

**DETERMINANTS OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE WITHIN THE SELECTED SECONDARY  
SCHOOLS OF KIKUYU DIVISION, KIAMBU  
DISTRICT, KENYA**

**BY**

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF OPEN  
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## **DECLARATION**

I, WINNIE NYAWIRA KAMAU declare that this project, is my original work and has never been presented to any other university for award of any academic certificate or anything similar to such. I solemnly bear and stand to correct any inconsistency.

Signature.....*Winnie K*.....

**WINNIE NYAWIRA KAMAU**

Date ..*24/04/09*.....

## APPROVAL

This is to acknowledge that this Report has been under my supervision as a university supervisor and is now ready for submission.

Signatures

Date

  
.....

24/04/09  
.....

**DERICK SSEKAJUGO**

## **DEDICATION**

This work is affectionately dedicated to my Husband Joseph Githinji for his love, moral and financial support. I would not like to forget my son Tony who took care of his brothers tirelessly. To Tony, Denny and Chris thanks for your love prayers and good wishes and Kui who was always there to offer you love and support.

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God bless you all.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors affecting the academic performance of the English language in the selected schools of Kikuyu Division Kiambu District.

The specific objectives of the study were to determine if discipline affects the students' academic performance of the English language in the selected schools of Kikuyu Division, to determine if teacher qualities affect the students' academic performance of the English language in the selected schools of Kikuyu Division; and to determine if school facilities affect the students' academic performance of the English language in the selected schools of Kikuyu Division. The methods used for data collection was questionnaires and interview guides to students, teachers and head teachers of the schools involved in the study.

In chapter four, the findings were presented and interpreted in relation to the study objectives and research questions. While linking to the existing literature, results included demographic characteristics, frequency and percentages. Based on the findings it was observed that teacher qualities, discipline of students; and school facilities have a direct impact on the students' academic performance. In chapter five, development of solutions to the problem, summary of the findings and conclusions were attempted.

The findings suggested recommendations that the Government should provide more teaching learning facilities in schools to make the learning environment more attractive to students and teachers among other recommendations.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Background to the study**

The government of Kenya attaches great importance to the development of the education sector, for it recognizes that education is a powerful tool for transformation of society (Education White Paper, 1992). Education plays a key role in achieving moral, intellectual, ideological, cultural and social development of the people in society, as well as the national goals of unity, democracy, economic progress and security of all its citizens. Emphasis is put on the role of education in liberating people from the vicious cycle of poverty, dependence, ignorance, disease and indignity, and in the process of building a self reliant nation with a sustained independent economy.

Although the government has undisputed need for bringing about the desired changes and improvement in the system of education, it is at this stage having severe resource constraints. It's therefore, quite a challenging task to cater for the development needs of education. The Kenyan Human Rights Commission Report (KHRCR 1999) notes that there are not enough secondary schools to absorb all children who qualify for secondary education. Many school administrators, overwhelmed with pressure from parents, admit large numbers of students which do not march with the available facilities and teachers. A lot of discipline problems have been reported in schools due to unmanageable numbers.

In the UNESCO Magazine (2001) its argued that education has become a powerful catalyst for change at all levels of society but its characteristics

and form present new challenges and policies. The challenges are manifested in form of educational accessibility, relevance, equity, quality and its governance.

Chaube (2000) explained that it's a right of the individual to receive at least primary and secondary education which is important in democratization of any society. Secondary education is designed to provide children with the academic knowledge and skills they need to function successfully in society and to prepare them to pursue further education, to enter the work force to be responsible active citizens.

If students do not receive the knowledge and skills they need to be productive, then the schools have not succeeded in their mission (US Department of Education, 1991). It's upon this background that the study will be undertaken to investigate the influence of teachers' competence, quality of teachers and discipline of students on academic performance.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem**

The study investigated the factors affecting academic performance of students in selected schools. From the researcher's personal teaching experience, a few scholars have written about the factors influencing the academic performance of students in Kikuyu division of Kiambu District in Kenya. This has forced the researcher to carry out the study into the factors affecting the academic performance of students in the division.

## **1.2 Objectives of the study**

### **1.2.1 General objective**

The general objective of the study was to investigate the factors affecting the performance of the English language in the selected schools of Kikuyu Division Kiambu District

### **1.2.2 Specific objectives**

1. To determine if Discipline affects the students academic performance of the English language in the selected schools of Kikuyu Division
2. To determine if quality of teachers affects the students academic performance of the English language in the selected schools of Kikuyu Division
3. To determine if school facilities affects the students academic performance of the English language in the selected schools of Kikuyu Division

## **1.3 scope of the study**

The study was conducted in the selected schools of Kikuyu Division Kiambu District. It was limited to the specific objectives of the study in 1.2.2. The study was carried out from December 2007 to July 2008.

## **1.4 Significance of the study**

This research will be useful in the following ways:

It will provide information to policy makers in the education ministry, administrators of schools; teachers, parents and other stakeholders which may enable them make improvements in education service delivery.

It will help students together with their parents to identify the means of improving upon academic performance in the English Language..

It will also contribute to the existing literature about better education service delivery and provoke further research in this field.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **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 Discipline of Students and Academic Performance of English**

In recent years, policy makers, educators, parents and students increasingly have expressed concern about the incidence of school related criminal/behaviour. Although concern has grown, several researchers show that violent behaviours, smoking, theft have increased especially in secondary schools (Kasozi, 1997).

School discipline has a diversity of connotations, as may people perceive it to mean many different things. According to Kasozi (1997) discipline refers to a situation of remaining inside legal bounds of law as laid down by the school administration.

Scheviakore (1955) and Musaazi (1982) emphasize the need for orderliness in the school. They emphasize that students, teachers, school employers and administrators should all be orderly as school discipline and good academic performance is a collective responsibility and a prerequisite for school success.

The Kenya Education Policy Review Commission Report (KEPRCR, 1992) clearly spells out discipline as one of the aims and objectives of education at all levels of the education system.

According to Mafabi (1995) discipline is the underlying factor in all school activities; they cannot be pursued without it. In the absence of discipline, there is anarchy; a situation which makes it impossible for a school's goals to be achieved. Most of these writers emphasize the need for discipline as a prerequisite for school success; however, they do not explicitly illustrate how discipline can be enforced in the school setting. School authorities should not only stress the importance of discipline, they also need to put mechanisms of enforcing it.

Okumbe (1998) describes discipline as the action by management to enforce organizational standards. He stresses that all members of educational organization are required to strictly adhere to the various behavioral patterns necessary for maximum performance. In support of this, Chaube (2000) contends that an opinion may be formed about the school by observing the discipline among students. It is necessary for every school to enforce certain rules of conduct to ensure discipline and discipline is essential if rules are to be implemented.

According to Musaazi (1982) student discipline means that students are provided with an opportunity to exercise self control to solve school problems, to learn and to promote the welfare of the school. Ssekamwa (2000) in agreement with Musaazi adds that discipline is the development of self worth, self control, respect for self and others and the adherence to the school routine set up in terms of schedules and school regulations. It is very important for school authorities to give freedom to the students to develop the self esteem and exercise self control. There are many school authorities who use this approach to enforce discipline in schools. The researcher however feels that this method could be effective for post secondary school students and may not be appropriate for secondary School students.

Docking (1980) considers discipline as an important element in the process of socialization, formation of character, a system of controls, which enables teaching to take place as conceptually related to the process of education.

According to Mafabi et al (1995) symptoms of indiscipline include; habitual absenteeism from class and from school as a whole, late coming, telling lies, rudeness, vandalism, aggression, smoking and drinking while at school; evading school activities, bullying of new students, indecent forms of dressing. These, however, do not explain how these behaviours affect academic performance because there are many students involved in these kinds of behaviour but perform well.

## **2.2 Quality of Teachers and Academic Performance of English**

Various writers have come up with views about the characteristics of competent teachers and benefits of having such teachers as follows:

Craig et al (1998) holds the view that the quality of the teachers' performance determines the students' achievement. Factors such as the years taken to train teacher, the teachers verbal fluency, subject matter knowledge, having books and materials, knowing how to use them, teacher expectation of pupil performance, time spent on classroom preparation and frequent monitoring of student progress determine the quality of performance of a teacher. Regardless of the training, the experience and the preparation undergone, a teacher should have adequate motivation to teach. Lack of incentives in schools and small salaries offered to teachers compel them to work in many places to make ends meet. This renders many teachers ineffective at their work.



The Common Wealth Report (1974) explains teacher competence as having knowledge of child development; of the material to be taught and suitable methods; his skills must enable him to teach; advice and guide his pupils, community and culture with which he is involved; his attitudes should be positive without being aggressive, so that his examples are likely to be followed as he transmits explicitly, and implicitly the national aims and moral and social values. In support of this, Konchhar (2000) contends that discipline problems cannot be prevented yet most of them will not arise in the classroom of intelligent, hardworking, teachers who plan their work effectively, motivate their students skillfully and provide a friendly environment.

Rayns (1969) holds the view that, "Teaching is complex and many sided, demanding a variety of human traits and abilities. These may be grouped into two, first those involving the teacher's mental abilities and skills, his understandings of psychological and educational principles and his knowledge of general and specific subject matter to be taught and second; those qualities stemming from the teacher's personality, his interest attitudes and beliefs, his behaviour in working relationships with pupils and other individuals and the like". In line with these views, Brinkerhott and white (1988) argued that teachers have the authority to control what goes on in classrooms and that authority must be established with each separate class. Some teachers are unable to do this; their classes run wild and their students terrorize them.

Anderson, et al (1992) contends that nothing is more critical to the quality of school than its staff. Teachers contribute to the whole development of children both inside and outside the classroom and not simply through the transmission of information and skills. Teachers need to interact with children even outside class. This instills confidence

among the children in dealing with the teacher and enhances free interaction even in class.

Hargreaves and Fullan (1992) hold the view that on top of having deeper knowledge of and confidence in teaching their subject(s), the teacher should know how to teach mixed ability classes and how to respond to different learning styles of their pupils. It's from the above that many writers give many characteristics and qualities which effective teachers should possess. There are many students who perform well without teachers in some subjects while others with well-qualified teachers perform poorly. The researcher therefore aims at establishing the effect of teacher competence on academic performance of students in secondary schools.

### **2.3 Facilities in Schools and Academic Performance of English**

The success or failure of secondary schools is measured against the presence or absence of structures and facility provision and management. Nsubuga (1977) holds the view that an important element of a good school is that of facilities. He emphasizes that a good school should have adequate facilities which help with teachers and pupils to effectively teach and effectively learn in a convenient and comfortable environment.

According to Kochhar (2001) physical facilities contribute a lot to the general atmosphere of the school. He suggests that healthy surroundings, good sanitary arrangement leave little scope for irritation. Adequate library and reading room facilities, special room for different subjects, common room and so will keep the children busy and away from indiscipline.

Musaazi (1982) and Ssekamwa (2000) agree that most programmes of instruction and pupil services require some physical facilities such as school buildings, school grounds, enough desks, chairs, teaching materials and laboratories needed. The possession of adequate facilities in the school for studying is a characteristic of an effective school. However, there are many students who perform well in schools with limited facilities and there are also many students who perform poorly in schools, which are well facilitated. The researcher therefore aims at carrying out a critical analysis of the connection between academic performance and the availability of facilities in secondary schools.

#### **2.4 Research questions**

1. What is the relationship between discipline and students academic performance of the English language?
2. What is the relationship between the quality of teachers and students academic performance of the English language?
3. What is the relationship between the school facilities and students academic performance of the English language?

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study followed a descriptive research design because the researcher used four selected schools in the Division.

#### **3.2 Area and Population of the Study**

The study was carried out in Kikuyu Division in Kiambu District. The study involved 100 students and 49 teachers. They were selected from Nyambogo secondary school, Alnabuko secondary school, Amesege secondary school, Gasabakwa secondary school, Hema secondary and Itibo secondary school.

#### **3.3 Data Type and Sources**

This study used both primary and secondary data:

Primary data was collected using Questionnaires and Interview Guides, which was given to students and Teachers.

Secondary data was through Document analysis in the form of Reports, training manual, news papers, and journals for the period under study. They were thoroughly analysed.

#### **3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure**

##### **3.4.1 Sample Size**

A total of one hundred forty nine respondents were used from the total population of the schools which was used for this study.

##### **3.4.2 Sampling Procedure**

Students were put in 10 groups each having 20 students where 10 Students were chosen at random from each group to make 100 in number who participated in the study. The 49 Teachers were conveniently selected to participate in this study

### **3.5 Methods for Data Collection**

#### **3.5.1 Instruments for data collection**

- **Questionnaires**

These were used to collect information from some students and teachers who were part of this study. Both close ended and open ended questions were used.

- **Interviews**

Interviews were held with Heads of departments and Head for the schools were part of this study.

### **3.6 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, the researcher 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.

### **3.7 Data collection 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.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This study was carried out to investigate the poor performance of English in Kikuyu Division, Kiambu District. The results are presented in tables and in form of frequency counts and percentages. The results and discussions are centered on the three set objectives of the study.

**Research question one: What is the relationship between discipline and students academic performance of the English language?**

When the students and teachers were requested to respond to the question on what they considered to be the level of discipline in their school, the following were the results.

**Table 1: The level of discipline in the school**

Comment	Number of respondents
Very high	24
High	30
Moderate	78
Low	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>

**Source: Primary data 2009**

Students and teachers had different views about the level of discipline in their schools. However, quite a small number respondent that the level of discipline was very good which represented 16.1% of the total number of respondents. Majority were of the opinion that discipline was moderate or low (65.8%).

The responses about the level of academic performance in schools judged at national level were as follows:

**Table II: Level of academic performance of English in school.**

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
Very high	16
High	41
Moderate	77
Low	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>

**Source: Primary data 2009**

The results were statistically significant. The students and teachers had different views on the level of academic performance in English of their schools judged at national level. Those who stated that performance was very high or high were 38.3% while those who were of the view that performance was moderate or low were 61.7%. These meant that the majority of students and teachers recognize the importance of discipline vis a vis academic performance.

**Table III: Combining table I and II the results are as follows.**

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Level of discipline in school</b>	<b>Academic performance at national standards</b>
Very high	24	16
High	30	41
Moderate	78	77
Low	17	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>149</b>

**Source: Primary data 2009**



**Table VII: Rating of Heads of departments about teachers**

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Preparation of schemes of work	11	30	2	1	44
Giving exercises	12	28	2	2	44
Making exercise	9	14	21	0	44
Making corrections with students	9	33	2	0	44
Completion of the syllabus	5	32	5	2	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>120</b>

**Source: Primary data 2009**

The table VII shows the responses of Heads of Departments about the performance of teachers in the four schools.

93% of the heads of departments were of the view that teachers make preparations for teaching while 6.8% commented that teachers don't make adequate preparations for teaching.

Students were also asked to assess the quality of teaching in their schools. The results are shown in table VIII below;

**Table VII: Students rating of teachers' performance**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
Explanation of subject matter concepts	41	54	9	1	105
Giving exercises	25	53	25	2	105
Making exercise	40	46	17	2	105
Making corrections	20	56	22	7	105
Free interaction with students	31	41	20	13	105
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>525</b>

**Source: Primary data 2009**

Results from table VII show that 90.48% of the students were of the view that teachers explain the subject concepts thoroughly on the other hand 9.52% responded that the explanations of subject concepts were not clear. 74.29% indicate that teachers give exercises in class while 25.71% were of the view that teachers don't give exercises in class. Also, students revealed that 81.9% of the teachers mark exercise while 18.1% do not mark exercises. 72.4% of the students further held the view that teacher make corrections after making the exercising while only 27.6% did not. This therefore means that students were satisfied with the quality of teaching.

Students also pointed out that they lack important facilities like computers and televisions in their schools. Therefore they are not kept abreast of the innovations, inventions and current issues important for academic work. This puts them at a competitive disadvantage in relation to those students who use internet and other facilities to access information which is not available in text books.

From the questionnaire responses, interviews and observations, there are limited facilities in schools. Lack of facilities for teaching and learning is negatively affecting the academic performance of these schools.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the discussion of the findings, conclusions and recommendations. These are presented according to each of the objectives for purposes of being systematic.

#### **DISCUSSION**

In this section, careful assessment and scrutiny of the findings were presented.

#### **Research question one: What is the relationship between discipline and students academic performance of the English language?**

Students and teachers were asked about the level discipline of students in their schools. The respondents had different views about this issue. 36.2% were of the view that discipline was high while 36.8% were of the opinion that discipline was low. The respondents also had varying views about the level of academic performance in their schools. 38.8% were of the view that the level of academic performance was high or very high while 61.7% were of the view that academic performance was moderate or low.

#### **Research question two: What is the relationship between the quality of teachers and students academic performance of the English language?**

The teachers were found to be 36.4% graduate, 59.7% diploma holders. Only 3.9% were licensed teachers. Therefore 96.1% of the teachers have the required qualifications to teach.

83.18% of the teachers commented that the teaching is done satisfactorily while 16.82% were of the view that the teaching is poorly done. 77.5% of the students had the view that the teachers perform well in class while 22.5% commented that the quality of teaching was not good. The results were therefore statically significant that teachers perform their work well.

**Research question three: What is the relationship between the school facilities and students academic performance of the English language?**

Students, teachers and head teachers were asked to rate the adequacy of facilities in their schools. 34.6% responded that facilities were adequate and 68.4% commented that facilities were inadequate.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The following conclusions were generated from the findings of the study. The results obtained indicate that when the students are indiscipline the time for the study is disrupted and wasted. This greatly affects academic performance.

Secondary school teachers in Kikuyu Division in Kiambu District are qualified and perform their work well. Therefore the poor academic performance in English is not attributed to the teachers.

The schools in Kikuyu Division in Kiambu District were found to have limited facilities and this contributes to the poor academic performance in English. The schools with more facilities obtain better quality results than those with fewer facilities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

As a result of the above conclusions, the researcher finally makes the following recommendations to the various stakeholders.

1. School children should be encouraged to work hard by providing scholarships to the best students in class. This will encourage competition among the students.
2. Some of the schools can be made partly day and partly boarding to cater for students who come from far and can afford boarding fees. This could reduce on late coming and escaping from school.
3. More meetings between school administrators, teachers, students and parents should be organized to sensitize the parents about their roles in disciplining their children.
4. To retain teachers in upcountry schools, government should consider introducing upcountry allowance in the remuneration scheme of teachers.
5. Government should provide more teaching learning facilities in schools to make the learning environment more attractive to students and teachers.
6. Computer facilities with internet should also be provided in schools so that students can access information relevant to their studies and to expose them to what is happening in the world like their counter parts in other schools.

## **FURTHER RESEARCH**

1. Motivation of students and academic performance in English
2. Social-Economic background and the academic performance in English

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## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENT

**Dear respondent,**

I am a student of Kampala International University carrying out an academic research on the topic "the factors affecting the performance of the English language in the selected schools of Kikuyu Division Kiambu District." You have been randomly selected to participate in the study and are therefore kindly requested to provide an appropriate answer by either ticking the best option or give explanation where applicable. The answers provided will only be used for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

NB: do not write your name anywhere on this paper

1. Age

a) 20-25

☐

b) 26-30

☐

c) 30-35

☐

d) 36-40

☐

e) Above 40

☐

2. Sex

a) Male

☐

b) Female

☐

3. Highest qualification attained

a) Certificate

☐

b) Diploma

☐

c) Degree

☐

d) Other

☐

4. State whether you are a trained or licensed Teacher

a) Trained teacher

☐

b) Licensed teacher

☐

5. How long have you taught in this school?

a) 1-3yrs

☐

b) 4-6yrs

☐

c) 7-9yrs

☐

d) 10yrs and above

**Please indicate the number that is appropriate to you or your situation on the right side boxes using the rates given below;**

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

	Item	Response
1.	English Teachers in this school make schemes of work and lesson plans before going to teach.	
2.	English Teachers in this school give exercises while teaching.	
3.	English Teachers make corrections in class with students after marking exercises.	
4.	English Teachers in the school interact freely with students in class.	
5.	Students in this school are committed to studies.	
6.	English Teachers in this school cover the designed syllabus adequately and in time to allow for revision by students.	
7.	This school has adequate facilities for teaching and learning English.	

8. What types of indiscipline commonly occur in this school?

.....  
 .....

9. What do you consider to be the cause of indiscipline in this school?

.....  
.....

10. In your view how can the academic performance in your school be improved?

.....

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

**Dear respondent,**

I am a student of Kampala International University carrying out an academic research on the topic “the factors affecting the performance of the English language in the selected schools of Kikuyu Division Kiambu District.” You have been randomly selected to participate in the study and are therefore kindly requested to provide an appropriate answer by either ticking the best option or give explanation where applicable. The answers provided will only be used for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

NB: do not write your name anywhere on this paper

### Background information

#### 1. Age

a) 13-15 ☐ b) 16-18 ☐ c) 19-21 ☐

#### 2. Sex

a) Male ☐ b) Female ☐

#### 3. Class

S.1 ☐ S.2 ☐ S.3 ☐ S.4 ☐

**Please indicate the number that is appropriate to you or your situation on the right side boxes, using the rates given below.**

Strongly agree	agree	disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

**(a) Discipline of students and academic performance**

1.	Students regard towards school regulations	
2.	The level of discipline in our school is low	
3.	Teachers concern towards discipline is low	

**(b) Facilities in school and academic performance**

1.	We have adequate furniture in classrooms	
2.	We have a library with relevant books we use for academic purposes	
3.	The available facilities are adequate for studies	

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEAD TEACHERS

1. How long have you been a Head teacher in this school?
2. How do you rate the academic performance of your school nationally?
3. How many English teachers do you have in your school? Please state the number of each group based on their academic qualifications.  
Graduate -----  
Diploma teachers-----  
Licensed teachers-----
4. How is the relationship between students and teachers in your school?
5. Do you give guidance to students about their academics?
6. Could you account for the fact that some few students perform better than others under the same learning conditions?
7. What type of indiscipline commonly occurs in your school?
8. What do you consider to be the cause of indiscipline in your school?
9. Does indiscipline affect students' academic performance?
10. Could you suggest ways of minimizing indiscipline in your School?
11. Does your school have adequate facilities for teaching and learning?
12. If not what facilities are missing