

**FACTORS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND FREE
PRIMARY EDUCATION IN ELDORET MUNICIPALITY**

**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF OPEN
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DEDICATION

This piece of work is specially dedicated to my beloved late parents, Papa Zadock and Mama Sarah, who inspite of their humble position in the society invested unsparingly all that they earned through sheer struggle towards my education. Although they are not there physically to witness the fruits of their labour, I have no doubt that the world can bear witness to this.

May the Almighty God rest their souls in eternal peace!

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To my beloved Angels: Abel Noel, Rebecca, Abigael and Lucia for the loneliness they had to bear while I underwent this study at the Kampala International University.

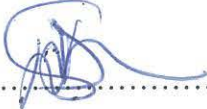
To my mentor, Ijait, Cassianus Aluku, I cannot find the kindest words with which to thank you. May the Almighty God richly bless you.

To the God almighty, Giver of all things, the gift of life, good health, finances and opportunity to study – may your name forever be praised. Amen!

DECLARATION

I would like to declare that this research report is my original work, and has not been submitted to anybody anywhere for any award.

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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that this work has been submitted to the University as the researcher's original work with my approval.

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate the influence of personal, home and school-based factors on academic performance. The study attempted to answer the question: “Which personal factors, home factors, and school based factors are perceived to be major contributors to academic performance of pupils in public primary schools”? To identify the factors, the study was based on social learning theory.

The researcher used stratified sampling technique to select eight public primary schools from the 18 public schools in Eldoret Municipality. Using systematic sampling technique, 300 participants were selected to participate in the study. An ex post facto research design was used. The main instrument of data collection was pupils’ questionnaire. Through pilot study and by using test-retest technique, the reliability of the instrument was found to be $r = 0.78$. The collected data was analyzed using mean scores and standard deviations.

From the analysis of the participants’ responses, it was found that sex, family size and learning resources were the factors that enhanced good academic performance of pupils. Also, it was perceived that school-based factors contributed to good performance of the pupils. In addition, male pupils were academically superior to their female counterparts.

In view of these findings, it was recommended that the Kenyan government should provide activities and programmes geared towards improving the parents’ understanding the importance of investing in children’s education. This would enable the family and the nation at large to enjoy the benefits that accrue from educating a child

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 *Introduction*

This chapter presents background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, and assumptions of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study, theoretical framework and operational definition of terms.

1.1 *Background of the Study*

Since 1963, the Kenya government has striven to provide universal primary education, and lately, education for all who wish to access it, (Sessional Paper 1, 1965). Education is seen as a major weapon in combating ignorance, diseases and poverty. Kenya's efforts should be seen within the wider international context of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 which placed education on the list of human rights (Republic of Kenya, 1980). The doors to education for all in Kenya were first opened in 1971 with a presidential decree abolishing tuition fees for districts with unfavourable climate (Sifuna, 1990). Subsequent directive further abolished fees in primary education. Over time, enrolment numbers rose disproportionately with funds from the government. Upto 2008, the government had played a very big role in the implementation of free primary education.

With the attainment of Independence, Kenyans became concerned with, and embraced the concept of Free Universal Education (UPE). The Kenya Education

Commission Report of 1964/65 chaired by Ominde supported these objectives. However, due to lack of facilities and finances, it was not until 1971 when the first steps towards UPE were undertaken (UNESCO, 2001). The Gachathi Report of 1976 recommended the extension of removal of fees for the seven years of primary education. This recommendation was put to effect by the second President of the Republic of Kenya in 1979 when he introduced FPE and abolished school fees in public primary schools.

A commission set up in 1988 chaired by Kamunge introduced cost-sharing in education. It recommended that the government would only subsidize education at primary level through provision of teachers. The construction of physical facilities and provision of other core necessities such as books was shifted to parents. The levies to be charged were to be determined by individual headteachers or school committees. Having no guideline eventually made primary education expensive and unaffordable to many children. As a consequence, children from poor families were forced to drop out of school.

During the 1980, international development organizations like the World Bank promoted user fees as a means for financially constrained governments to garner enough income to provide greater access to education (UNESCO, 1998). However, 1990 ushered in the era of “Education for All” (EFA). A commitment among the international development community and developing countries to universalize primary education was advocated. The United Nations embraced similar goals in 2000 by declaring Universal Primary Education as the second of

the eight millennium development goals. The push for Education for All arguably occurred for many reasons both politically and otherwise. For example, development experts cite the numerous returns to primary education including favourable economic growth effects and other positive externalities like improved democracy through higher literacy and numeracy rates. Likewise, human rights discourse upholds free and compulsory primary education as a fundamental right for all children. As a commitment, this idea has grown, so has the movement towards eliminating user fees for primary education under the premise that fees acts as a barrier to educational access.

In Kenya, the move to launch free primary education was laudable and is undoubtedly the boldest move by the government in addressing the needs of those not able to afford basic education. The fact that the programme was launched without much prior preparation is a credit to the government. It mobilized resources on an interim basis and ensured learning went on uninterrupted even before budgetary provisions were made for the programme. The government implemented the plan without carrying out a cost analysis to determine how much money each child needed. The decision to award Ksh.1, 020/- per child per year was, therefore, arbitrary (Mwaniki, 2005). It disregarded previous estimations on actual cost of primary education (Republic of Kenya, 1988). Secondly, it did not fully compensate schools which charged more than that to meet its operations expenditures. This led to schools lacking the necessary facilities for learning which in turn affected performance. It is on this score that the researcher found it necessary to carry out an investigation aimed at finding out the influence of

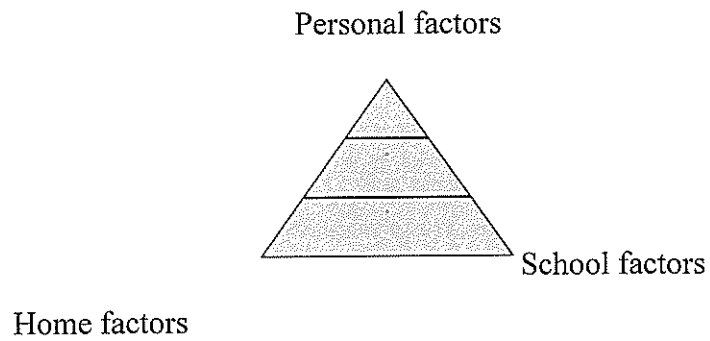
personal factors, home factors and school-based factors on academic performance of pupils after the introduction of free primary education.

1.2 *Theoretical Framework*

The theoretical framework used in this study was social learning theory put forward by Bandura, 1977. This theory explains how children learn in their environment as they interact and observe significant others. Such learning assists them in becoming socialized so that what they do is congruent with the norms and expectations of their societies.

The theory explains the importance of environment to academic achievement of pupils. The environment comprises of personal, home and school-based factors. If the environment is motivating, then children are encouraged to utilize their abilities to achieve the objective of learning. Therefore, social learning theory provides a holistic approach of considering the contribution of the environment to learning.

The theory can be illustrated using the following conceptual framework.



This shows that personal factors, home factors and school factors form a triangle that is important in determining the performance of pupils. Therefore, the researcher will make use of social learning theory to identify which personal, home and school based factors contribute most to pupils' academic performance.

1.3 *Statement of the Problem*

Quality education as measured by what a learner can do, expressed in examination scores, communication ability and interpersonal skills should be the goal of education. This goal can be achieved if children can access basic education in their formative years. The quality of education being offered should be expressed in the high scores pupils attain since their school needs are being catered for by the government.

Efforts to achieve Education for all in many under-developed countries (LDCs) such as Kenya are making headway. However, the high investment made by the governments to invest in education does not match with what goes on in primary schools. One of the major problems affecting free primary education is biting poverty. Persistent poverty is one of the constraints to the efficient delivery of the Kenyan education system. Most parents cannot provide inputs required to sustain children in school e.g. stationery, school uniforms and most importantly, food. Poverty breeds hunger and malnutrition. Hungry and malnourished children, therefore, have reduced capabilities to learn. Such children have been known to perform poorly in school.

Another problem affecting free primary education is absenteeism as a result of ill-health and lack of clean water that lead to a myriad of diseases ranging from malaria and diarrhea. There is also socio-cultural perception that educating boy

child is better than education a girl child. And further in some communities, such as the Maasai, boys are left behind herding cattle while girls are married of early. This has been a big hindrance to Education for all dreams as most pupils tend to remain at home. It is against this background that this study was to find out the effect of selected performance determinants on pupils' academic performance after the introduction of Free Primary Education.

1.4 *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to find out the influence of selected determinants of academic performance after the introduction of Free Primary Education in primary schools in Eldoret Municipality. This will be based on the use of ex-post facto research design with a view to enhancing accessibility to relevant quality education. The selected determinants were characterized by personal factors, home factors and school based factors.

1.5 *Research Objectives*

In this context, the researcher was interested in investigating the factors that influenced the academic performance of primary school pupils in Eldoret Municipality after the introduction of Free Primary Education. The following objectives were used to guide the study:

- (a) To identify personal factors which are perceived to contribute to academic performance of primary school pupils after introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality.

- (b) To determine home factors which are perceived to contribute to academic performance of primary school pupils after the introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality.
- (c) To identify school-based factors which contribute to academic performance of primary school pupils after the introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality.
- (d) To identify which factors, among the personal home and school-based factors that are a major contributor to academic performance after the introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality.
- (e) To investigate the influence of gender on academic performance of primary school pupils in Eldoret Municipality.

1.6 Basic Research Questions

In order to realize the objective of the investigations, the following basic research questions were asked:

- (a) Which personal factor is a main contributor to academic performance after the introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality?
- (b) Which home factor is the main contributor to academic performance after the introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality?
- (c) Which school-based factor is the main factor that contributes to academic performance after the introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality?
- (d) Which factor, among personal, home and school-based is perceived to be the main contributor to academic performance after the introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality?
- (e) What is the influence of gender on academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Eldoret Municipality?

1.7 Assumptions of the Study

For the sake of this research problem, the researcher made the following assumptions:

- (i) that pupils' scores in end of term examination were a reflection of their academic performance. In this case, therefore, it was a true measure of academic performance,
- (ii) that the participants would be sincere and honest in responding to the items in the questionnaire,
- (iii) that all participants would be co-operative and would provide reliable information. and
- ((iv) that there were inadequate learning materials such as textbooks, uniforms, furniture and writing materials or learners in public schools.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The issue of Education for All has generated so much interest among the governments of many less developed countries. This has led to introduction of free education. This kind of arrangement has seen the introduction of affordable education in secondary schools. Through the present study, it was hoped that the study might:

- (a) equip educational stakeholders with knowledge that, for Kenya to realize or achieve the millennium goals and vision 2030, there was a great need to heavily invest in education right from low levels of education.

- (b) add more information on the current database on Free Education for All. This will help the government in assessing and evaluating the already established programmes. Therefore, the programmes may be improved or expanded so that many people are able to access quality relevant education for an educated nation.
- (c) Serve as reference materials for researchers interested in education for all and other related areas. This will be based on the recommendations for further research.

1.9 *Scope of the Study*

The study on selected determinants on academic performance and free primary education in Eldoret Municipality was conducted between May and June, 2009. The study was based on an ex-post facto research design. Not all schools in the district or in the whole country were be used. This was to enable the researcher to derive from the sampled schools detailed data at an affordable cost in terms of time, finances and human resources. The participants of this study were obtained from class 8 pupils who were included in the sample.

1.10 *Limitations of the Study*

The researcher might have evoked anxiety among the pupils during data collection in sampled primary schools. However, in carrying out the study, the researcher assured the pupils that she was not a stranger and she was like their teachers although in a different school. The participants were assured that the researcher was not administering any kind of examination, but collecting information required to improve their learning environment.

The findings were generalized to all schools in the Municipality. It might have been appropriate to generalize the results to all primary schools in Kenya. However, this could have only be possible if the population was similar to the one used in this study.

1.11 Operational Definition of Terms

Academic Performance

The general standards of excellence which will be estimated by the scores obtained in end term examination.

Age

This referred to the number of years a participant has been alive since his or her birth.

Birth Order

This was used in this study to refer to the sequence in a family according to how they were born.

Candidate Registration

This will form one of the school-based factors which will refer to all pupils in class eight taking their examination in the same examination centre or difference centres for the purpose of enhancing academic performance.

Class Size

This will be used in this study to refer to the number of pupils in the class receiving instructions from the teachers.

Family Size

Referred to the number of siblings sharing same mother and father.

Gender

This means socially ascribed roles or activities of males and females in a given family. This refers to how the family perceives males and females and their roles.

Home factors

In this study, home factors will be operationalised to refer to family size, type of family and language spoken in homes.

Learning Resources

These are materials used by teachers and pupils to enhance good academic performance. In this study, Mathematics and English teachers will be used to represent the learning resources.

Personal Factors

In this study, personal factors will be operationalised to refer to sex, height, age and birth order.

School Factors

These refer to the learning resources, candidate registration, class size and school size.

School Size

In this study, school size will be measured in terms of the number of streams each class has in the school.

Type of family

This was used in this study to refer to the state of a pupil belonging to a monogamous family or polygamous family.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 *Introduction*

This chapter has reviewed literature that is general in nature and some which is more specific to the issue of free education. Literature review provides a critique of studies and comments of other people towards free education in Kenya. Much of the literature reviewed here was obtained from books, journals, seminar papers, newspapers, periodicals and magazines. This review was to form a basis for the present study.

2.2 *Importance of EFA in National Development*

The importance of education is articulated clearly in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1984). This recognizes the intrinsic human value of education, underpinned by strong moral and legal foundations. Where the right to education is guaranteed, people's access to and enjoyment of other rights such as development is enhanced (UNESCO, 2002).

First, the skills provided by basic education, such as being able to read and write, are valuable in their own right, as a fundamental outcome of development. Secondly, education can help displace more negative aspects of human life. For instance, free and compulsory free education at formative years will reduce child labour. Thirdly, education has a powerful role in empowering those who suffer from multiple disadvantages (UNESCO, 2002).

Rogers and Ruchlin (1991) listed four broad benefits attributed to education. These were, direct financial returns, financial options hedging options and non-market returns. The benefits are primarily of a private nature since individuals reap most, if not all of the economic returns. Direct financial returns stem from the positive correlation that most researchers find between educational attainment and earnings (Rogers & Ruchlin, 1991). Although part of this financial reward is undoubtedly due to ability, ambition and a host of socio-economic variables, no researcher has denied the positive role played by education.

Financial options refer to the fact that each level of education prior to the highest level provides an individual with the opportunity of acquiring yet additional education. This leads to reaping extra benefits attached to that education (UNESCO, 2005).

Education further provides a hedging option by increasing the probability that an individual will be able to adapt to the effects of technological change. This is by either remaining at a job and utilizing more sophisticated equipment or adapting to an entirely different job. Non-market returns result from all the do-it yourself type of work that a person can perform as a result of his education. Filing one's own Income Tax Returns and helping one's children with their home work are but two examples of such non-market activity (Rogers & Ruchlin, 1991).

Weisbrod (1998) enumerates three benefits that are primarily social. All these benefits are external to the individual, they are known as external benefits or

externalities. First, residence related benefits stemming from the physical juxtaposition of the beneficiaries and the educated individual consists of several types; those accruable to the current family and the family of the individual, those reaped by the individual neighbours, and those accruing to taxpayers at large (UNESCO, 2000).

Employment-related benefits refer to the effects of the educated individual on the overall productivity of his colleagues, in situations where production involves co-operative effort (Bishop, 1994). Societal benefits stem from the fact that literacy is a prime requisite for an intelligent citizenry, for a smooth organization of economic activity and for economic growth (Rogers & Ruchlin, 1994). Furthermore, education reduces the financial burden on society by minimizing the need for corrective and welfare services (Weisbrod, 1998).

Despite a range of methodological problems, there is a compelling body of international evidence that schooling improves productivity in rural and urban self-employment (UNESCO, 2002). Many of these benefits stem from literacy, which requires a minimum of five to six years of full-time primary education of good quality (UNESCO, 2000). Good education, also, has a positive impact on lower fertility rates, better diets and the earlier and more effective diagnosis of illness (Wako, 1995).

This micro-level evidence reveals the interconnections between the constituent parts of human development and makes a compelling contribution to the case for

investing in education. In addition, a new generation of economic growth model gives human resources a central position in increasing development returns. Defined in this way, education that is universal, attained by all, has a powerful impact in addressing social and economic barriers within a society and is central to realizing national development. Therefore, developing countries such as Kenya should invest heavily in education particularly during the formative years of a child.

2.3 *Policies on Universal Primary Education , EFA and FPE*

The move to launch free primary education was laudable and is undoubtedly the boldest move by the government in addressing the needs of those not able to afford basic education. That the programme was launched without much prior preparation is a credit to the government. The Kenyan government mobilized resources on an interim basis and ensured learning went on uninterrupted even before budgetary provisions were made for the programme. In this, however, are to be found the initial problems with the programme. The government implemented the plan without carrying out a cost analysis to determine how much money each child needed. The decision to award Ksh.1, 020 per child per year is therefore arbitrary (Mwaniki, 2005). It disregarded previous estimations (Republic of Kenya, 2003) on actual cost of primary education (Musinguzi, 2004). Secondly, and deriving from the first one, it does not fully compensate schools which charged more than that to meet its operational expenditures.

While it could be argued that schools took advantage of the cost-sharing policy to overcharge parents before the introduction of FPE, this is the case with private schools. The government needs to address the disparities. Primary schools are faced with two major problems:

- (a) the government implemented Free Primary Education without an official explanation on the fate of cost-sharing as a policy guideline,
- (b) the impact of the policy on quality of education has not been addressed, both with regard to the high enrolment which has put a strain on the resources available including classes and the number of teachers required to implement the programme (World Bank, 2004). On this score, there is need to make an evaluation on the influence of personal factors, home factors and school-based factors on pupils' academic performance after the introduction of free primary education.

The Koech Report recommended that secondary level education be regarded as part of the basic education segment (Aduda, 2003). After implementation of Free Primary Education policy, steps were taken after 2007 to make secondary school education affordable to the population. This was because those who completed primary level were disillusioned by being unable to access secondary school education. By doing this, the government never considered the teacher-pupil ratio which determines the performance of learners (Musinguzi, 2004).

2.4 *Implementation of Free Primary Education in Kenya*

In 2003, the Kenyan government introduced Free Primary Education. This entailed the abolition of tuition fees. Following this move, enrolment surged from about six million to about 7.2 million pupils, resulting in a gross enrolment rate of 104% compared with 87.6% in 2002. However, parents have the responsibility of paying examination fees and buying of uniform which hinders a number of children to access basic education.

Cost-sharing policies of the previous decade have now been understood to be a significant cause of the low quality of primary education in Kenya. Quality education is measured by the grades pupils obtain in national examination and their transition to secondary schools. The performance of public primary schools has always been below average compared to private academies. It was against this background that this study was envisaged.

Since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was written in 1948, there have been over 30 international treaties and other instruments delineating the right to education. Article 28 of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the right of the child to education on the basis of equal opportunity to make primary education compulsory and available to all. Article 7 of International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 1982, assures that there will be access to free basic education, and wherever possible and appropriate, vocational training, for all children. In 2000, the United Nations launched its

Education for All initiative based on the Dakar Framework for Action. Equal access to education is a basic right and there is growing concern that all children are not afforded equal educational opportunities. The provision of Education for All is critical, and may require proper planning and should be initiated at all levels of education with an aim of enhancing quality education.

2.5 *Pupils' Health and Academic Performance*

The past decade has seen many governments in low income countries express increased interest in incorporating a school health and nutrition component into their strategic plans to achieve Education for All. This is primarily due to the mounting body of evidence that the delivery of simple health and nutrition to school children by teachers is a cost-effective mechanism that can lead to an improvement in education outcomes (World Bank, 2004).

For instance, the government of Zambia was one of those countries that incorporating this component into their long term strategic plan, however, this required justification and guidance as to how the programme could be taken to scale and effectively monitored and evaluated. A three-year impact assessment of pilot phase activities was undertaken. The health, nutrition, learning ability and educational achievement of a cohort of children were monitored. A tool was developed that enabled teachers to deliver tests of learning ability at the classroom level allowing large numbers of children to be assessed (World Bank, 2004).

The results of this impact assessment helped convince the government to go to scale with this program and to incorporate a school health and nutrition component into their long term strategic plan. The programme is now primarily funded by government resources and is currently being implemented in five of the nine provinces in Zambia. Hence, further expansion was planned.

Malnutrition disorders affect more than 30% of school children in Kenya. The disorders affect the cognitive and the intellectual power of these children. The unhealthy feeding habits of the school children, especially lack of breakfast, affect the interaction between the school children and the teachers. An active child in class is usually the child who receives breakfast at home and is at the same time more intelligent child with good scholastic performance (Ibrahim, 2000). Therefore, in this study, there is need to assess influence of the home factors on academic performance after introduction of Free Primary Education.

2.6 *Summary*

In this chapter, it has been clearly indicated that there is a greater need for consultation among the various stakeholders and scholars in order to achieve needed satisfaction and an educated nation. The study provides a good basis for further researches on Free Primary Education and provision of quality relevant education.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 *Introduction*

This Chapter presents an in-depth procedure of how this study was undertaken to achieve the objectives. The chapter deals with the research design, and methodology approaches used in this study. They comprise geographical location of the study, population and sample, sampling procedures, instruments of data collection, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques.

3.2 *Research Design*

The nature of the variables to be investigated is important and deserves regular investigation even though the variables cannot be manipulated. Therefore, an ex-post facto research design was adopted. This is a systematic empirical inquiry where the researcher does not have direct control of independent variables. This is because their manipulations have already occurred or simply cannot be manipulated (Kerlinger, 1993). In this study, the researcher investigated the effects of personal, home and school-based factors on academic performance of primary schools pupils after the introduction of the Free Primary Education. Data collected had both qualitative and quantitative aspects.

3.3 *Geographical Location of the Study*

The study was carried out in public primary schools in Eldoret Municipality. The Municipality is located in Rift Valley Province, Kenya. It is traversed by latitude 0° 31'N and Longitude 35° 16' East (Uasin Gishu District Development Plan, 2007). The researcher preferred Eldoret Municipality because of two reasons. First, the area has been experiencing rapid growth of private academies in the recent past. This implies that most parents are taking their children to private schools other than public primary schools, especially when it is offered freely. This puts doubts on the quality of education being provided in public schools.

Secondly, the choice of Eldoret Municipality was guided by the need for maximum utilization of the available resources in terms of time, finances and human resources. This is because the area is well known to the researcher. It is important to note, at this point, that the decision to choose Eldoret Municipality among other areas in the country did not underscore the importance of the areas, which could have produced similar results.

3.4 *Variables*

There are two types of variables, namely: independent and dependent variables. These variables were considered in this study. The independent variables included personal factors, home factors and school-based factors. The effect of these variables on academic performance of pupils after the introduction of the

Free Primary Education was investigated. Therefore, academic performance was the dependent variable.

3.5 *Study Sample*

In order to achieve the set objectives of this study, the accessible population was class 8 pupils in public primary schools. This group of pupils is strategically important in relation to realization of Vision 2030 and achieving the Millennium goals as a result of the acquired knowledge and skills. Also, this group was considered because they are viewed as the potential beneficiaries of what goes on in the primary school. Therefore, a group of class 8 pupils formed the study sample.

3.6 *Sample size and Sampling Procedure*

The main factor to be considered in determining the sample size was the need to keep it manageable enough. This enabled the researcher to derive its detailed data at an affordable cost in terms of time, finances and human resources (Warwick & Lininger, 2005). Since it was practically impossible for the researcher to access all the primary schools in Kenya, only a manageable sample of accessible schools was used.

The use of different types of schools was adopted so as to provide a representative sample of the school population from Eldoret Municipality and to raise external validity of the study. Stratified random sampling was used to select primary

schools. The schools were categorized into three groups, namely, Day Schools, Boarding and Day and Boarding Primary Schools. This kind of categorization offered different learning environments.

After sorting out the different types of schools in each stratum, each school was given a number that was written on a piece of paper, folded and then placed in a container. The papers in the container were then mixed thoroughly before picking the required number of schools randomly. The same process was undertaken in every stratum. This was done to ensure uniform representation among the different types of schools. Eldoret Municipality has 18 public primary schools. Out of these, 8 primary schools were selected. This formed 44.4%, which was a high sample (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999).

Class 8 pupils were selected by the process of systematic sampling. Systematic sampling is a technique that involved selecting every n th member of a population from a randomized list of the population (Oso & Onen, 2005). The researcher was convinced that this technique was easier to implement because it was based on admission numbers given to the pupils on reporting to school.

Class lists were used in choosing pupils that constituted the study sample. Pupils whose admission numbers were ending with any of the three numbers: three, five and seven were chosen. The numbers ensured that a 30% representation of the pupils is attained regardless of class size. Using this technique, 180 pupils were selected from the randomly chosen schools to respond to the pupils'

questionnaire. This technique of selecting pupils from the selected public primary schools was used so as to systematically randomize the sample for the study.

3.7 *Data Collection Instruments*

Pupils' Questionnaire (PQ) was the main instrument of data collection. The selection of questionnaire as a tool of data collection was guided by the nature of data to be collected and objectives of the study. The questionnaire was used since the study was concerned mainly with variables that could not be directly observed.

Pupils' questionnaire was used to gather information concerning personal factors, home factors and school-based factors that affected academic performance. Section A had seven items focusing on personal factors and home factors. The pupils were required to respond by indicating against the response that agreed with his/her opinion. Section B had five items seeking to collect information on school-based factors. The participants were required to indicate by circling the response that he/she agreed with. This section consisted of both open and closed items.

Academic performance was measured by scores obtained in end term examination. The scores were obtained from the pupils' progress records. The scores were standardized for the purpose of providing a common basis for analyses and discussion. Also, this was because the selected primary schools

might have practiced different methods of grading and assessing the students in various subjects.

3.8 *Pilot Study*

The main purpose for piloting the questionnaire was, firstly, to ensure, as far as possible, that the items would detect the kind of responses the researcher intended to get and that they were acceptable in terms of their content, and they adequately covered all aspects of the unit which the researcher particularly wished to explore. Secondly, pilot study was done to provide the researcher with an opportunity to get first hand experience about the nature of the research study. Thus, would serve to prepare the researcher to gain experience so as to anticipate any problem and to be able to tackle it appropriately.

3.9 *Reliability and Validity for Questionnaire*

A pilot study was done to ascertain the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The reliability of an instrument referred to the extent to which measures gave consistent results (Seitz, Writsman & Cook, 1999). Reliability was an important concern for two reasons. First, reliability is a pre-condition for the success of the instrument in measuring what it is supposed to measure. That is, it is a pre-requisite of the validity of the instrument. Secondly, unless an instrument measures a variable relatively consistently, there is little hope of determining by means of that instrument whether changes in that variable are as a

result of other variables or are merely the reflection of the unreliability of the instrument.

To determine reliability of the instrument of data collection, the questionnaire was administered in two public primary schools in Eldoret Municipality. It should be noted that the schools did not form part of the schools chosen for the actual study. The researcher approached the school administrators to seek permission to undertake the pilot study. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher and at the same time gave instruction to the participants.

A total of 80 participants took part in the pilot study. After the researcher completed collecting data, the same process was repeated after two weeks in the same schools and using the same participants so as to get two sets of interval data that would be used to calculate reliability co-efficient. Person's Product Moment Co-relation (r) was used in the computation of the reliability co-efficient from the test-retest scores. A co-efficient of $r = 0.78$ obtained; hence the instrument was deemed reliable (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999).

Validity of an instrument or scale is the success of the scale in measuring what it sets out to measure so that differences in individual's scores can be taken as representing true differences in the variable under study (Moser & Kalton, 1998). The usual procedure in assessing content validity of a measure is to use professionals or experts in the particular field which is highly subjective (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999).

The validity of the instrument of data collection was verified with the help of lecturers in School of Education, Moi University. Also, the content validity was determined through piloting where the responses of the participants were checked against the research objectives. The research instrument was to be considered valid if the content selected and included in the questionnaire was relevant to the variable being investigated.

3.10 Data Collection Procedures

Once the questionnaires were ready, the researcher sought permission to conduct the study from the District Education Office (DEO) and the Municipal Education Office (MEO). Permission was also sought from school headteachers.

Informed consent letters were prepared and sent to various schools. The letters informed the school administrators about the objective, nature and significance of the study. In the letter, it was stated that the researcher would personally visit the schools to make further arrangements for the study. This communication alerted the administrators about the impending study so that they could discuss it and make a decision well before the commencement of the research work. As soon as the informed consent letters are dispatched, the researcher visited the schools in person to explain to the administrators and secure their support for the research effort.

The questionnaires were administered to the participants by the researcher. The participants were asked to read the instructions before responding to the items in the questionnaire. The participants were assured that their responses would be treated confidentially. Sufficient time was allowed for the participants to respond to the items accurately and at their convenient time.

3.11 *Data Analysis*

The major purpose of data analysis was to reduce the data collected into an organized, integrated and meaningful report. The collected data was coded and tabulated before using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations were used in the analysis.

3.12 *Summary*

This chapter has dealt with aspects relating to how the study was undertaken. This section on methodology, being the heart of this study, was given due attention to ensure that data collected was as accurate as possible. The sampling procedures have been explained well to show that the sample collected was not biased. Instruments of data collection were piloted to establish their reliability, whereas scholars from Moi University verified the validity. An explanation of how the collected data would be analyzed has also been stated.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 *Introduction*

The data was collected with help of questionnaires, interviews and observation schedules. The researcher collected data from 11 (eleven) primary schools. The subjects were class 8 pupils drawn from Day schools, Boarding primary schools and Day and Boarding primary schools. A total of 297 (99%) pupils were involved against the 300 that were expected.

The researcher used tables, bar graphs, pie charts to present her findings. The presented data was analysed and then rated the factors affecting the performance of pupils in primary school after the introduction of free primary education.

This chapter, therefore, reports the analyses of data pertaining to the personal factors, home factors and school factors influencing academic performance of pupils in public primary schools after the introduction of free primary education. The study was done in Eldoret Municipality, Kenya. The reporting of the results follows a consistent format: a restatement of the research questions after which the pertinent descriptive statistics and appropriate conclusions are presented. The chapter opens with the demographic description of participants involved in the study.

4.2 Demographic of the participants

The sample of this study comprised of 300 participants. The participants were class 8 pupils drawn from randomly selected primary in Eldoret municipality. Although 300 participants were involved in the study, only responses from 297 of them were analyzed. This is because three participants did not respond to all items in the questionnaire used in data collection. The demographic description of the participants is presented in Table 4.1.

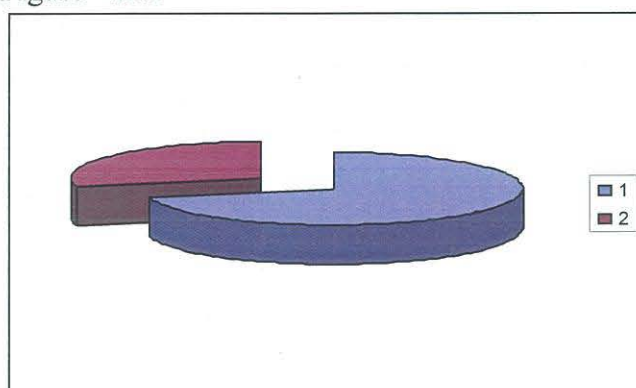
Table 4.1

Demographic Description of Participants

Type of school	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Day	79	21	100
Boarding	28	50	78
Day and Boarding	69	50	119
Total	176	121	293

From the above table, it can be observed that a total of 297 respondents were interviewed, giving a response rate of 99%. Out of this percentage, 58.7% were male and 40.3% were female as shown in figure 4.1.1.below

Figure 4.1.1



4.3 *Personal Factors and Academic Performance*

The objective of this study was to identify personal factors which were perceived to contribute most to academic performance of primary school pupils after introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality. To achieve this objective, the following research question was posed: which personal factor is perceived to be the main contributor to academic performance after the introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality? To answer this question, pupils' questionnaire was administered to the participants. The questionnaire contained four personal factors believed to contribute to academic performance from primary schools. These factors were: Sex, age, birth order and height. The participants were asked to respond to the items on these variables. The academic performances of the participants were calculated from the end of term examination records and their mean scores for the personal factors were computed. The mean scores are presented in Table 4.2.

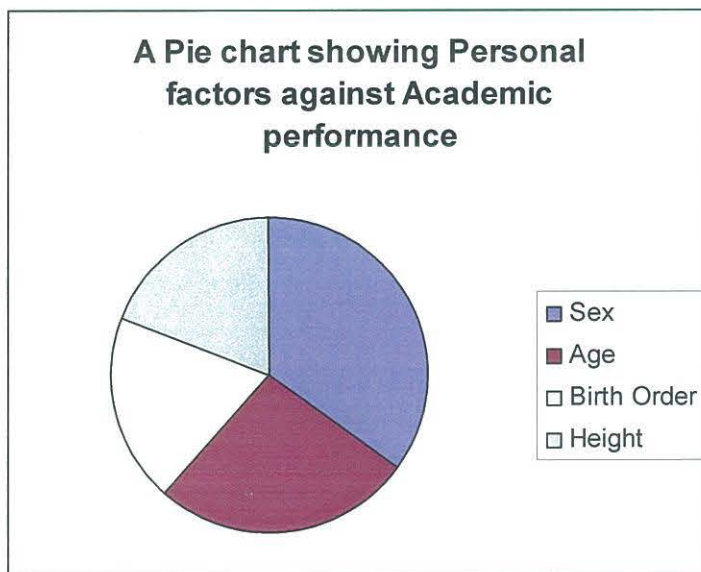
Table 4.2

Mean Scores on Personal Factors and Academic Performance

Personal Factor	Mean	S.D.
Sex	427.31	11.10
Age	324.64	14.62
Birth Order	236.33	13.30
Height	233.97	15.72

The results of descriptive statistics shown in table 4.2 indicate that sex is perceived as the main personal factor contributing positively to academic performance of pupils. It is followed by pupils' age, while pupils' height was the least contributor to academic performance. It was therefore concluded that among the personal factors, pupils' sex is leading in enhancing academic performance of learners after the introduction of free primary education, as shown in figure 4.2.1 below.

Figure 4.2.1



4.4 *Home Factors and Academic Performance*

The second objective of this study was to identify the home factor which is perceived to contribute most to academic performance of primary school pupils after introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality. To achieve this objective, the following research question was posed; which home factor is perceived to be the main contributor to academic performance after the introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality? To answer this question, participants were requested to respond to the items in Section A of the pupils' questionnaire. The participants were to give information regarding family size, type of family and language used at home. The mean scores of these variables in relation to academic performance are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

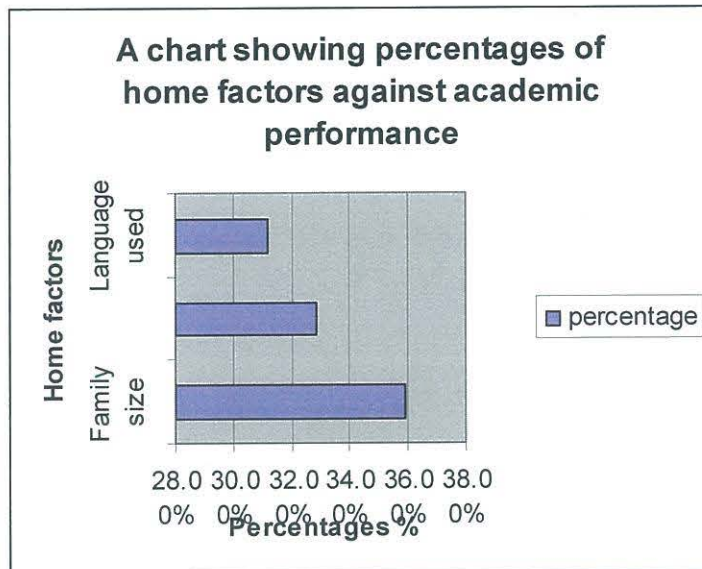
Mean scores on Home Factors and Academic Performance

Home Factor	Mean	SD
Family size	310.24	14.92
Type of family	244.68	13.67
Language used	229.71	12.98

The results of the descriptive statistics shown in Table 4.3 indicate that family size is perceived as the main home factor contributing positively to academic performance. It is followed by type of family and language used at home. It was, therefore, concluded that among home factors, family size is leading in enhancing academic performance of pupils in public primary schools (Figure 4.3.1). Pupils

from a family of a few members perform academically better than those from large families.

Figure 4.3.1



4.5 *School-based Factors and Academic Performance*

The third objective of this study was to identify school-based factor which is perceived to contribute most to academic performance of primary school pupils after introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality. To achieve this objective, the following research question was asked; which school-based factor is perceived to be the main contributor to academic performance after introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality? To answer this question, the pupils' questionnaire was administered to the participants. The participants responded to the five items in Section B of the Pupils' Questionnaire which contained four school-based factors. These factors were size of the school, class size, candidate registration and learning resources. The mean scores of the ratings are presented in Table 4.4.

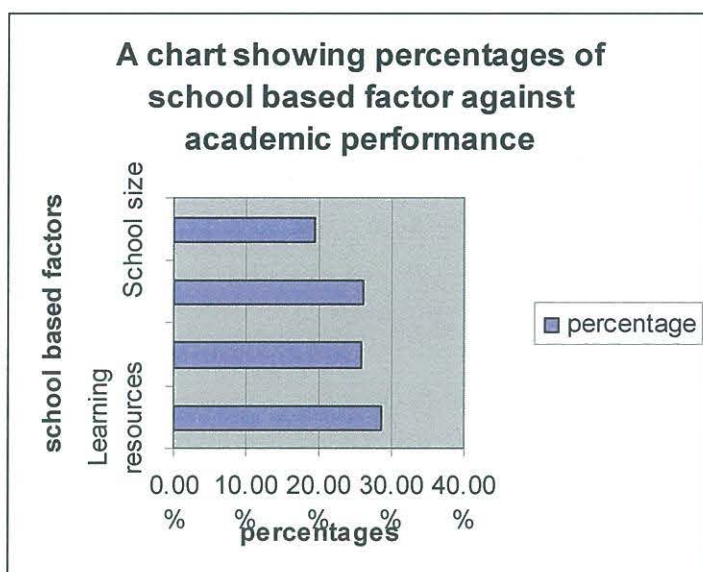
Table 4.4

Mean Scores on School-based Factors and Academic Performance

School-based Factor	Mean	SD
Learning resources	288.63	15.48
Candidate registration	281.34	13.94
Class size	249.79	14.02
School size	236.79	10.46

The results of the descriptive statistics shown in table 4.4 indicate that learning resources are perceived as the main school-based factor contributing positively to academic performance of primary school pupils. It is followed by candidate registration and class size. School size is perceived as the least contributor to

pupils' academic performance. Therefore, it was concluded that among the school-based factors, learning resources are leading in making pupils to perform well in academics as indicated in figure 4.4.1 below.



4.6 *Personal, Home and School-based Factors and Academic Performance*

The fourth objective of this study was to identify which factor, among personal, home and school-based factors is perceived to be a major contributor to academic performance after the introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality. To achieve this objective, the following research question was raised; which factor among personal, home and school-based is perceived to be the main contributor to academic performance after introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality? To answer this question, the responses of the participants were grouped according to the three variables. The mean scores in relation to academic performance of the three variables were computed. The results of the descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4.5

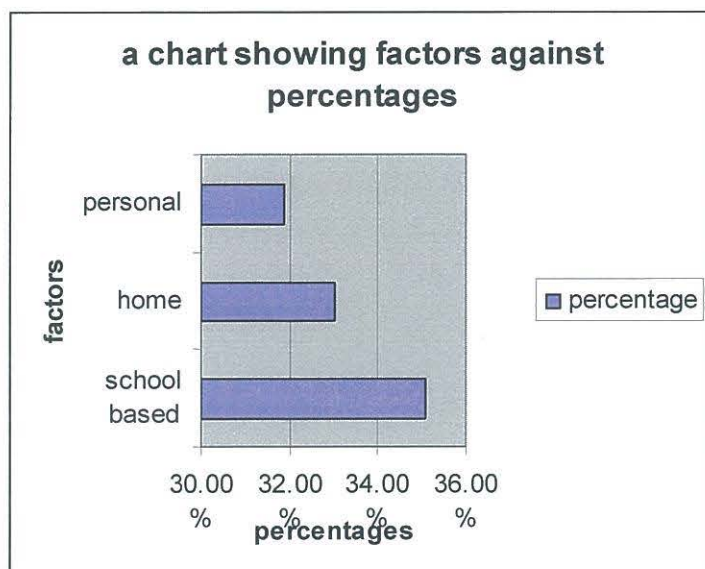
Table 4.5

Mean Scores on Contribution of Personal, Home and School-based Factors to Academic Performance

Factors	Mean	SD
School-based	289.43	15.18
Home	261.78	14.30
Personal	249.74	13.79

Table 4.5 shows the results of the descriptive results which indicate that school-based factors are perceived to be the main contributors to pupils' academic performance in public primary schools. They are followed by home factors whereas personal factors are perceived to be the least contributor to pupils'

academic performance. It was, therefore, concluded that school-based factors are leading in enhancing academic performance of pupils (Figure 4.5.1).



4.7 *Gender and Academic Performance*

The last objective of this study was to investigate the influence of gender on academic performance after the introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality. To achieve this objective the research question that was asked was; what is the influence of gender on performance of pupils in primary schools in Eldoret Municipality? To answer this question, participants were asked to indicate their gender in the pupils' questionnaire. The academic performance of the participants was calculated from the end term examination records and the mean scores for the two groups of participants were computed. The results of descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4.6.

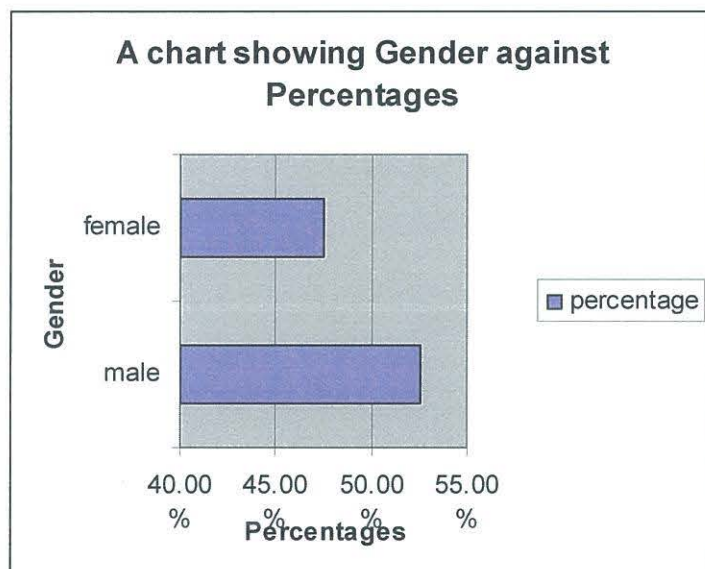
Table 4.6

Mean Scores by Gender on Academic Performance

Gender	Perception		
	No.	Mean	SD
Male	121	289.68	15.98
Female	174	261.52	16.00
Total	297	275.60	15.99

The results of the analysis in Table 4.2 indicated that male pupils are academically superior to female pupils. From this result, it was concluded that male pupils are benefiting more from Free Primary Education than female pupils, as shown in figure 4.6.1 below.

Figure 4.6.1



4.8 Conclusion

From the analyses, it was found that sex, family size and learning resources have contributed to good academic performance by pupils after the introduction of Free

Primary Education. In general, school-based factors were discovered to be a major contributor to good academic performance. Lastly, male pupils are academically superior to female pupils

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Overview

This chapter discusses the findings of this study. The findings are discussed under the following subheadings: personal factors, home factors and school-based factors and academic performance, gender and pupils' academic performance. The chapter opens with a summary of the findings of this study. It ends with conclusions, recommendations to policy makers and suggestions for further research.

5.2 *Summary of the Findings*

This study was undertaken in Eldoret Municipality. From the analysis of the participants' responses, it was found that sex, family size and learning resources were the factors that enhanced good academic performance of pupils. Also, it was perceived that school-based factors contribute to good performance of the pupils. In addition, male pupils are more academically endowed than their female counterparts.

5.3 *Personal Factors and Academic Performance*

The first research question was; which personal factor is perceived to be the main contributor to academic performance after the introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality? Analysis of the participants' responses revealed that sex was a major contributor to enhanced performance.

This finding can be attributed to the fact that in some African communities, there are chores/domestic responsibilities that are meant for boys and for the girls. This has led to role stereotyping where girls spend most of their time doing domestic work (Ongeti, 2002). These confines are based on the postulation that a very educated girl will have lower chances of getting married. When girls are denied the opportunity to learn, they become vulnerable to many other vices as parents prepare them for marriage (Rose & Tembon, 1997).

In some communities, immediately a girl-child undergoes initiation, it is the responsibility of the parent to get her a fiancé. This implies that the girl has to find more time to understand the person at the expense of going to school. Therefore, this finding was in agreement with what FAWE, 2001, established.

5.4 *Home Factors and Academic Performance*

The second research question was; which home factor is perceived to be the main contribution to academic performance after the introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality? The main reason for analyzing responses of the participants was to determine the home factor which is a major contributor to good academic performance in primary schools. The results obtained from the analysis revealed that family size is a major cause of good academic performance among the home factors.

The finding of this study indicated that large families have to spend much of the upbringing of the families leaving very little funds to be channeled to the education of the siblings. This condition is worsened by the prevailing poverty conditions. Poverty conditions have a negative impact on academic performance (UNICEF, 1998). However, small family size is characterized by the working people. Therefore, they have saved for their children's education. They are capable of providing learning resources for their siblings (Ongeti, 2002).

5.5 *School-based Factors and Academic Performance*

The third research question was; which school-based factor is perceived to be the main contributor to academic performance after the introduction of Free Primary Education in Eldoret Municipality? Analysis of the scored responses of the participants showed that learning resources in school was a major contributor to good academic performance of primary school pupils.

The finding was in agreement with what Heinemann (1994) and Muga (1997) found in their studies. The studies revealed that availability of textbooks and reading materials raised the quality of learning activities and thus improved pupils' academic performance. For instance, in Uganda, a study by Heinemann (1994) on availability of textbooks and its influence on performance in primary schools found a strong influence on performance in English.

Research has revealed that there is a positive impact of instructional materials on learners and especially those materials that are related to reading and writing

(B.E.R., 1985). The implication is that textbooks in classrooms raise academic achievement of learners. In Uganda, a study was done to count the number of textbooks and readers available in the lowest and highest-grade levels in 67 primary schools. It was revealed that textbooks availability strongly influenced achievement in English, dwarfing the effects of the child's social class (Heyneman, 1994).

5.6 Gender and Academic Performance

The first research question was; what is the influence of gender on academic performance of pupils in Eldoret Municipality? To get an answer to this question empirically, participants indicated their gender on the pupils' questionnaire. Analysis of the participants' responses revealed that male pupils were academically superior to female pupils.

The finding was in line with the findings of the other studies: FAWE, 2001, Leah, 2003 and Okwany, 2003. Cases of girls performing academically less ably than their male counterparts in examinations were reported in all the studies. This can be explained by the fact that girls in school face numerous hindrances in accessing quality education with several factors being identified as barriers to their education. These factors are categorized into socio-cultural, economic and institutional barriers, collectively fitting into supply and demand factors.

5.7 *Conclusions*

In view of the findings of the study, the following conclusions have been drawn:

First, personal factors are important determinants of academic performance. Pupils from communities that still uphold certain cultural beliefs such as early marriage and female circumcision may lack the opportunity to advance in education. For this reason, academic performance of primary school girls is likely to suffer setbacks arising from her disadvantaged family background.

The need to change this situation is exceedingly compelling. This is because a significant population in Eldoret Municipality is less empowered. As a result, their interests need to be given a priority in the education planning process in the country. The government should realize that it has a duty to provide quality relevant education for various social groups that do not have access to primary education.

Secondly, long term programmes that will encourage parents to provide a conducive environment that stimulates the learning interest of pupils should be planned. Towards achieving this goal, there is need to re-emphasize the fact that government programmes should establish activities to empower parents academically. For instance, the government should sensitize parents on the wise use of youth and female funds that are being provided by the government so as to invest in activities that will empower them meet the needs of their children's education.

5.8 *Recommendations to Policy Makers*

From the research findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made to policy makers in Kenya, in order to realize the success of Free Primary Education in the country.

The government of Kenya should provide activities and programmes geared towards improving the parents' understanding the importance of investing in children's education. This will enable the family and the nation at large to enjoy the benefits that accrue from educating a child. Therefore, the government should come up with sensitization programmes regarding provision of more learning resources in schools.

Lastly, primary schools should intensively guide and counsel pupils in order to realize the importance of education, both to the society and the nation at large. Likewise, a comprehensive plan of services for the learners should be enacted to reduce the unique stressors, which make pupils vulnerable to difficulties with social and emotional adjustment.

5.9 *Suggestions for further study*

There are important issues that this study was unable to address due to its scope. From the research findings and conclusions drawn, there are certain aspects of academic performance that the researcher felt need some further investigations. In view of this, the following are some of the areas that could be considered for further research:

1. A similar study should be replicated in other districts in Kenya.
2. A similar study involving economic and socio-cultural factors influencing academic performance should be carried out.
3. A comparative study should be carried out to determine the difference in academic performance of pupils before and after the introduction of Free Primary Education.
4. A comparative study should be carried out to find out why there exists a difference in academic performance of pupils in private academies and those in public schools

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TIME SCHEDULE

This research was planned to take place as shown below:

ACTIVITY	DATE
Review of literature and writing proposal.	21 st May – 31 st May, 2009
Handing in the Proposal to the Supervisor	3 rd June, 2009
Correction of the Proposal	21 st June, 2009
Preparation of instruments, preparation of questionnaire, revision, modification and finalizing questionnaire	25 th June – 1 st July, 2009
Distribution of Instruments	3 rd July, 2009
Data Collection, assembling of Questionnaires for data analysis	17 th - 14 th July, 2009
Data analysis	15 th - 30 th July, 2009
Writing of the report	1 st – 6 th August, 2009
Typing of the report	7 th – 8 th August, 2009
Submission of the report	12 th August, 2009

BUDGET PROPOSAL

S/NO.	ITEM DESCRIPTION	COST PER UNIT (KSH.)	TOTAL COST (KSH.)
1.	Stationery (ruled paper 1 ream)	350	350
2.	Eraser	25	25
3.	Typing the Proposal	1050	1050
4.	Binding the Proposal	70	70
5.	Travelling and subsistence for 15 days	13000	13000
6.	Typing the Report	1700	1700
7.	Binding the Project	1500	1500
8	Miscellaneous	<u>5000</u>	<u>5000</u>
TOTAL		<u>22,696</u>	<u>22,696</u>



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Office of the Director

WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Sir/Madam,

INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR MS/MRS/MR.....

REG. #.....

Above named is our student in the Institute of Open and Distance Learning (IODL),
pursuing a Diploma/Bachelors degree in Education.

He wishes to carry out a research in your Organization on:

Research is a requirement for the Award of a Diploma/Bachelors degree in Education.

Assistance accorded to him/her regarding research will be highly appreciated.

Faithfully,

VEZI JOSEPH
IN-SERVICE

APPENDIX 1: PUPILS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

Dear pupil,

Below are some questions addressed to you. You are kindly requested to respond to them as genuinely as possible. There are not wrong or right answers. Your co-operation in answering these questions will be highly appreciated. Note that the answers you will give will be kept confidentially and they will be used for the purpose of this research only. Do not indicate your name anywhere on this questionnaire.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL FORM

Please read each statement or question carefully. Respond by indicating the response that corresponds to your most appropriate choice.

1. Indicate your gender.
(a) Male (b) Female
2. How old are you? _____ Years.
3. What is your birth order?
(A) First Born
(B) Middle Born
(C) Last born
(D) Only child
4. What is your height? _____ Feet.
5. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
Brothers _____
Sisters _____
6. Do you share the same mother with your brothers and/or sisters?
Yes No
7. What language do you normally use at home?
(A) Mother tongue only
(B) Mother tongue and Kiswahili
(C) Kiswahili only
(D) Kiswahili and English
(E) English only.

SECTION B: ACADEMIC MATTERS

Please select the response that corresponds to your feelings about the following statements that relate to academic matters.

8. How many streams does your class have?

- (A) one
- (B) two
- (C) three
- (D) four
- (E) other _____ (Specify)

9. How many pupils are in your stream? _____

10. Will all of you sit for your national examination from this school?

- (A) Yes (B) No.

11. If your response in item 10 above in NO, explain your answer.

12. How many pupils share Mathematics and English textbooks in your class?

END

Thank you.