects of family class status on students' mathematics and
numerous studies indicate marked disparities in enrollment and
attainment associated with socioeconomic status Sathar & Lloyd
(2000) for rural China, Patrinos & Psacharopoulos (1996) for Bolivia
and Guatemala). In a recent systematic cross-national analysis of this
relationship, Filmer & Pritchett (1999) analyzed the “wealth gap” in
education in 35 countries in Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and
East Asia. Their results revealed substantial cross-country variation in
the differences between median years of school obtained by students
in the top 20% compared to the bottom 40% of the wealth
distribution. All countries (except Kazakhstan) displayed a difference between rich and poor children's attainment; the largest wealth gaps emerged in the countries of South Asia.

The allocation of children to productive activities in the home or the labor market is thought to be a common survival strategy for poor families, but more research is needed to determine whether and how child labor interferes with schooling. Studies have found detrimental effects of child household labor on schooling in Botswana Chernichovsky (1985), Malawi Lockheed et al (1989), Colombia, Bolivia, and the Philippines Grootaert & Patrinos (1999). But in other contexts, where school has been effectively legitimated as the proper place for children or where employment opportunities for children are scarce, child labor is less likely to interfere with schooling.

In a recent study of Botswana, Fuller et al (1995) found no effect of household labor tasks on girls' probability of leaving school. In Kenya, Buchmann (2000) found little evidence that wage labor or housework competes with school enrollment. These studies underscore that child labor and schooling need not be mutually exclusive activities. The varied results of the research on child labor strongly suggest that the relationship between schooling and working depends on social structural factors that determine the range of options available to families as they make decisions. Cross-national comparative research is needed to determine whether there are patterns underlying what appears to be a myriad of results from single-country case studies.
2.2: Cultural beliefs and academic performance of pupils
The study by Holmes (2003) found out that overall, females receive less education than males, and they tend to dropout, or are withdrawn earlier for both economic and social-cultural reasons. The study furthers argues that the opportunity cost of sending female children to school in rural areas, where girls are married quite early, is high because benefits of their schooling will not accrue to their parental household. Similarly Kasente, (2004), Kakuru, (2003) explain how early marriages influence children’s dropping out of school especially as regards the girl child as it is perceived by parents that marrying off the girl child is an escape route from poverty.

Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment (UPPAP, 2000) indicates that marrying off girls would benefit her family in terms of attaining bride price. Odaga and Heneveld (1995), further note that parents worry about wasting money on the education of girls because they are most likely to get pregnant or married before completing their schooling and that once married, girls become part of another family and the parental investment in them is lost. This therefore perpetuates parents discouraging the girl child from continuing with school.

2.3: Parental attitudes and academic performance of pupils
Parents’ perceptions and societal expectations, part of gendered sex role, socialization affect how girls and boys participate in education. (Rich, A. 2000) From tender age, the young children are socialized into “sex roles.” Thus learning “sex appropriate” behaviors and traits in childhood is one of the prerequisites for smooth functioning in society (common in rural areas). (UNICEF 2000)
In general most children, and girls in particular, especially those in rural areas, fail to enroll in or to complete primary schooling because their parents do not value education. (UNESCO 2003) In most cases because the parents themselves are uneducated/illiterate. There is also a ‘myth’ among most illiterate parents that “boys are generally clever and hard working in school.

Their minds are always in school. But girls like playing and when they mature they are difficult to deal with and they get pregnant”. The implication is that they should not be given the opportunity to go to school. Such ‘messages’ demotivating to girls, who internalize them and in return end up believing that school, is not for them. (UNESCO 2004)

2.4: family structure and academic performance of pupils

Research has examined how family structure and size influence educational outcomes in developing regions. Importantly, much of this research questions the universality of findings from the United States and other industrialized countries. For example, in the United States the well documented negative effects of single parenthood on children’s educational outcomes range from a greater probability of school drop-out to lower achievement. These effects have been attributed in part to economic stress associated with female headship, and in part to the lack of human or social capital in the household Seltzer (1994)

Interestingly, in some African contexts female headship appears to be associated with greater, not fewer, educational opportunities for children. For example, in a study of adolescent girls in South Africa,
Fuller & Liang (1999) reported that father absence served to decrease girls’ risk of leaving school. Lloyd & Blanc (1996) analyzed the effects of female headship on children’s schooling in seven sub-Saharan African countries. Female-headed households tended to be poorer than other households, but children in female-headed households were consistently more likely to be enrolled in school and to have completed grade four than were children in households headed by men.

Lloyd & Blanc (1996) maintain that “female household heads are more likely to invest resources, including time, money and emotional support, in facilitating the education of children living in their household”. The different effects of family structure in Africa and other regions may also be linked to the nuclear family’s embeddedness in larger kinship networks. For example, Lloyd & Blanc (1996) noted that extended family networks in sub-Saharan Africa enable children with academic promise to move to households of “patron” family members, who help them gain access to higher quality schools.

Pong (1996) similarly illustrated the importance of extended kinship systems in moderating the effects of family structure on children’s schooling in Malaysia. Children of divorced mothers, but not of widowed mothers, have lower school participation rates than do children of two-parent families. Pong attributed these results to the buffering role of large kinship systems: in Malaysia, widows receive more material support from family members than do divorced mothers.

Studies on sibling size and schooling in developing countries similarly cast doubt on the generalizability of patterns found in industrialized countries. Research in the United States consistently documents an
inverse relationship between number of siblings and educational attainment Blake (1989), Steelman & Powell (1989). A prominent explanation for this relationship is the "resource dilution hypothesis" which stresses that material resources and parental attention are diluted with additional children in the household. Negative associations between sibling size and educational outcomes have been replicated in some developing countries, including Thailand Knodel et al (1990), Malaysia Pong (1997), Shreeniwas (1997), Parish & Willis 1993), the Dominican Republic and the Philippines Montgomery & Lloyd (1997).

Yet the negative association between sibling size and schooling is not consistently observed. For example, Anh and associates (1998) demonstrated that the negative relationship between sibling size and enrollment in Vietnam disappeared when controls for socioeconomic status were added. In Kenya, Buchmann (2000) found no effect of sibling size on children's probability of enrollment, and Montgomery & Lloyd (1997) found no impact of excess fertility (fertility departing from stated family-size preferences) on educational attainment. Earlier research in Africa reported that siblings may even contribute to household resources in some contexts.

In rural Botswana, the number of seven- to fourteen-year-old children in the household was positively related to educational enrollment and attainment Chernichovsky (1985), and sibling size was positively associated with years of schooling in Kenya (Gomes 1984). These studies suggest an important caveat to the resource dilution hypothesis by demonstrating that effects of sibling size are not consistent across societies. The extended family systems common in
Africa can provide resources that moderate the effects of sibling size and actually facilitate children’s schooling.

A second caveat relates to the point that a child’s position within the sibling structure may determine whether siblings contribute or dilute resources for education. For example, in addition to documenting positive effects of older siblings in Botswana, Chernichovsky (1985) found that the presence of very young siblings was detrimental to children’s schooling. Similarly, Parish & Willis (1993) found that in Taiwan, early-born siblings receive less education while later-born siblings receive more; having older sisters is helpful to male and female children alike. Echoing Gomes’ (1984) findings from Kenya, Lloyd & Gage-Brandon (1994) noted that some of the costs of high fertility in Ghana are borne by older siblings rather than by parents; thus later-born children may benefit from the economic resources provided by older siblings.

A final caveat to the resource dilution interpretation highlighted by research in developing countries lies in evidence for what economists call the quality-quantity trade-off. This term refers to the idea that parents may anticipate educational costs and modify fertility decisions in order to have fewer but better-educated children. Caldwell’s (1980) influential work explicitly identified the direct costs of schooling and the increased pressures on parents to invest in their children as important factors for bringing about fertility decline.

Parish & Willis (1993) and Malaysia Shreeniwas (1997) showed that
the negative relationship between sibling size and education began to
emerge only after the onset of fertility limitation. Taken together,
these findings suggest that observed negative effects of larger siblings
might reflect not the dilution of resources perse, but rather prior
decisions and preferences that determine both numbers of children in
the household and investments in their education. In sum, the
literature on family structure and schooling in developing countries
illustrates the potential buffering effect of larger kinship structures and
the often-significant impact of order and gender composition of
siblings. More generally, the research highlights the importance of
focusing critically on the social and economic contexts in which family
effects operate.

In addition to the research on family structure, a growing body of
research on family decision-making investigates conventional notions
regarding parental values and preferences, cultural beliefs, and the
allocation of children to work or school. For example, while early
research attributed gender inequalities in education to patriarchy
Csapo (1981), Greenhalgh (1985), recent research emphasizes the
context-specific nature of family decisions regarding education for sons
and daughters. Some studies have demonstrated how multiple
factors–labor market conditions, the family economy, parental beliefs
and preferences–inform educational decisions Parish & Willis 1993,
Fuller et al (1995), Buchmann (2000). Similarly, researchers have
begun to examine relationships between gender and poverty in
household decisions about schooling Knodel & Jones (1996), World
Bank (2000).
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction
This study explains the methods that the researcher used to select the geographical area, from which the research was carried out and methods of selection of respondents. It also explains the methods the researcher used to collect and analyze data.

3.1 Research Design
The study used a descriptive design. The research drew from both the qualitative and quantitative analysis approaches in order to get a bigger picture both in number and data.

3.2 Environment
The study was conducted in Kakuzi division, Thika district in Kenya. And this was so because it is where the researcher lives and therefore it was easy to get information. The costs of transport were reduced.

3.2. Study population
The study included teachers and pupils of primary schools in the division of Kakuzi, Thika district

3.3 Sample framework
3.3.1 Sample size
A total of 120 Questionnaires were distributed to teachers and 50 pupils participated in focus group discussions.
3.3.2 Sample technique
Using a purposive sampling technique, teachers were selected to participate in the study while random sampling was used to select pupils who participated in focus group discussion.

3.3.3 Sample Procedure
In carrying out research the researcher first got a release letter from the course administrators which the researcher took to the schools under study. The researcher was then given permission by the school authority to access information from the school. The researcher then with the help of teachers randomly picked pupils for focus group discussions. For the teachers the researcher purposively distributed questionnaires to them by selecting two teachers from each class in the schools.

3.4 Methods for Data Collection
3.4.1 Instruments
Questionnaires
These were used to collect information from the teachers since these respondents were literate and were able to understand the language used.

Focus group discussions
Focus group discussions were held with pupils since it is easy to get information from children while discussing with them.

3.4.2 Sources of Data
This study used both primary and secondary data:

Primary data was collected using Questionnaires which were administered to the teachers.
Secondary data was collected through Document analysis in the form of Reports, training manual, newspapers, and journals for the period under study was read and the required data collected from them.

3.5 Data Processing and Analysis
Qualitative data involved three sets of activities which included editing, coding and frequency tabulations. Editing was done by looking through each of the field responses from questionnaires and interview guides ascertaining that every applicable question had an answer and all errors eliminated for the completeness, accuracy and uniformity.

The researcher then proceeded on to coding the various responses given to particular questions that lacked coding frames, he then established how many times each alternative response category was given an answer using tally marks which was later added up.

Data was then presented in frequency tabulations rendering it ready for interpretation. Quotations and field notes made were also included.
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION
The chapter is a presentation and interpretation of the findings. The results are presented in form of tables and frequency counts and percentage. It focuses on Social-Economic background and children’s academic performance in rural primary schools in Kakuzi Division Thika District Kenya.

4.2 Profile of the respondents
One hundred twenty (120) questionnaires were distributed to the teachers and 100 were filled and returned. This therefore represents 83% of the total number of questionnaires that were distributed.

Table 1: Gender of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents Sex</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study covered 100 randomly selected teachers of whom 60 (60%) were male and 40 (40%) were female.

Table 2: Age group of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>frequency</th>
<th>percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19-24 yrs</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-30 yrs</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 and above</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The age category of the respondents was divided in three groups that is 19-24 years were 30 respondents which was 30%, 25-30 were 50 (50%) and 31 and above were 20 representing (20%) of the respondents.

Table 3: Educational level of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The academic level of the respondents was divided in three categories that is certificate, diploma and degree. 35 (35%) of the respondents had certificates, 45 (45%) had diplomas and 20 (20%) had degrees.

Focus group discussions were used to extract data from the pupils. 50 pupils were included in the discussion of which 30 were boys and 20 girls.
4.3 Socio economic background and academic achievement of rural primary schools.

4.3.1 Low economic status

Table 4: How economic status is a hindrance to pupil’s academic achievement in rural primary schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 1: How economic status is a hindrance to pupil’s academic achievement in rural primary schools
According to the chart, 50 (50%) of the respondents agrees that poverty is a hindrance to the academic achievement of rural primary school while 30 (30%) disagree and 20 (20%) were not sure.

Table 5: Pupils do not have enough schooling materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

70 (70%) of the respondents agreed that because of poverty, the pupils do not have enough schooling materials while 20 (20%) disagreed and 10 (10%) were not sure.

Table 6: Because of low economic status parents can not afford to pay fees for their children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table shows that 90 (90%) of the respondents agreed that because of low economic status parents cannot afford pay school fees for their children while 10 (10%) were not sure.

"...my parents cannot afford to pay for my school fees in time therefore am always sent back home to collect fees which means I miss classes." (pupil focus group participant)

**Table 7: Because of poverty children have to sell products in the market**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

40 (40%) of the respondents agreed that because of poverty children have to sell products in the market while 35 (35%) disagreed and 25 (25%) were not sure.

"...i have to sell products in the market before I come to school and sometimes I reach late and tired." (Pupil FGD participant)
Table 8: Because of low economic status pupils fall sick and miss classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

55 (55%) of the respondents agreed that because of poverty pupils fall sick and therefore miss classes while 30 (30%) disagreed and 15 (15%) were not sure.

".......my parents cannot afford to pay for my medical bills and therefore when I fall sick we use cheap medicines...................." (Pupil FGD participant)

Table 9: Children from richer families perform better than those from poor families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 2: Children from richer families perform better than those from poor families

The table and chart shows that 40 (40%) of the respondents agreed that children from richer families perform better than those from poor families while 40 (40%) disagree and 20 (20%) were not sure.

4.3.2 Cultural beliefs

Table 10: Cultural beliefs hinder children’s education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
45 (45%) of the respondents agreed that cultural beliefs hinder children’s education while 40 (40%) disagreed and 15 (15%) were not sure.

**Table 11: Children married off early because of cultural beliefs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the table 50 (50%) of the respondents agree that children are married off early because of cultural beliefs while 40 (40%) disagreed and 10 (10%) were not sure.

".........my friend was forced to marry an older man and so she had to drop out of school.................” (Pupil FGD participant)

**Table 12: Circumcision hinders children’s**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the table, 60% of the respondents agreed that circumcision hinders children’s education while 30% disagreed and 10% were not sure.

Table 13: Children have to do some work before going to school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
65 (65%) of the respondents agreed that because of cultural beliefs children have to do some work before going to school while 30 (30%) disagreed and 5 (5%) were not sure.

### 4.3.3 Parental attitudes and educational background

**Table 14: Parent's attitudes towards education affect children's achievement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

70 (70%) of the respondents agreed that parent's attitudes towards education affect children's achievement while 20 (20%) disagreed and 10 (10%) were not sure.

**Table 15: Girls are the most affected by parental attitudes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 4: Girls are the most affected by parental attitudes

The chart shows that 80 (80%) of the respondents agreed that girls are the most affected by parental attitudes while 20 (20%) disagreed.

"......my sisters do not study and are at home because my parents do not want them to study..................." (Pupil FGD participant)

Table 16: Parent's educational attainment has an effect on children's education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the table 75 (75%) of the respondents agreed that parent’s educational attainment has an effect on children’s education while 15 (15%) disagreed and 10 (10%) were not sure

4.3.4 Family structure

Table 17: The number of children in the family affects children’s academic achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

80 (80%) of the respondents agreed that the number of children in the family affects children’s academic achievement while 15 (15%) disagreed and 5 (5%) were not sure

".........my parents decided to leave my sister at home so that i can go to school since the money is not enough................." (Pupil focus group participant.)
Table 18: Single parenting affects children’s academic achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

50 (50%) of the respondents agreed that single parenting affects children’s academic achievement while 35 (35%) disagreed and 15 (15%) were not sure.

Table 19: Children from families with both parents perform better than those in single parent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 5: **Children from families with both parents perform better than those in single parent**

According to the chart, 70 (70%) of the respondents agreed that children from families with both parents perform better than those with single parents while 25 (25%) disagreed and 5 (5%) were not sure.

**Table 20: Children from mother only families perform poorly in class**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

80 (80%) of the respondents agreed that children from mother only families perform poorly in class while 10 (10%) disagreed and 10 (10%) were not sure.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Introduction
The major purpose of the study was to investigate socioeconomic background and academic performance of rural primary pupils. This chapter focuses on the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations. Finally the chapter ends with suggestions for further research.

5.1. Summary
The first objective was to determine socio economic background and children’s academic achievement in regards to economic status. According to the study 50% agreed that poverty is a hindrance to the educational attainment of rural pupils because they cannot afford to pay for school fees, afford the necessary school materials, treat themselves when sick and above all because of poverty they have to go and sell produces in the market. All these hinder their academic achievement. According to Filmer and Pichet (1999) children from wealthy countries and families perform better than those from poor countries families.
Pupils revealed in focus group discussions held with them that most rural people are poor and cannot afford to pay for school fees leave alone buying the necessary school materials this therefore hinders the academic achievement of children. They also mentioned that their parents cannot afford to pay for their medical bills or even prevent them from catching diseases thus missing school.

Most of the pupils agreed that they have to sell products in the market since their parents are poor and this means that sometimes they miss classes to go and sell on market days or have to first sell the products
and then go to school which makes it difficult to concentrate in class because they are tired and hence affects their academic performance.

The second objective focused on cultural beliefs and academic performance of pupils in rural areas. According to the study 45% agreed that cultural beliefs like early marriages, circumcision and the belief that girls have to do work at home affects their academic achievement.

According to the pupils cultural beliefs are mostly in rural areas and therefore this affects children's education because some of the beliefs target education.

The pupils revealed that they had friends especially girls who were married off at an early age and therefore had to drop out. They also mentioned that circumcision hinders children's academic achievement because the preparations take long which means children have to take part and miss classes. According to them after circumcision the wounds take long to heal which means they have to stay at home until they heal in the process they miss classes and then catching up is difficult.

The third objective focused on parental attitude and academic performance of pupils. According to the study 70% agreed that some parents think education is not important and therefore do not take their children to school or do not bother to give them the necessary requirements for school. The study revealed that girls are the most affected by parental attitudes. The study also found out the educational attainment of the parents also contributes to children's academic achievement.
According to the pupils most parents do not take education as important and therefore do not make it as a priority. Some parents believe that education is a waste because those who do study do not get jobs. The pupils also added that most parents think that it is useless to educate a girl and therefore in instances where the money is not enough the girl is told to withdraw from school for her brothers to study.

According to the pupils educated parents value education more than non educated parents.

The final objective sought to investigate family structure on the academic achievement of pupils in rural areas. According to the study 80% agreed that the number of children in a family contributes to the academic achievement of children since others have to remain at home while their brothers go to school. The study also found out that children from single parent families do not perform well in school like those from both parent families and the study revealed that children from mother only families suffered the most. According to Lloyd and Blanc (1996) female headed tend to be poorer than other households.

The pupils revealed that when children are many in a family some children are denied education because of lack of funds and in most cases girls are the most affected.

It was established from pupils that children form single parent family are always withdrawn at school and always look lonely and therefore do not concentrate in class which means they do not understand what they are being taught and hence perform poorly. It was established
that most single mothers in rural areas are poor and therefore the children not only lack parental support but also lack the basic needs.

The pupils agreed that children from both parent families had support from all parents and therefore were secure which means they concentrate in class

5.2. CONCLUSION

The main purpose of the study was to investigate socioeconomic background and academic performance of rural primary pupils

It was established that poverty was one of the reasons why pupils from rural areas did not perform well in their studies or did not achieve their educational aspirations.

Cultural beliefs are also a hindrance to children’s academic achievement in rural areas. It was established that some cultural beliefs did not make it easy for children to study.

Parental attitudes are also another factor why pupils did not achieve their educational aspirations. The study found out that girls are the most affected by parent’s attitude towards their education.

Finally family structure is also a hinderance to children’s academic achievement in rural areas.
5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The government should make sure that it devises means of helping children from rural areas attain education. For example, bursaries can be organized to help children from poor families.

Teachers should not ignore children who are withdrawn instead should try to find out the problem and devise means to solve it. For example, children from single parents.

Parents from rural areas should be sensitized on the importance of education.

Suggestions for further research.
More research should be done on the effect of family structure on the academic achievement of children because little has been done on the subject.
REFERENCES


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Benavot A, Cha Y, Kamens D, Meyer JW.


enrolled in school? Soc. Forces 78:1349–79


APPENDIX A: TRANSMITTAL LETTER

TRANSMITTAL LETTER FOR THE HEAD TEACHER

MAY, 1ST 2008

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a graduating student at Kampala International University pursuing a bachelor in education. I hereby write to request you to allow me carry out research in your institution. I am conducting a study on the social economic background and pupil’s academic performance in rural primary schools.

I would be grateful for your permission and assistance in conducting the study.

Respectfully yours,

Francis N. Wakimani

Noted by:

Mr. Geoffrey Kasozi
Assistant Director, Academics, ICDS
APPENDIX B: Questionnaire to the pupils

Dear respondent the purpose of the study is to identify the Social-Economic background and children’s academic performance in rural primary schools in Kakuzi Division Thika District Kenya.

I would like to bring to your attention that the information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

NB. Do not write your name anywhere on this paper

Personal information

Age
- 13 and below [ ]
- 14-17 years [ ]
- 18 and above [ ]

Sex
- Female
- Male

Educational level
- Standard six [ ]
- Standard seven [ ]
- Standard eight [ ]

Socio economic background and academic achievement of rural primary schools.

Poverty
1. Poverty is a hindrance to the academic achievement of rural primary schools
   Agree [ ]
2. Because of poverty, pupils do not have enough schooling materials
Agree [ ]
Disagree [ ]
Not sure [ ]

3. Because of poverty parents can not afford to pay fees for their children
Agree [ ]
Disagree [ ]
Not sure [ ]

4. Because of poverty children have to sell products in the market
Agree [ ]
Disagree [ ]
Not sure [ ]

5. Because of poverty pupils fall sick and miss classes
Agree [ ]
Disagree [ ]
Not sure [ ]

6. Children from richer families perform better than those from poor families
Agree [ ]
Disagree [ ]
Not sure [ ]

Cultural beliefs

7. Cultural beliefs hinder children’s education
Agree [ ]
Disagree [ ]
Not sure [ ]
8. Children are married off early because of cultural beliefs
   Agree [ ]
   Disagree [ ]
   Not sure [ ]

9. Cultural practices like circumcision hinder children’s education
   Agree [ ]
   Disagree [ ]
   Not sure [ ]

10. Because of cultural beliefs children have to do some work before going to school
    Agree [ ]
    Disagree [ ]
    Not sure [ ]

**Parental attitudes and educational background**

11. Parent’s attitudes towards education affect children’s achievement
    Agree [ ]
    Disagree [ ]
    Not sure [ ]

12. Girls are the most affected by parental attitudes
    Yes [ ]
    No [ ]

13. Parent’s educational attainment has an effect on children’s education
    Agree [ ]
    Disagree [ ]
    Not sure [ ]

**Family structure**

14. The number of children in the family affects children’s academic achievement
15. Single parenting affects children’s academic achievement
Agree [ ]
Disagree [ ]
Not sure [ ]

16. Children from families with both parents perform better than those in single parent
Agree [ ]
Disagree [ ]
Not sure [ ]

17. Children from mother only families perform poorly in class
Agree [ ]
Disagree [ ]
Not sure [ ]
APPENDIX C: Focus group discussions with the pupils.

1. How is poverty a hindrance to children’s education in rural areas?
2. How are cultural beliefs a hindrance to children’s education in rural areas?
3. How do parental attitudes contribute to the academic achievement of rural pupils?
4. What is the relationship between family structure and academic achievement of rural pupils?
# APPENDIX D: TIME SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20(^{th}) Dec-29(^{th}) January 2008</td>
<td>Looking for funds to buy all the necessary items for the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1(^{st}) Feb-15 March 2008</td>
<td>Carrying out the research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 16(^{th}) - March 30(^{th}), 2008</td>
<td>Compiling of findings while checking with my supervisor for corrections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1(^{st}) 10(^{th}), 2008</td>
<td>Submit in my dissertation to my supervisor for approval.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX E: BUDGET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Cost (Ug shs)</th>
<th>Costs (K shs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stationary</td>
<td>5,000/=</td>
<td>208/=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pens and pencils</td>
<td>10,000/=</td>
<td>416/=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ream of paper</td>
<td>35,000/=</td>
<td>1458/=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport costs</td>
<td>100,000/=</td>
<td>4166/=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous expenses</td>
<td>150,000/=</td>
<td>6250/=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typing and printing charges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300,000/=</strong></td>
<td><strong>12500/=</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>