

**IMPACT OF POVERTY ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
STUDENTS IN KANYUMU PRIMARY IN MULANGO
ZONE KITUI DISTRICT, KENYA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I **MUTIA NYAMAI**, declare that this project is my original work and has never been presented to any other university for any academic award

Signature 

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Date 13-12-2009

APPROVAL

This is to acknowledge that this report has been under my supervision as a university supervisor and submitted for examination.

Signature PP. Sunday Date 13/12/09

MR. SUNDAY ARTHUR

DEDICATION

This work is affectionately dedicated to my wife Tabitha and my children Cyprian, peter and Patience for the support, patience, and understanding during this period of study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My gratitude first goes to God who has given me the strength and courage to undertake this research.

I also owe a lot to appreciation to those who assisted me in carrying out this research. I am grateful to my supervisor who tirelessly went through my work and inspired me to dig deeper into the core of the matter. His kind criticism, patience and understanding assisted me a great deal.

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I wish to thank my family for their love, financial support and inspiration during my stay in Kampala International University.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Poverty has been the hardest challenge facing human life from time immemorial. It has contributed to low social-economic states in society and has brought about difficult circumstances that face learners today. It has negatively affected all people regardless of age, culture, race, religion and other factors.

On overview of some facts about poverty in the world of Africa the black Americans suffered untold miseries ranging from diseases, poverty, denial of education, forced labour and denial of other essential services due to racial segregation by the white colonialist. This has lowered social economic position.

In America, black Americans as a result of racial discrimination by whites, were reduced to beggars who languished in poverty by being denied some of the important resources. This has negatively led to poor social economic situation in America.

was not spared either, the low social economic level may have originated from the negative factors that resulted from colonization which the British colonialist set foot in in the 19th century. Some changes were negative and others were positive. Some of the negative changes that the British colonialists brought were the issue of formal education, where the Africans were denied and later they were given basic education to enable them concentrate on agriculture. The whites were trained for white collar jobs. suffered many abuses which included displacement from their farms, forced labour, slavery, draconian rule, beating and were dis-united by these British colonialists.

Poverty has since increased and has tremendously affected learning in general. Kenyans associated learning with payment of fees in all level of education. Parents are being overtaxed ranging from the part of food staff to land and other basic needs. But the rich are spared from this taxation as they push their tax to the poor men / common man. Despite the introduction of free primary education in which spells out free and compulsory primary education. Not all aspects of education have been offered freely there is the case of uniform, desk, among others

This study analyzes the effect of poverty in reference to learning, the extent to which the same has affected learning, what other people have written and possible solutions that can be put to the problem.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Problem and poor social economic levels affected life and more so the education of the learners. A child whose basic needs are not fulfilled will long for the same and education will be considered next. Therefore the researcher concern as he continues teaching this category of learners is to have an understanding and guidelines on issues in order to have the needs of such learners adequately;

1.3 Purpose of the study

The researcher aimed at investigating all the factors that cause poverty and ways of reducing and finally eradicating the difficult circumstances that affect education of children of Kitui zone. Poverty according to the researcher is the root cause and the grandparent of the difficult circumstances that negatively impact the education of children in Kitui zone. Once the researcher has investigated he will be able to yet the solutions depending on each cause and apply them to the challenges facing the learners for better.

1.4.1 General objective

This study was to establish the effects of poverty on pupil's academic performance of the selected secondary schools in Kitui zone.

1.4.2 Specific objectives will be to;

1. Determine the profile of the respondents in regard to;
 - 1.1 Social demographic data
 - 1.1.1 Age
 - 1.1.2 Gender
 - 1.1.3 Academic level
2. Determine the effects of poverty on academic performance of learners.
3. Determine the role of the community in alleviating poverty and improving education.

1.5 Research questions

- (i) What are the effects of poverty on academic performance of learners.
- (ii) What is the role of the community in alleviating poverty and improving education.

1.6 Scope of the study

The study was conducted Kitui zone. The study was limited to the objectives of the study. Any other aspect of the topic apart from that mentioned in the objectives was not investigated because of resource and time constraints.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study was very important as it led to increased knowledge about the extent or difficulties facing the children and which has led to a huge magnitude in dropout rate in schools.

The study could be relied upon to bring about positive attitudes towards children who live under difficult circumstances by many parties. The findings of this study would be of great value to the groups of people.

- (i) The affected children would have their problems reduced. The findings reached suggest solution to problems facing the state group of children.
- (ii) The study is of good use to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in planning corrective measures which include giving of bursaries the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour and other ministries whose services are meant for the youth.
- (iii) The community and parents would be greatly assisted by the findings. The community has these children in their hands and proper support should be accorded. These children in addition to provision of guidance and counseling services, the community would change their attitude and appreciate that these children deserve their support in order for them to positively grow into responsible mindful parents in future.
- (iv) The local leaders and teaches would have this study beneficial to them as they would be enabled to handle these children with proper care and provide their needs accordingly.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature as an account of the knowledge and ideas that have been established by accredited scholars and experts in the field of study. It is guided by the objectives of the study outlined in chapter one.

2.1 Definitive review of poverty

It is not easy to have a universal definition of poverty this is because there is intense debate about poverty by researchers and some institution. However, according to (Sachs, 2005) it is generally agreed that poverty can be defined in terms of three distinguishable degrees. These are; extreme poverty, moderate poverty and relative poverty. Extreme poverty means that households cannot meet basic needs for survival. Such people are perpetually hungry, unable to access health care; they lack amenities of safe drinking water, and sanitation. They cannot afford education for their children; they lack basic shelter for their families and some articles of their clothing such as shoes. Extreme poverty occurs only in developing countries. Moderate poverty on the other hand generally refers to conditions of life in which basic needs are met, but just barely. Relative poverty is construed as a household income level below a given proportion of average national income. In high income countries they lack access to cultural goods, entertainment, recreation quality health care, education and other perquisites for upward social mobility.

In poverty has been defined in terms of the condition in which poor people find themselves in. for the purposes of this research, poverty will be defined in its multi-dimensional nature where it includes inadequacy of income and deprivation of basic needs and rights, and lack of access to productive assets as well as to

social infrastructure and markets (Government of , 1999). According to the poverty reduction strategy paper for the period 2001 – 2004, qualitative approach of measuring poverty defines the poor as those who cannot afford basic food and non food items while the qualitative approach defines poverty as the inability of people to meet their basic needs. It is associated with features as lack of land, unemployment, inability to feed oneself and family, lack of proper housing.

2.2 Causes of poverty:

As reported in the poverty reduction strategy paper for the period 2001 – 2004 and the second participatory poverty assessment study in (Government of , 1999), the following are the causes of poverty in . Low agricultural livestock productivity and poor marketing. Mostly caused by traditional farming methods, low soil fertility, drought and flood, poor and inadequate extension services, high cost of inputs, low quality seeds, lack of credit facilities, lack of pasture and water, animal disease, lack of information and opportunities on marketing. Insecurity for example banditry, hijacking, raiding, stock theft, robbery and looting, physical injury, mutilation, rape and murder, unemployment and low wages coupled with lack of infrastructure for self-employment. Bad governance – lack of transparency and accountability in management of resources and funds meant to benefit communities. Land issue – landlessness, squatterdom, communal ownership customary laws governing land and fragmentation. Inadequate roads – poor road network which causes lack of access to schools, markets and hospitals. Cost of social services – health, education, etc. HIV / AIDS – young and energetic die leaving the old, widows and orphans. Causes high dependency and wastage of time caring for the ill.

Gender imbalance – for example lack of ownership and control over productive assets such as land by women, lack of access to credit due to lack of collateral. This makes female families vulnerable. Disability – disabled people are denied

access to public utilities, good health care, basic education and vital information leading to lack of employment opportunities. Personal causes – laziness and social breakdown (Government of , 1999).

2.3 Effects of poverty on provision of quality education

Having articulated the indicators of quality education in schools, it is worthy to note that all aspects of quality cannot be achieved because of the effects of poverty in financing education in which include;

Limited provision of school facilities, equipment and materials. Such affects the quality of teaching and learning. Less staff development and training opportunities. Poor nutrition and feeding habits in schools, poor health among some students. Poor time management especially when learning is interrupted as students are sent for fees in some schools. Poor working relations in schools, lack of development of certain skills in students due to inadequacies of the curriculum some schools adopt. Increase school dropout (Government of , 1999).

The list of the effects in long depending on the nature and type of school and the environment in which the school is situated. For instance schools in the arid and semi arid areas are more vulnerable compared to schools in high and medium economic potential areas. equally, schools attracting students from among the urban poor are more susceptible to poverty compared to school children of the well to do in society. Worst affected are girls in some communities where they may be denied education in favour of boys. In other situations the girls may be married off to counter the perennial poverty in their home as the parents hope to be paid some dowry. (Abagi and Odipo, 1997).

Day schools are most affected especially schools in the low income areas. other schools attract very few students such that they can not enjoy economies of scale in financing educational activities and programmes. Where the average

poor struggle to educate their children putting almost all the family income in financing of the education of their children, the poorest of the poor do not access this service. Contrary, the non poor appear to be benefiting from the cost sharing arrangement in financing secondary education hence the escalation of the gap between the rich and the poor in society.

The school is the most important functional point for achieving the educational goals. (Abagi and Odipo, 1997).

In , many children who enter the school system at the secondary level do not complete the cycle students dropout at various stages of the education system. Several factors are responsible for high dropout rates and hence low completion rates among secondary school students. Schools require students to have uniforms, textbooks, and stationary and pay tuition building fund and activity fees. Due to high cost of these items, children, whose parents cannot afford to provide all or most of these requirements, are always under pressure from the schools' administrators. The frustration these students go through affect their academic performance: they lose interest in education and, eventually, dropout (Abagi and Odipo, 1997).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter gives the methods that the researcher used to select the geographical areas, from which research was carried out and methods of selection of respondents. It also explains the methods used to collect, process and analyze data.

3.1 Research design

This study employed a descriptive design since the study was about explaining a scenario or an event. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The quantitative and qualitative techniques were used to collect and analyze data on the parenthood practices.

3.2 Study population

The study was carried out in Kileleshwa zone. The study involved students, teachers and parents.

3.3 Sample frame work

3.3.1 Sample size

A total of seventy respondents were used for the total population of schools used for this study as illustrated by the table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Categories of sample

Categories of respondents	Sample
Teachers	10
Students	40
Parents	20
Total	70

Source: Primary data

3.3.2 Sample techniques

Using a convenient sampling technique, a total of seventy respondents were picked at random to participate in this study.

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 then was given permission by the authority to access information from the school.

3.4 Methods for data collection

3.4.1 Instruments

- **Questionnaires**

These were used to collect information from some students since these respondents are literate and are able to understand the language being used.

- **Interviews**

Interviews were held with teachers and parents since they are busy and have no time to answer questionnaires.

3.4.2 Sources of data

This study used both primary and secondary data

Primary data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides, which was given to students, parents and teachers respectively.

Secondary data was through document analysis in the form of reports, training manual, news papers, 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 has 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 lack coding frames, 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 ONE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND THEIR FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. The results are presented in tables and in form of frequency counts and percentages.

4.1 Profile of respondents

A total of 75 respondents were selection. The tables below show the various types of respondents that were selected.

Table 1: Respondents by age

Age brackets	Frequency	Percentage
13 - 19	10	13.3%
20 – 25	20	26.7%
26 – 30	15	20%
31 – 35	10	13.3%
36 – 40	15	20%
40 and above	5	6%
Total	75	100

Source: Primary data

The table shown that the majority of respondents 60% were in the age brackets of 26 – 30 and 31 – 35.

Table 2: Respondents by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	40	53.3
Female	35	46.7
Total	75	100

Source: Primary data

According table 2 the male respondents were the majority that is 53.3% and the female respondents were 46.7%.

Table 3: Respondents by educational level

Educational level	Frequency	Percentage
None	5	6.7
Primary	10	13.3
Secondary	30	40
College / university	30	40
Total	75	100

Source: Primary data

The table shows that the majority of the respondents that is 30 (40%) had a level of secondary and college education and 10 (13.3%) had secondary level while 5 (6.7%) had no education.

4.2 Effects of poverty on the academic performance of students

Research findings reveal there is a relationship between poverty and academic performance of students. It was revealed that the traditional division of labour stipulates that girls and boys perform certain tasks within the domestic economy as unpaid family labour. In many poor families labour is not only a cultural demand, but in many cases it may be absolutely imperative for family survival. The relatively greater value placed on the unpaid domestic labour results in frequent absenteeism, chronic fatigue and hence poor performance and then school dropout.

During the study the researcher observed that children who were supposed to be in school were selling products in the market to earn a living for the family. According to the children their parents could not afford paying for their school

fees and therefore they had no choice than to sell products to sustain them. Most of the children had started school and could not go further due to lack of school fees.

The parents revealed that the educational cost they had to bear in order to educate their children was high and therefore they couldn't afford it. Education is poorly supported in many African countries (Nikinyangi, 1980). In for example, the lack of proper governmental support places a considerable economic burden (with regards to funding) on parents and children. According to Tomasevsky (2003), has a legal guarantee of free education. However, despite the legal guarantee secondary school fees continue to be charged a situation, which according to the school authorities, forces parents to withdraw their children from the school system.

According to the teachers some of the children were always sent home due to non payment and because of that they would miss classes and hence poor performance. The teachers also revealed that because of poverty children are forced to do work at home before they come to school and this leaves them very tired and therefore cannot concentrate in class which leads to poor performance.

4.3 Limited provision of school facilities, equipment and materials

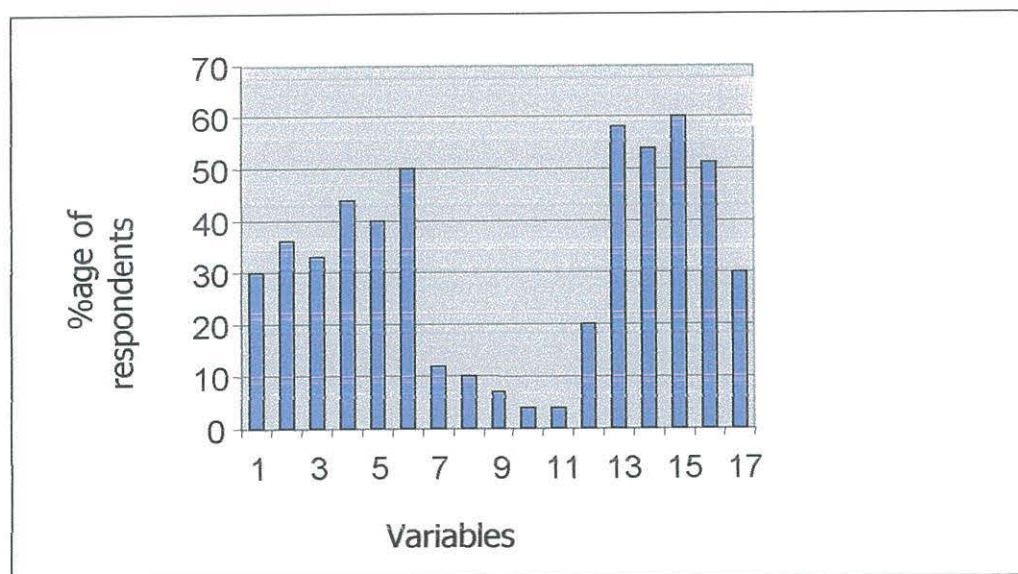
The study revealed that due to poverty school facilities and equipment materials were scarce and therefore the students did not perform well in class because they could not understand what the teachers were teaching. The findings relating to limited provision of school facilities equipment and materials were captured and presented in percentages using frequency counts in form of the table below.

Table 4: Provision of school facilities

	Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree
1	We have enough text books	30%	12%	58%
2	We have enough classrooms	36%	10%	54%
3	Practical materials are enough	33%	7%	60%
4	We have all the necessary laboratories	44%	4%	51%
5	All students have school uniforms	40%	4%	51%
6	We have enough chairs and black boards	50%	20%	30%

Source: Primary data

Chart I: Provision of school facilities



The table and chart show that 58% disagree that they have enough text books, 54% said they did not have enough classrooms, 60% said the practical materials were not enough, 51% do not have the necessary laboratories, and school uniforms and 30% do not have enough chairs and blackboards. These all naturally affect the academic performance of students. In interviews held with the teachers they revealed that lack of these facilities led to children performing poorly since they did not have what to use to study.

4.4 Less staff development and training opportunities

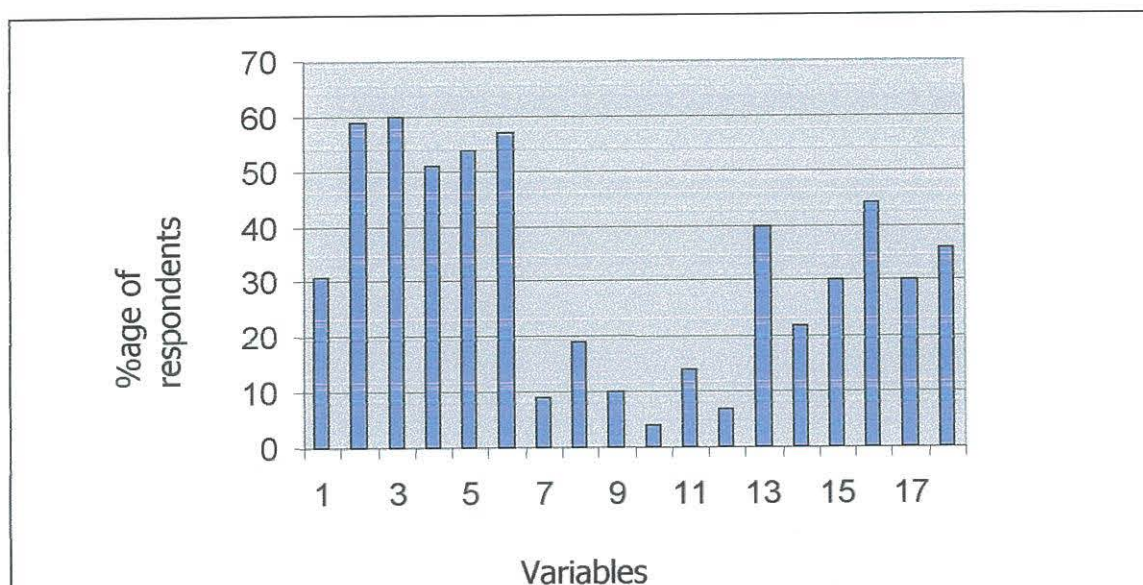
The findings of the study are presented in the following table and chart below.

Table 5: Less staff development and training opportunities

	Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree
1	We have few teachers	31%	9%	40%
2	We have few trained teachers	59%	19%	22%
3	Classes are large for the teachers	60%	10%	30%
4	We do not understand anything since the classes are large	51%	4%	44%
5	Teachers do not teach all lessons since they are few	54%	14%	30%
6	Because teachers are less paid they get frustrated and don't teach well	57%	7%	36%

Source: Primary data

Chart II: Less staff development and training opportunities



The table shows that 31% strongly agree that they have few teachers, 59% have few trained teachers, 60% have large classes, 51% do not understand anything since the classes are large, and 54% say teachers do not teach all subjects since they are few and 57% say that teachers do not teach well due to frustrations. These are all effects of poverty which affect the academic performance of the students.

According to the teachers they are less paid and yet they handle large classes and teach for many hours. They also revealed that they had less training and this so because they did not have funds to cater for their training.

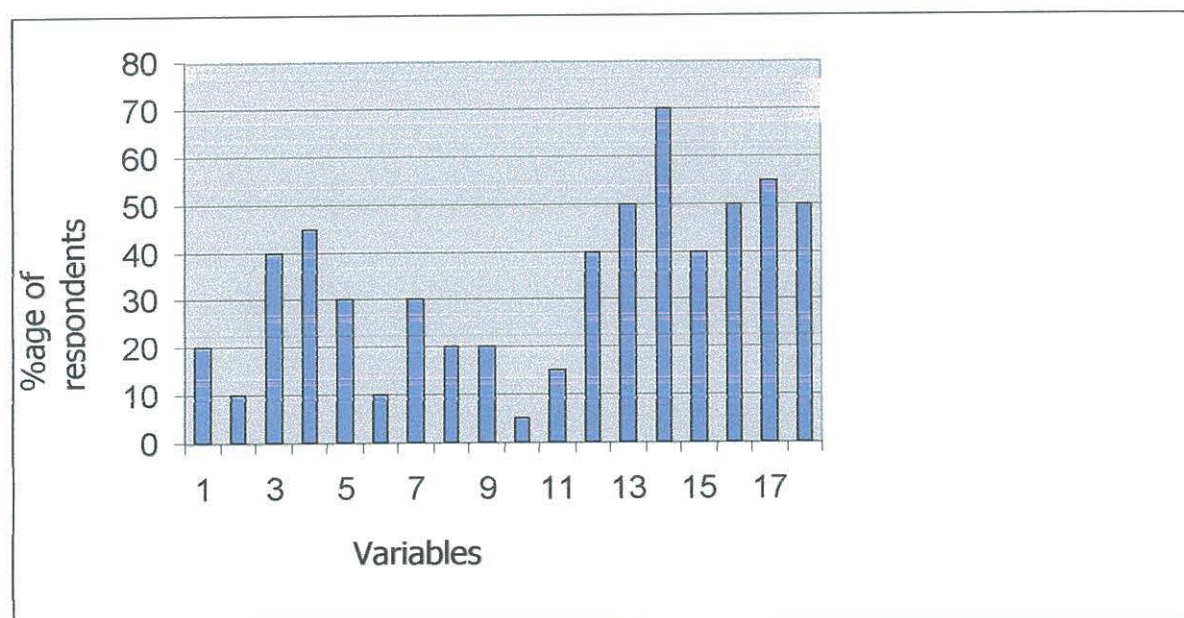
4.5 Poor nutrition, feeding habits and poor health among students in schools

Table 6: Poor nutrition, feeding habits and poor health among students in schools.

	Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree
1	We have feeding programs at school	20%	30%	50%
2	The diet is balanced	10%	20%	70%
3	We eat all necessary meals and well prepared	40%	20%	40%
4	The school environment is clean and disease free	45%	5%	50%
5	The school has good health facilities	30%	15%	55%
6	Few students fall sick	10%	40%	50%

Source: Primary data

Chart III: Poor nutrition, feeding and poor health among students in schools



The table and chart shows 50% do not have feeding programs, 70% do not eat a balanced diet, 40% do not eat all the necessary meals, 50% are in school environment that is not safe and could fall sick any time while 55% say the school do not have good health facilities and 50% say that most students fall sick at school.

According to the students the meals prepared was always maize and beans and it was not well prepared. They revealed that those who came from rich families could afford to buy whatever they wanted to eat but those who came from poor families had no choice than to eat what the school prepared even though it was not good.

The teachers who also ate the same food provided for the students admitted that the food was not well prepared but they also had no choice to eat the food. The headmaster revealed that the food was not well prepared because of lack of funds to buy the necessary ingredients for the food.

The school did not also have enough money to equip the school dispensaries and because of this the school do not have enough medical attention when they fall sick. All these are barriers to academic performance.

4.6 Increase school dropout

Table 7: Increase school dropout

	Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree
1	Most students dropout due to poverty	70%	20%	10%

2	Children have to work at home before they come to school and hence perform poorly which leads to poor performance and hence dropout	59%	19%	22%
3	The school environment is not good due to poverty and hence students dropout	60%	10%	30%
4	Children do not have what to eat and study when hungry yet they do not understand and hence dropout	51%	15%	25%
5	The distance from home to school are long and students reach school when they are tired and therefore cannot concentrate in class which leads to school dropout.	50%	20%	30%
6	Parents are poor and therefore their daughters dropout of school to get married so that they are paid dowry.	40%	5%	55%

Source: Primary data

According to the table 70% of students dropout due to poverty, 59% have to work at home before they go to school which leaves them tired and therefore cannot concentrate in class, 60% leave school because the school environment is not good and this includes large classes few instructional materials among others. 50% agree that long distances for students are a burden and therefore students ended up dropping out and 40% said that parents forced girls to leave school early to get married due to poverty.

The study found out that students from poor homes found it very difficult to cope with the school environment since they lacked many things that is they did not have enough or good food to eat, they did not have school uniforms and were always sent home for school fees these alone lead to frustration and the child hating the school environment this therefore leads to school dropout.

4.6 Exposure of students and staff to indiscipline

Table 8: Exposure of students and staff to indiscipline

	Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree
1	Students turn to drugs due to poverty	80%	10%	10%
2	Students turn to deviant behaviour when they lack something in life	59%	19%	22%
3	The teachers do not care about students from poor families and therefore they behave the way they want	60%	10%	30%
4	Students perform poorly in class because they lack materials and this leads to students losing interest in education and hence indiscipline cases	40%	20%	40%
5	Children from poor families are the most undisciplined	40%	20%	40%
6	Because teachers are frustrated they do not care about the discipline of the students	60%	15%	25%

Source: Primary data

The table clearly shows that students who come from poor families are likely to abuse drugs because they are frustrated and 80% agree to that. Teachers revealed that students who come from poor families are willing to study but because of what they lack that is parental love, good food, and good clothes among others discourage them and therefore turn to deviant behaviours.

The study also found out that due to poverty the relationship between the teachers, parents and students is not good since every one is frustrated, the teachers are not well paid and they look at the poor students as the cause of all

these and the parents are frustrated since their children are always being sent home and the students also get tired of all these. These are a hindrance to academic performance.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summary

From the study it can be noted that poverty has a direct relationship on academic performance of the students.

5.2 Conclusion

Education is widely accepted as the main exist route from poverty. It is the backbone of growth and development of individuals and the nation. However, its achievement continued to elude many who are poverty stricken.

This has perpetuated the vicious circle of poverty so much that the gap between the rich and the poor has kept on widening as the extreme poor are denied access to education.

Equally access to quality education among some of the poor has constantly been affected by poverty in that some access education that is marred by lack of the right instructional facilities and equipment, poor processes of delivery, inconducive and unattractive learning environment, etc.

These render them to uncompetitive in the job market. However, the efforts by the government to avail educational opportunities to the poor are welcome especially the proposed tuition waiver in secondary schools. Because this will not fully solve the problem of the poor in accessing secondary, the educational stake holder should further augment government efforts in financing education.

5.3 Recommendations

The government and school managers may consider the following in the financing secondary education to reduce the burden of financing education among the poor.

Waiving duty on learning and teaching materials.

Encouraging industry to assist in financing of education especially through scholarships.

Encouraging community initiatives in financing of schools.

Setting up of education insurance for the poor especially the orphaned and other vulnerable groups.

At school level, schools should be encouraged to diversify the income generating activities by for example setting up production units in the workshops and laboratories.

Encourage clubs and to start of income generating activities.

Schools should be encouraged to keep good relations with the communities to attract well wishers who would wish to give some assistance.

Mounting training courses to community members with the resources available in schools for example workshops, computer laboratories, home science rooms, sick bays, etc may be new ways to raise funds for school.

Diversification of the income generating activities requires some amount of input in terms of finances which otherwise which may not be readily available in most

poverty stricken schools. Approaching financial institutions to advance loans to finance feasible income generating activities may be explored.

School leaders should embrace school based management and develop the knowledge base associated with efficiency and effectiveness in school management for the purposes of achieving the educational goals for the learners. Owing to the effects of poverty in provision of education, school governing structures should strategize on the school aspects which need more emphasis compared to others to meet the expectations and interests of the most important constituent – the students.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENT

Dear respondent,

I am a student of Kampala International University carrying out an academic research, '. You have been randomly selected to participate in the study and are therefore kindly requested to provide and appropriate answers by either ticking the best option or giving explanation where applicable. The answers provided will not be used for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

N.B: Do not write your name anywhere in this paper.

A. Personal information

1. Gender

Males

Female

2. Age

20 – 25

26 – 30

31 – 35

36 and above

Evaluate the following statements using the following

No sure	Disagree	Agree
3	2	1

(c) Poor nutrition, feeding habits and poor health among students in schools

1	The school has feeding programs at school	
2	The diet is balanced	
3	Students eat all necessary meals and well prepared	
4	The school environment is clean and disease free	
5	The school has good health facilities	
6	Few students fall sick	

THANK YOU