

**SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN  
SELECTED PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN YEI COUNTY SOUTH SUDAN**

**BY**

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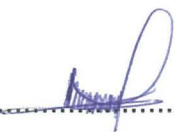
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### **DECLARATION**

I, Yakani Stephen, declare that this project is my original work and has never been presented to any other university for any academic award.

Signature ..... 

Yakani Stephen

Date ..... 04/05/2012

### APPROVAL

I certify that this report has been under my supervision as a university supervisor and is now ready for submission.

Signature



**Ssekajugo Derick**

Date

4/25/2022

## **DEDICATION**

This work is affectionately dedicated to my family members; my father Richard Amule and mother Reida and to my brother Muto Moses as well as my sisters; Edina and Jane for the courage and prayers.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I also owe a lot of appreciation to all those who assisted me in carrying out this research. I am grateful to my supervisor Mr. Ssekajugo Derrick who tirelessly went through my work and inspired me to dig deeper into the core of the matter.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explored the school environment and academic performance of pupils in Selected Public Primary Schools in Yei County, South Sudan. The central research questions were "i) what is the profile of the pupils as to; age, gender, rank in the family and level of learning? ii) What is the level of school environment of the pupils? iii) What is the level of academic performance of the pupils? iv) Is there a significant relationship between the level of school environment and academic performance of pupils in Yei County, South Sudan". To answer these questions, data were collected from teachers in 10 government primary schools in Yei County division. A total number of 550 questionnaires were sent out and successfully responded to. The study employed a descriptive correlation survey design and *expo facto* whereby both the Qualitative and quantitative paradigms for the research design. Simple statistical methods like frequency analysis, percentages and SPSS were used for data analysis. The findings of this study are imperative for educational planning and management that environment had a negative impact on the student performance and this opinion was found to be true by the teachers' perceptions about school environment and academic performance of pupils. The study recommended; Environmental considerations should be embedded in teacher education and in school management training, so that these important elements are not relegated to the 'background noise' of educational discourse and Environmental improvement in schools should be locally driven, user-led and embedded in pedagogy.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE**

#### **Background of the study**

There were two categories of primary schools in South Sudan, namely public and private schools. The public primary schools were funded by the government or communities and were managed through parents, teachers associations. The private schools on the other hand were established and managed by private individuals or organizations. Before 2003, primary schooling was a big burden to many parents. Actually, many children of school going age were out of school.

However no other infrastructure was put in place to facilitate the implementation. This gave rise to many problems that the government had not anticipated. First, over 2 million children joined the primary schools. The schools were overwhelmed by the numbers since the classrooms were not expanded or added (Too, 2004). Teachers were few and there were no desks or chairs for the newly enrolled pupils. Some classes still were over 100 pupils by then yet average number expected in a class was 40. The teacher - student ratio was too big hence it did not make sense. The problems had not been solved by then. After realizing that the quality offered in the public schools was low, some parents transferred their children to private schools. As of then the private schools had more children than they did before the free education. This was where people could find uncompromised quality education for their children, in the public schools, pupils in some schools still sat on the floor or learnt under trees. In other schools the children could not master all their faces due to their great numbers.

May be the situation would come to improve when the government expanded the facilities and employed more teachers, though as to when be highly debatable (Aduda, 2005).

Many studies had attempted to estimate the impact of school and teacher characteristics on learners' academic performance yet, most had serious estimation problems that casted doubt on their results (Glewwe 2002) Glewwe and Kremer, 2006). Almost all existing studies had "retrospective" that was based on data collected from schools as they existed by then in contrast to data collected from a randomized trial). It is against such a background that the researcher was inspired to conduct a study on the impact of school environment on the academic performance of pupils in Yei River County Yei River County, South Sudan

### **Statement of the problem**

While the South Sudan government investments in education , had increased since the end of the rebellious activities both in terms of real expenditure and the percentage of government spending allocated to education, equity was still an issue as indicated by South Sudan country report and the Education For All (EFA) assessment report ( UNESCO, 2000) . Now two schools were alike. Schools just like the people within them had different characteristics. There were large regional differences in access to primary education and in the quality of primary education. The study therefore intended to establish the effect of school environment on the academic performance of pupils in Yei River County, South Sudan

**Purpose of the study**

The study intended to investigate the correlation between school environment and academic performance of pupils in Yei River County, South Sudan.

**Research objectives**

General: To investigate on the correlation between school environment and academic performance of pupils.

The study was guided by the following specific objectives

- ) To determine the profile of the pupils as to age, gender, rank in the family and level of learning.
- i) To determine the level of school environment of the pupils in Yei River County South Sudan.
- ii) To determine the level of academic performance of the pupils in Yei River County South Sudan.
- v) To determine if there was a significant relationship between the level of school environment on the academic performance of pupils in Yei River County, South Sudan.

**Research questions**

The study attempted to answer the following questions:

- ) What is the profile of the pupils as to; age, gender, rank in the family and level of learning?
- i) What is the level of school environment of the pupils in Yei River County South Sudan?

- iii) What is the level of academic performance of the pupils in Yei River County South Sudan?
- iv) Is there a significant relationship between the level of school environment and academic performance of pupils in Yei River County South Sudan?

### **Null hypothesis**

The study sought to test for the following hypothesis

Ho<sub>1</sub> There was no significant relationship between the level of school environment and academic performance of pupils in Yei River County, South Sudan

### **Scope of the study**

**Content scope;** The study focused on establishing the correlation between the school environment and academic performance of pupils in selected public primary schools

**Theoretical scope;** The study was supported by the constructivist theory which was advanced by theorists such as Jean Piaget, Maria Montessori and lev vygotsky. They were consistent in their belief that learning and development occurred when young children interacted with the environment and people around them (Hunt, 1969) as cited in Skinner (1953).

**Geographical scope;** The study was carried out in Yei River County South Sudan.

**Time scope;** The study was conducted between the months of December 2011 and April 2012, which was the expected time of having completed all the research requirements.

**Significance of the study**

The researcher was hopeful that the findings of the study would be used by other researchers in their own studies but on the same theme for the purpose of improving the research study in the course of time. The findings of the study would be used to advance suggestions, ideas and solutions to the problems encountered in the struggle to achieve meaningful learning within schools.

To local authorities and other administrators in the field of education, a road map to the huddles faced in schools which had tremendous impact on the academic performance of learners would have been laid. The findings would therefore help to awaken such authorities of the need to have active monitoring and supervision of the various activities that were being done in school and the challenges faced and therefore devise means of handling such challenges faced.

**Operational definitions of key terms**

**School environment:** All sort of aspects constituted in the surrounding of the learner with the school setting.

**Academic performance:** refers to how learners deal with studies and the way they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers in order to achieve the preferred teaching and learning outcome.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Concepts, ideas and opinions from other experts /authors**

##### **Introduction**

The chapter gave reference to what other scholars had written about school environment and academic performance of learners.

School environment; Gonder and Hymes (1994) considered school environment as a reflection of the physical and psychological aspects of the schools that were more susceptible to change and that provided the preconditions necessary for teaching and learning to take place. They further added that such a useful term for the intangibles that could affect learning. As such, it deserved serious attention in the effort to improve performance. Comprehensive models that had been developed for school refund had invariably included school environment.

Psychologist Rudolf Moos (1970) as cited in senge (1994), observed that learning environment was a term used in connection with arrange of quite specific areas of education, as well as to convey some broad ideas about leaning. He therefore defined learning environment as being comprised of four factors, physical relationships, structures and expectations; language and communication which interacted to make learning meaningful.

Academic performance; Amalaha (1975) just like Moen and Doyle (1977) considered academic performance as being the pupils drive towards the achievement of success in academic work. He further added that people differed in their drive to achieve in some; the need for achievement was very high while for others it was very low.

Academic excellence, according to him was learnt through the socialization according to him was learnt through the socialization process. Those who had high achievers as their role models in their early life experience would develop a high need for achievement while those who had low achievers as their role models would hardly develop the need for academic success.

School and academic performance; Sarison (1996) discussed how certain school characteristics , including organizational climate and leadership, influenced change within a school , Sarison used the term "street level implementation " as the way in which implementation at the local level could sometimes be a purposive fuel or accidental misinterpretation of guidelines promulgated at some system level. Although both levels of social level factors (direct and aggregated) had been used, their separate effects had not been considered.

Further, the school effects found by those studies had been small. Some researchers suggested that school level variables that had not been sufficiently sensitive to certain direct school attributes such as climate, emotional tone and relationships among students. The researcher was therefore interested in finding out how school and academic performance was attributable to school characteristic mentioned above.

## **Theoretical Perspective**

The study was supported by the constructivist theory which was advanced by theorists such as Jean Piaget, Maria Montessori and Levyotsky. They were consistent in their belief that learning and development occurred when young children interacted with the environment and people around them (Hunt, 1969) as cited in Skinner (1953). Constructivists, viewed young children as active participants in the learning process. In

addition, constructivist believed that children were ready for school when they could initiate many of the interactions they had with the environment and people around them.

Constructivists influenced schools and educators paid a lot of attention to the physical environment and the curriculum of the early childhood classroom. Kindergarten classrooms often were divided into different learning centers and were equipped with developmentally appropriate materials for young children to play with and manipulate.

Teachers and adults had direct conversations with children, children moved actively from centre to another and daily activities were made meaningful through the incorporation of children's experiences into the curriculum. At home, parents engaged their young children in reading and story telling activities and encouraged children's participation in daily household activities in a way that introduced such concepts as counting and language use.

In addition, parents could provide young children with picture books containing very large print and toys that stimulated interaction (such as building blocks and large puzzles). When a young child encountered difficulties in the learning process, the constructivist approach was, neither to label the child nor to retain him or her, instead constructivists gave the child some individualized attention and customized the classroom curriculum to help the child address his/her difficulties. In that study therefore focus was on all sorts of aspects constituted in the surrounding of the learners (i.e. environment) as being the major determinants of his or her performance.

**Level of school environment**

Direct non aggregated measures that had been raised to describe school characteristics fell into three categories; building and physical environment principal leadership and social structure.

**Building and physical environment and academic performance of pupils**

Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore and Ouston (1979) found that the school environment which included good conditions , responsiveness to pupils needs and good care and decoration of buildings was associated with better outcomes for students.

**Principal leadership and academic performance of pupils**

The way in which the principal worked with teachers had a demonstrable effect on student’s outcomes. Mortimore et al (1998) included purposeful leadership by the principal and assistant principal and the principal’s role in hiring and firing teachers. The study found that outcomes were more favourable when there was a combination of firm leadership together with a decision making process in which all teachers felt their views were represented. Example of the school effect variables used to describe principal leadership included such principal strategies as the type of classroom monitoring and feedback and the type of support for individual teacher’s improvement. Teddlie and Stringfield (1993) studied other principal leadership characteristics such as shared academic leadership versus non shared academic leadership relationship to the or central office and uniform procedures for discipline.

**School social structure and academic performance**

Brooker’s measure of school social structure included teacher’s satisfaction with school structure, parental involvement, differentiation in student programs, principal report of time devoted to instruction and open versus closed classroom.

**Level of school environment and academic performance**

Brooker’s measure of school social climate used 14 variables derived from student, teachers and principal reports of the norms, expectations and feelings about the school; Regnolds (1982) examined student’s attitudes towards school, teacher’s perceptions of students within school organizational factors and school resources levels. His research revealed a number of factors within the school that were associated with more effective regimes. Among the social and psychological variables associated with effective schools were such characteristics as high proportions of pupils in authority positions, positive academic expectations low levels of coercive punishment and high levels of students involvement.

In research on the parental involvement aspect of school social climate, Hawley and Rosenholtz (1984) identified parent involvement as one of four factors in effective schools that were expected to improve student achievement. Epstein (1987) discussed the various methods a principal could employ in establishing and monitoring effective parent involvement programs. Sarason (1996) discussed how certain school characteristics including organizational climate and leadership, influenced change within a school, Sarason used the term “street level implementation” as the way in which implementation at the local level could sometimes be a purposeful or accidental.

Misinterpretation of guidelines promulgated at some system level. Although both levels of school level factors (direct and aggregated) had been used their separate effects had not been considered. Further the school effects founded by those studies had not been sufficiently sensitive to certain direct school attributes such as climate, emotional /tone and relationships among students.

Reynolds (1994) suggested that the proportion of variables explained by school level variables could be improved by tapping school variables such as climate emotional tone and relationships. Few studies had used the culture of schooling in terms of attitudes, perceptions, goals and the psychological relationships among individuals such as students within classrooms, classroom within schools and parents within a school community. Though Randerbush and Williams (1991) referred to the inadequacy of statistical models at the time their book was written they prefaced their book on multilevel analysis of schools, by saying that: An irony in the history of quantitative studies of schooling had been the failure of researcher's analytical models to reflect adequately the social organisation of life in classroom and schools. The experiences that children shared within school settings and the effects of those experiences on their development could be seen as the basic material of educational research, yet of recent, few studies had explicitly taken account of the effects of particular classrooms and schools in which students and teachers shared membership.

The issues emphasized by Reynolds and by Randerbush and Willis were critically important to the study of school effects. The research described exploited the transition database in an effort to develop as many testable variables as possible. It was important to note that the transitions database was not constructed to study effective school or school climate. Consequently, a secondary analysis of the topic was inherently limited

Many critical and direct measures of important school functioning were not available , although attempts were made in the study to develop some surrogate measures.

Sifuna (2003) noted that free primary education in public primary schools had stretched teaching and learning facilities as a result of high number of influx of new pupils. In Tanzania, the experience was quite instructive because the government had constructed additional new classrooms country wide so as to cater for the new enrolment. Lack of physical facilities in public schools remained the major impending factor to the achievement of overall effectiveness in public schools, private school continued to administer periodic continuous assessment tests and regular examinations to achieve good academic results. Since the introduction of free primary education in public schools student assessment especially continuous assessment tests had stopped. That could clearly explain why those schools continued to perform poorly.

Large classes made it impossible for teachers to administer and grade their work and provide feedback on performance. Teachers working morale had remained low in public schools in Kenya due to low compensation. In Kenya, corporal punishments in schools were widely practiced by teachers (Mnito & Kakonge 2002) despite the fact that in 2001, the convention on the rights of the child was demonstrated and enacted by act of parliament leading to children's Act. The Act clearly specified the rights of all children with respect to survival development and protection. Other issues of concern related to lack of basic information and knowledge among teachers concerning the education for all ( EFA) which was benchmark for countries to respond following the Jomtein in 1990, Amman in 1996 and expanded vision of EFA at Dakar in 2000.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

The study employed a descriptive correlation survey design and expo facto whereby both the Qualitative and quantitative paradigms were used since the variables entailed in the study were thoroughly explained and some measured with numerical and analyzed with statistical procedures. Given the fact that quite a number of factors constituted school environment and all such factors had influence on the academic performance of pupils, it was vivid evidence that the study adopted correlation and cross sectional survey methods. It was correlation since it involved the relating of each of the environmental factors in the school with the academic performance of learners. The study was correlation in a sense that the data was collected from the selected respondents once and for all in interest of time and it was survey study since large number respondents were used.

#### **Research population**

The population for that particular study constituted 150 teachers and 1800 pupils of selected upper primary classes of public schools of Yei River County Yei River County, Yei River County , Kenya.

#### **Sample size and sampling procedure**

The sample size constituted 300 pupils of both primary seven and eight and 120 teachers chosen from the 10 public primary schools entailed in the Yei River County. By using purposive sampling such as a sample of 120 teachers was used from the would be 124 recommended sample size and the sample size of 300 pupils was used from the would be 520 as held by social science researchers. Such a sample met the minimum

sample size requirements as established by statisticians (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) as cited in Amin 2005. Employing Slovene’s formula made the generation of that sample size Of 550 and that was given from

$$n = \frac{N}{I + Ne^2}$$

Where n = Sample size

e = is the confidence interval which could be 0.05a 95%?

**Table 1: Summary of the sampling criteria**

Population category	Population per school	Number of schools	Total population
Pupils			
Class 7	83	10	830
Class 8	45	10	450
Teachers	18	10	180
	<b>Total</b>		<b>1460</b>

Source: Slovene (1978)

### Research instruments

School environment face sheet and demographic chart of respondents composed the main tools of data collection in selected public primary schools. Questionnaires for

level of school environment and the level of academic performance was included that was anchored on the variables of the study ( i.e. the dependent and independent variables) that was used to solicit data from the pupils of upper primary classes in the selected public primary schools regarding their views on non school environment affected the academic performance.

**Validity and reliability of the instrument**

Advent researchers argued that the validity of a tool relied on its reliability without having a reliable tool, the element of validity could lack. Validity and reliability were examined by expert adjudicators with the assistance of the supervisor. Content validity index (CVI) of questionnaire was determined by suing the formula.

Content validity index      (CVI) = 
$$\frac{\text{No. of items declared valid}}{\text{Total number of items}}$$

Reliability of the instrument was established using the cronbachs Alpha test using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) and that was to be above 670 which was accepted by social scientists.

**Data gathering procedures**

The researcher obtained an introduction letter before he went to the field from office of DVC postgraduate studies. That introduced the researcher as a post graduate student trying to carry out an academic research. The researcher sought permission

from the concerned authorities of the Yei River County for accession to the respondents and also for introduction to schools within the Yei River County. After securing permission, the questionnaire were administered by the researcher to the respondents, score sheets for academic performance as well as face sheets for demographic charts of respondents were used for the study.

**Data analysis**

Collected data was edited categorized or coded and fed into the computer and were summarized and made ready for analysis Frequency and percentages distribution tables of the respondents were developed mean and standard deviation for level of school environment and academic performance of pupils were established, Pearson Product moment correlation for the relationship between level of school environment and academic performance of pupils were generated and a regression analysis for determination of the influence of school environment on academic performance of pupils were generated all of which were done using the statistical package for social scientists ( SPSS).

**Ethical considerations**

The study primarily engaged all respondents viewed relevant to study. Accordingly, the researcher provided respondents with the necessary information regarding the main purpose of the study and also promised extreme confidentiality to information provided.

**Limitations of the study**

Due to human nature some few pupils seemed to give incorrect information and on the same note some other respondents were not willing to cooperate and not ready to

respond. The researcher never had enough skills in carrying out research and therefore the research was somehow not carried out effectively.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

#### Introduction

This chapter focuses on presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data. The chapter examines the state of the profile of the teachers and pupils; also for the pupils and as in terms of age, gender, rank in the family and level of learning, the level of school environment of the pupils and academic performance of the pupils and the relationship between the levels of school environment on the academic performance of pupils in Yei River County Yei River County.

**Table 2: Profile of Teachers**

Major Category	Subcategory Descriptions	Frequency analysis	Percent (%)
Age	Below 20	06	05
	20 – 29	35	29
	30 – 39	37	30
	40 – 49	37	30
	50 and above	8	07
	<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100</b>
Gender	Male	55	46
	Female	66	55
	<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100</b>
Marital status	Single	24	20
	Married	97	80
	<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100</b>
Level of	Certificate	115	94

education	Diploma	06	5
	Bachelors	02	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 affirms that the age distribution of the teachers is normally distributed as the rate of entry is almost equal to that which exist. With 30% draw percentages for 30 – 39 and 40 – 49 as age interval for teachers this implied that the system had clearly youthful and energetic teachers in the system. The female teachers emerged with the highest percentage (55%) this can be attributed women are not aggressive as men so they prefer low profile jobs therefore primary teaching could be a best alternative for them. Having youthful and energetic teachers, table 2 clearly shows that the highest percentage of them was married (80%). Since it is part of seeking respect from the community it is always advised for teachers to get married not to act out of their professional conduct of conduct.

As a prerequisite for primary teachers is a certificate of education 94% of the teachers were certificate holders and only 5% and 1% were Diploma and Bachelor holders respectively and would have been the level of administrators since they earn slightly higher than the other teachers hence they can be able to sponsor themselves for higher education such as degrees and diplomas. Table 3 presents the profile of the pupils who participated in the study.

**Table 3: Profile of Pupils**

<b>Major Category</b>	<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Age	Below 10	04	01
	11-15	420	76
	16-20	122	22
	21 & above	04	01
	<b>Total</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>100</b>
Gender	Male	285	52
	Female	265	48
	<b>Total</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>100</b>
Rank in the family	First born	126	23
	Middle	111	20
	Last born	305	56
	Others	6	01
	<b>Total</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>100</b>
Class level	Primary four	04	01
	Primary seven	274	50
	Primary eight	272	49
	<b>Total</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>100</b>

Pupils of Yei River County Yei River County primary schools were found to lie within (11 – 15) age interval with 76% as the highest percentage; this implied that they were already ranging in the upper classes of the primary school system. The ratio of the boys to girls as clearly observed from the table the difference between them was minimum with a 4% difference. The pupils who participated, in the study were those

from form seven and eight as they were considered as pupils with the ability to interpret the questions well since the questionnaire was used as an instrument of data collection for the study. Table 4 presents the indicators of school environment.

**Table 4: Level of School Environment**

Indicators of School Environment	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Principal leadership in form of conduct of teachers	3.72	Agree	1
Ample time is being devoted to instructing/guiding of learners	3.70	Agree	2
Programs of learners are consistent	3.61	Agree	3
School buildings and physical environment	3.25	Neutral	4
Parental environment in running of school activities	3.17	Neutral	5
There is teacher satisfaction with the school	2.96	Neutral	6
<b>Average Mean</b>	3.40	Neutral	

As clearly seen from the rankings by the researcher in table 4 in the last column the respondents views and opinions about the indicators of school environment just affirmed the researchers assumption of rank of the school indicators about the principal leadership in form of conduct of teachers emerged as the first with a mean average of 3.72. But this tied up with the second ranked indicator that ample time is being devoted to instructing/guiding of learners and were interpreted with the agree response where respondents agreed with some doubt. This implied that the leadership behavior of the head teacher of the school is considered to be an important component of the school environment as teacher efficacy and time-use, and students' learning efficacy and attainment test scores are assumed as dependent variables to assess their relationship with school environment. In view of the Indicators of School Environment, the respondents did not did not show up the side as they neither agreed nor disagreed as

clearly observed from table 4. Table 5 presents the indicators of pupils’ academic performance in terms of means which are the performance ratings by the teachers.

**Table 5: Level of Pupils’ Academic Performance<sup>1</sup>**

Indicators of academic performance	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
The level of academic performance of pupils in my school is moderate as compared to other private schools in my region	2.99	Neutral	1
The level of academic performance of pupils in my school is low as compared to other private schools in my region	2.98	Neutral	2
The level of academic performance of pupils in my school is high as compared to other private schools in my region	2.72	Neutral	3
<b>Average Mean</b>	2.90	Neutral	

The means computed in table 5 all were interpreted being neutral. This implied that the teachers did not find component variables of school environment that contribute significantly to the performance of teachers. This could be due to the fact that the between-school variations of the teacher performance variables are too small to detect any variations in the school environment neighbouring neither private nor government aided. Table 6 presents the means of the pupils’ academic performance per subject within the table which are the performance ratings by the pupils.

**Table 6: Level of Pupils’ Academic Performance2**

Subjects	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Mathematics	3.12	Neutral	1
Social studies	3.05	Neutral	2
Religious education	3.34	Neutral	3
<b>Average Mean</b>	3.17	Neutral	

Similarly Table 6 also showed the same average mean like that of table 5, the levels of pupils academic performance per subject were neither agree nor disagreed , this implied that performance of the pupils within the selected subjects was averaged. However having been with the same range of interval, Religious education scored a higher magnitude (3.17) than mathematics and Social studies with 3.12 and 3.05 respectively. The attributed good discipline within the pupils and other external forces might have hindered them from excelling like teacher – student ratio, socio – economic factors, grade of the schools and issues of the like. Table 7 presents the level of pupils’ academic performance in terms of marks scored in mathematics, Social studies and Religious Education.

**Table 7: Level of Pupils’ Academic Performance2**

		Very high 81-100	High 61-80	Moderate 41-60	Low 21-40	Very low 0-20	Total
Mathematics	Count	24	88	247	179	12	550
	%	04	16	045	33	02	100
Social studies	Count	12	101	310	103	24	550
	%	02	18	056	19	04	100
Religious Education	Count	13	62	277	120	78	550
	%	02	11	50	22	14	100

Marks scored by students in Social studies were normally distributed as seen from table 7 where the highest percentage rated moderately (41 – 60). However those of Religious Education and mathematics were skewed with more students scoring low marks even though their high percentage was also moderately ranked. This indicated general poor performance in all subjects as the difference in the number of pupils that score with the ranges of high and very high and low and very low was significantly big. Thus some component variables of school environment do contribute significantly to the performance of pupils. Three factors contribute significantly to the academic performance of the pupils and they are caring and support factor (a combination of three environment variables: esprit, intimacy, and student-centeredness), the formalization factor, and the pupil control factor (pupil control ideology minus organizational ideology). Table 8 presents the opinions of the respondents about the relationship between the level School environment and academic Performance of Pupils.

**Table 8: Relationship between Level School Environment and Academic Performance of Pupils**

<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Parental involvement has effect on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools	4.08	Agree	1
Time devoted to instruction, has effect on other academic performance of pupils in public primary schools	3.88	Agree	2
Principal leadership in terms of conduct of teachers in schools has effect on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools	3.83	Agree	3
Teacher satisfaction with school structure has effect on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools	3.69	Agree	4
Differentiation in student programs has effect on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools	3.61	Agree	5
School building and physical environment has effect on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools	3.58	Agree	6
<b>Average Mean</b>	3.78	Agree	

In view of table 8 the views of the respondents had an average mean of 3.78 which was interpreted as being agree were respondents reacted to the questions that the level of school environment had an impact on the academic performance of pupils. This can be attributed to feeling that the environment only affects the pupils' consciousness when it causes particular pleasure, harm, discomfort, or stress. Thus an improperly design of the physical environment in a school causes stress to the occupants of the facility, both directly and indirectly, hence pupils' academic can be influenced by the school condition and environment. Table 9 presents the verification of the research hypothesis.

**Table 9: Summary of the Pearson correlation of the research hypothesis about the relationship between Level of School Environment and Academic Performance**

Variables Correlated		r-value	Sig.	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
Environment Performance1	Vs	0.212	0.018	Positive and significant	Rejected
Environment Performance2	Vs	0.042	0.325	Positive and insignificant	Accepted

Performance1: Performance ratings by teachers

Performance2: Performance ratings by pupils

Table 9 indicates the performance ratings by the teachers about school environment and academic performance were correlated. It was found out that at a five level of significance the r – value is greater than 0.05 hence rejected the hypothesis. Having correlated the opinions of the pupils about environment and their academic performance it was found when r – value 0.042 less than 0.05 hence accepting the hypothesis that there was no significant relationship between the level of school environment and academic performance of pupils. Thus Pupils' learning efficacy is found to interact with school environment and the effect contributes significantly to their academic performance.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter looks at the discussion of the findings of the research from

the profile of the pupils as to age, gender, rank in the family and level of learning, the level of school environment of the pupils, the level of academic performance of the pupils and determining if there was a significant relationship between the level of school environment and the academic performance of pupils in Yei River County Yei River County

#### **FINDINGS**

Delineation of school environment into multiple aspects is helpful to the school administrators to systematically understand, analyze, and manage the internal process of the school organization. Similar approaches can also be applied to the study of other types of organizations by researchers. School environmental factors which influence achievement are complex as they deal with numerous variables which change their effects depending on other existing variable. This study addresses issues on how school environment affects the academic performance of pupils. Since the study was conducted from rural schools that are least endowed with school facilities compared to urban schools. Life in rural areas revolves around agrarian activities that make up the school environment of low material quality life in terms of nutrition, physical wealth and cognitive stimulation.

The demand for labour or opportunity cost is high in the area of study. Children were required to work to supplement family income for a good part of the day. Pupils were more likely to get the brunt of all the inequities as motivation for sending them to school is less (Chimombo et al. 2000; Fuller 1986).

All these and other socio-economic variances are likely to affect pupils' performance in schools. From the analysis in the preceding sections, the study has

gained insights into which of these experiences seem likely to have an effect on academic performance. The researcher outlined factors at school level, classroom level and pupil level and an overview of the factors that seemed to have made a difference in achievement are given. School level factors considered for discussion in the study were location of a school categorized as urban and rural, owner of the school categorized as government owned and grant aided school and trained teacher pupil ratio of a school categorized as schools with teacher pupil ratios below 50, schools with teacher - pupil ratios between 50 and 70 and schools with teacher pupil ratios above 70.

In Standard seven, the location of the schools consistently showed more variation in performance in all the subjects followed by trained teacher- pupil ratios. These results showed that as far as the upper levels of basic education is concerned there were no opportunities for pupils to perform in all the three subjects. Schools with teacher pupil ratios that are below 50 will obvious consistently perform better than those schools with higher teacher pupil ratios. Therefore, according to the results it appears that performance in the school was likely to depend on where the school was located and on favorable teacher – pupil ratios. School location and school owner can also play a significant role in impacting on academic performance of pupils mostly especially for private owned schools.

Classroom level factors are influential in determining the academic performance of pupils. These factors are trained teacher pupil ratios and textbook pupil ratios. In this case, teacher pupil ratio at classroom level not whole school teacher – pupil ratio. Textbook-pupil ratios are considered from 1:1 to 1:3, above 1:3 and where there were no textbooks. Therefore the presence of a trained teacher in a classroom is considered to have some little influence on academic achievement in all subjects at all levels of basic education but it is not very conclusive as to which teacher-pupil ratio the teachers functioned optimally.

At the pupil level, the study analyzed the relationship of level of academic performance of pupils. At the upper basic education level age and sex of pupils are a matter considered in all the subjects. Pupils at an appropriate age performed consistently much better than those who are underage or overage. Boys consistently performed better than girls. These results have implications on the enforcement of appropriate ages as well as the teaching strategies organized for girls. If the system still allows children to enter school at advanced ages, the levels of performance cannot be expected to improve. It appears that the cognitive growth of over-age pupils does not match with the cognitive demands of a school curriculum. This is in line with the findings by Kadzamira (2001).

Ferreira, (1995) observes that; pupils attitudes are shaped to some extent by the structures (facilities) through which they are mediated. In fact, school environment can directly affect the attitudes of pupils or the attitudes of teachers and parents which in turn affect pupil attitudes. Proshansky (1970) referred to physical settings and attitudes as follows: Physical settings-simple or complex-evoked complex human responses in the form of feelings, attitudes, values, expectancies, and desires, and it is in this sense as well as their known physical properties that their relationships to human experience and behavior must be understood.

There is a body of research in the area of school environment and their relationship to pupil and teacher attitudes. Stockard and Mayberry (1992) found that the quality of a physical plant or environment is related to non-cognitive outcomes, such as better attitudes toward school. These outcomes may eventually relate to higher academic achievement. Christopher (1988) concluded that human nature makes people feel better about them when their surroundings are pleasant. Pupils who have better attitudes usually learn more and work harder. McGuffey (1972) conducted a study investigating pupil attitudes towards their school buildings in the elementary level. He found that students housed in newer school buildings which were fully carpeted and air-conditioned showed more positive attitudes than students housed in older buildings.

Chan (1982) compared pupils' attitudes toward the physical environment of a school opened in 1980 and that of two older schools: one built in 1923 and the other in 1936. The main finding of this study indicated that pupils housed in a modern school building had a significantly more positive attitude toward school than do pupils housed in a much older building. Likewise, Cramer (1976) studied selected Junior High Schools in the Bibb County School of Georgia. He contended that pupils housed in newly renovated school facilities showed more positive attitudes. Teachers' attitudes are also directly related to the school facility. Several studies have been conducted in the area of open-space classrooms and their effect on teacher attitudes. Lewis (1976) examined the influence of open-space classrooms and closed-space classrooms on the attitudes of teachers toward the school building. It was found that teachers housed in open-space classrooms showed more positive attitudes. Likewise, Hones (1974) concluded that teachers' attitudes toward their students in open-space classrooms improved significantly. Mills (1972) agreed with Jones' findings when he concluded that teachers in open-space areas exhibited behaviors that allowed greater pupil freedom and self-direction. These teachers displayed behaviors which were more permissive, supportive, warm and sympathetic toward students. As one can see, not only does the physical environment of a school affect children, teachers are also affected by the design of a school building. And so, school architects, educators and facility planners must take into consideration the impact that the designs of school buildings have on student and teacher attitudes.

Pupils' perceptions of school environments influence their academic achievement. A match between a Pupils' preferred school environment and the actual class environment may be as important to academic achievement as the actual nature of the school environment. Meeting the individual needs of Pupils in a structured climate, with organization of pupil roles in the classroom, clear role expectations, and shared group-sanctioned norms have been shown to be effective factors contributing to pupil academic performance. An educational climate that is orderly, but not rigid with a consistent set of rules and values while still allowing for pleasure in learning is an

effective environment. Establishing learning teams and changing them often and allowing pupils to participate in decision-making can lead to higher student morale, and thus, impact their academic performance. Thematic of interdisciplinary approaches, cross-age tutoring, opportunities for self regulating, and grouping by topic, interest, and pupil choice are also conducive to their academic performance. Perhaps most important to students' perception that they can achieve is an environment that provides challenging, complex work while encouraging academic risks and viewing mistakes as a part of learning. In an effective learning environment and in a supportive relationship with a concerned teacher, Pupils who are under performing may choose to learn to help themselves reverse the pattern and start Performing.

### **CONCLUSION**

Our perceptions affect our emotions and behaviors and our emotional and behavioral reactions also help shape our environments and skew our beliefs of those environments. A fundamental position of attribution theory is that we behave according to our perception and understandings. Attribution is part of our cognition of the environment, and is often used to feel a sense of control. We make attributions to make our world more manageable and predictable. One of our most important attributes is ability. Much of our performance is evaluated, by ourselves and by others, by assessing performance ability or competence. The attribution of high ability can be limiting, as it carries the obligation to perform at increasingly higher levels. Pupils who are underperforming may be exerting control over their own actions and environment by using self-serving attributions. By attributing lack of school success to external factors, for example, a pupil may not have to accept personal responsibility for his lack of success, and thus the negative quality of poor performance is reduced. A student who believes that lack of success is caused by external and presumably uncontrollable sources preserves herself image. If a gifted pupil is feeling too much pressure to succeed, he may purposefully underperform to prove he "isn't so smart after all." Pupils' perceptions of their educational experiences influence their academic performance. One

way to preserve one's own perception of high ability, especially if poor performance is perceived to be likely, is to reduce the level of effort and not try. One obvious limitation of this study is that it used only a small sample of prospective primary teachers' drawn from one Yei River County of the . In order to further understand and document the nature and prevalence of these conceptions, additional studies using more qualitative measurement methods and larger representative samples need to be conducted that look at both conceptions of the environment. Data obtained from teachers or pre-service teachers belonging to different Yei River County should also be compared.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are hereby proffered based on the study findings;

- Environmental considerations should be embedded in teacher education and in school management training, so that these important elements are not relegated to the 'background noise' of educational discourse
- Further empirical investigation should be carried out into key elements which are insufficiently covered in the research literature
- The design process must be the focus of environmental change in schools, so that teachers and learners might experience motivational and perspective-changing benefits beyond the specific problem-solving
- Environmental improvement in schools should be locally driven, user-led and embedded in pedagogy
- Investment in change should be seen as an iterative process, rather than a five-year programme to cover the needs of a subsequent generation. Building Schools for the Future pre-supposes a commonly held view of what the future will look like: unless this is generated collaboratively and implemented flexibly, there is a significant risk of expensive failure.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

- This study should be replicated, using a different population to determine whether school environment affects the academic performance of pupils.
- More research also might help to demonstrate a strong relationship that, in turn, allows findings to be generalized. Because of the limitations of the questionnaire instrument to assess some of the environmental conditions that were alike among all Kenyan public schools, such as the thermal and visual environments, extensive research is needed to examine the influence of these factors on pupils' Performance.
- This can be done by examining whether minimum standards for acoustics, lighting, heating and air conditioning as requirements for a quality school building are met in Kenya. If this study is replicated, the researcher might want to add more responses to each question used in the questionnaire instrument to better examine the school environmental condition.
- Kenyan teachers' attitudes toward the conditions of the public school buildings and subsequent influence on pupil attitudes are fodder for another important study that should be conducted. Such study would examine whether or not the working conditions have direct positive and negative effects on teacher morale, feelings of effectiveness in the classroom, and the general learning environment.
- Teacher satisfaction or dissatisfaction and the school buildings should be explored because the conditions of the school buildings might cause the teacher dissatisfaction if a teacher feels that he or she cannot utilize the classroom for a better teaching style because of a small classroom space filled with more pupils than expected. In addition, a teacher might feel dissatisfied when the classroom or the school building is in poor or even sub-standard condition.

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## APPENDIX IA

### SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT FACE SHEET AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHART OF RESPONDENTS

**Dear respondent,**

This questionnaire is to help the researcher gather information on: "*School environment and academic performance of pupils in selected public primary schools in Yei River County Yei River County, South Sudan*". For confidentiality, the responses provided will be treated with highest degree of confidentiality. To ensure the same, do not write your name or any other form of identity anywhere on this form. Where alternative responses are given, mark your choice by putting a tick ☐ in the box next to the appropriate answer.

#### 1.0 Section A: Profile of the Respondents

Age: Below 20 ☐ 20 - 29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50 and above ☐

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Marital status: Single ☐ Married ☐

Level of education

Certificate ☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelors ☐ Master ☐ Ph.D ☐

If any other please state-----

## APPENDIX IB: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEVEL OF SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Your respective answers are to range from 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree;

3 Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.

Case	Variables	1	2	3	4	5
2.1	School buildings and physical environment in my school are well set and impressive					
2.2	Principal leadership in form of conduct of teachers in my school is comprehensible					
2.3	There is satisfaction with the School makeup in my school					
2.4	Parental involvement in the running of school activities in my school					
2.5	Programs of learners are consistent with the interests of the pupils in my school					
2.6	Ample time is being devoted to instructing and br guiding of learners in my school.					

## APPENDIX IC: LEVEL OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS

Your respective answers are to range from 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree;  
3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.

Case	Variables	1	2	3	4	5
3.1	The level of academic performance of pupils is low in my school as compared with private schools in the region					
3.2	The level of academic performance of pupils in my school is moderate as compared with private schools in my region					
3.3	The level of academic performance of pupils in my school is high as compared with other private schools in my region					

# **APPENDIX ID: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEVEL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS**

Your respective answers are to range from 1 Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.

Case	Variables	1	2	3	4	5
	School building and physical environment has effect on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools					
	Principal leadership in terms of conduct of teachers in schools has effect on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools					
	Teacher satisfaction with school structure has effect on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools					
	Parental involvement has effect on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools					
	Differentiation in student programs has effect on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools					
	Time devoted to instruction, has effect on the academic performance of pupils in public primary school					

Thank you