

**POVERTY AND CHILDREN ACADEMIC PROGRESS:
A CASE STUDY OF JERA ZONE, SIHAY DIVISION
UGENYA DISTRICT-KENYA**

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO INSTITUTE OF OPEN AND
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UNIVERSITY**

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DECLARATION

I Ochieng Charles Opondo do hereby declare that this is my own original production and that it has never been submitted to any institution for the award of a degree or any other award.

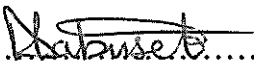
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APPROVAL

This report is resulting from the researcher's efforts on **Poverty and children academic progress in Jera Zone, Sihay division Ugenya district Kenya** was conducted under my supervision with my approval; it is now ready for submission to the academic board for the award of a bachelor's degree in education of Kampala International University.

Signature...  Date. 14/04/2011

Mrs. TALIGOOOLA DEBORAH NABUSETA
SUPERVISOR

DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to my beloved wife Hellen, my children Shadrach, Dickens and my mother Jane Atieno for their tireless effort and support they gave me throughout the period of my studies which without them this research report would not have seen the light of this world.

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First and foremost I would like to thank God for enabling me to go through this process successfully.

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor Mrs. Taligoola Deborah for her professional and expertise guidance as she took me through the research process.

Last but not least I want to highly thank my wife, Helen, Children Shadrack and Dickens, and my mother Jane for their moral and economic support during this process.

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to examine the effect of poverty on the academic progress of children in Jera Zone, Sihay Division, Ugenya district Kenya. Some schools in Jera Zone were selected for this research and some children from these schools were sampled and given questionnaires to fill. The researcher based his selection on the previous examination done by these children in each class, four pupils were chosen among the top five and four from among the bottom five in the exam. The researcher was concerned with the children's parents education, how their parents respond to payment of school levies, checking of books by parents, administering of punishment, who the domestic chores, whether they complete their homework or not, how often they fell sick, whether they access adequate food or not, whether they attended nursery school or not and their literacy.

The finding was that 63% of those whose fathers have education above primary and 62% whose mothers have the same perform very well in class. 66% of those who are rarely sent home for school fees performed well also. 63% of those whose parents check their books, 59% of those who complete their home work, 57% of those who rarely fall sick perform well in school. 67% who did not attend nursery school performed very poorly in class.

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary education
SES	Socio-Economic Status
NGO	Non-Governmental organization
PPS	Public Primary school
USA	United States of America
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
LD	Learning disabilities

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Poverty	The state of being poor
Cycle of poverty	Poverty that is passed over and over from one generation to another
Division	An administration unit or area
District	An administration area larger than a division
Trauma	An unpleasant experience that causes one distress or anxiety
Respondents	A person who answers questions especially in a survey
Disparity	Difference
Phenomenon	A natural occurrence
Cognitive	Related to the brain
Pediatrics	The branch of medicine concerned with children and their illness.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

Poverty is an issue that more and more of our nation's children are coming face to face with. The price that children of poverty must pay is unbelievably high. Each year, increasing numbers of children are entering schools with needs from circumstances such as poverty that schools are not prepared to meet. This paper will examine the effects of poverty on teaching and learning. Poverty as a risk factor will be discussed as will a number of the many challenges that threaten the learning of children of poverty as reflected in Kenya Certificate of primary Education (KCPE) results.

1.1 Background of the study

Today, increased number of children grows up in poverty. In Kenya for example 50% of people live below poverty line (CIA- the World Fact Book). There is a close relationship between socio-economic status (SES) and school performance. For example it is well documented that high SES students of all ethnic groups show higher average levels of achievement on test scores, receive better grades, and stay longer in school than low – SES students (Alwin and Thornton, 1984; Goleman, 1985; White, 1982) in Anita E Woolfolk (1995:161).

What are the effects of low –SES poverty that might explain the lower school achievement of these low –SES students? Many factors maintain a circle of poverty. Poor health care, for mother and child, limited resources, family stress, interruptions in schooling, discrimination and other factors lead to school failures (Anita E. Woolfolk 1995; 162)

1.2 Statement of the problem

The problem to be investigated in this study is the effects of poverty in pupils academic progress in Jera Zone, Sihay division, Ugenya district, Kenya.

For along time now, pupils from public schools in Kenya have not been competing favorably with their counterparts from private schools especially in KCPE. This was evident once again in 2009 KCPE results released on 28th December 2009 (Daily Nation 29th December 2009).

Poverty could be the probable cause of this achievement gap: like in the case of Nairobi province, most PPS are attended by children from low –SES who can not afford the exorbitant school fee paid in private schools. Private schools are mainly attended by children from the high SES. According to Slavin (1998), children from poverty start out in life at a disadvantage. Their mothers may have no or inadequate pre-natal care, they may have insufficient early health care.

If the parents are fortunate to have jobs, affordable day care may be of poor quality. Additionally, poor children do not have the same kind of experiences that children of other social classes do. The experiences they miss out on are those that could help in the development of skills and academic achievement (Karen M. Pellino; 2007).

This achievement gap may be closed by providing or availing at school the things or facilities that the children from low-SES may miss out home such as computers, visit to Zoos and Museums, pre-school programs, relevant literature and educational reading materials, interaction with educated role models, guidance and counseling and so on.

According to Eva L. Essa (2003:7), in pre-school programs, children will benefit from experiences that they may not receive at home; for instance, participating in group activities, playing with groups of age mates, or learning specific concepts from specially trained teachers.

It is important to find out which aspect of poverty affect the academic progress of most learners otherwise it would further widen the gap between the rich and the poor as well as not enabling our country to achieve its dream to be industrialized by 2030.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to determine which aspect of poverty may be most responsible for low academic progress and achievement in Jera zone, Sihay division, Ugenya district.

1.4 Objectives of the study

1.4.1 General objective

The general objective of this study is to investigate the impact of poverty related issues on the academic progress of learners in Jera zone, Sihay Division, Ugenya district.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

- i. To investigate the impact of the home environment on learners academic progress
- ii. To find out the influence of emotional trauma on academic progress of learners.
- iii. To assess the relationship between health and nutrition and academic progress of learners.
- iv. To find out the influence of poverty on child readiness for school and learning

1.5 Research questions

- i. Does the home environment have effect on learner's academic progress?
- ii. How does emotional trauma affect academic progress of learners?
- iii. What is the relationship between health and nutrition and academic progress of learners?
- iv. Does poverty affect child readiness for school?

1.6 Scope of the study

The study was conducted in selected primary schools in Jera Zone in Sihay division, Ugenya district, Kenya. It was concerned with the effects of poverty related issues such as home environment, emotional trauma, health and nutrition and school entry on pupils academic progress. The study started in August 2010 and ended in November 2010.

1.7 Significance of the study

Good education is often the only means of breaking the circle of poverty of poor children (Karen M Pellino, 2007). It is only through good education that the government and the society at large can get educated and qualified personnel to take up jobs and build the nation.

The research was of great help to the government, Non-Governmental organizations (NGO's), Teachers as well as the children.

The government formulated and initiated workable policies and programmes which helped alleviate poverty as well as those which helped learners who are victims of poverty to achieve their best in education.

NGO's have become important stakeholders in funding projects related to poverty eradication as well as those meant to improve education. This research exposed further those areas such NGOs should focus on.

This research helped teachers in guiding and counseling the learners as well as diagnosing causes of poor academic performance.

Children would be the greatest beneficiary of this research. The finding of this research would be used in directing necessary effort to improve the academic progress.

1.8 Limitations of the study

This area highlights the conditions or weaknesses beyond the researcher's control that restricted the researcher's work.

First and foremost, insufficient funds forced the researcher to select a small area, Jera Zone instead of the larger Ugenya district.

Limited time was another limitation to discharge his duty as a teacher simultaneously.

The respondents level of education made the researcher to focus on learners in class four, upwards since learners in lower primary could not be able to answer the questionnaires on their own.

Last but not least, rainy weather posed a big threat on movement to the selected schools.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Every year when the results of the Kenya Certificate of Primary education (KCPE) exams are released, it has revealed a very wide achievement gap between pupils in public primary schools and those in private schools.

One thing which is clear about these two groups of pupils is the disparity that exists between their socio-economic backgrounds of their homes which naturally make them end up in such schools. Mostly learners in public primary schools come from the low income earning families otherwise called the poor while those in private primary schools come from families endowed with wealth.

It is also clear that most of public primary schools can not compete with private schools in terms of facilities, staffing and other resources. Learners in private primary schools are advantaged in terms of the above aspects since they are usually sufficient compared to those in public primary schools which find it very difficult to provide for them.

This may therefore imply that there is a relationship between poverty or low income and academic progress of children.

Theoretical framework of the study

Some theories which have been developed to explain the relationship that exist between poverty and children are theory of cycle of poverty and the culture of poverty theory.

The cycle of poverty theory was developed by Dr. Ruby K Payne. According to him, the cycle of poverty is a phenomenon where poor families become trapped in poverty for at least three generations. These families have either limited or no resources. There are many disadvantages that collectively work in circular process making it virtually impossible for individuals to break the circle. This occurs when the poor do not have the resources necessary to get out of poverty such as financial capital, education or connections.

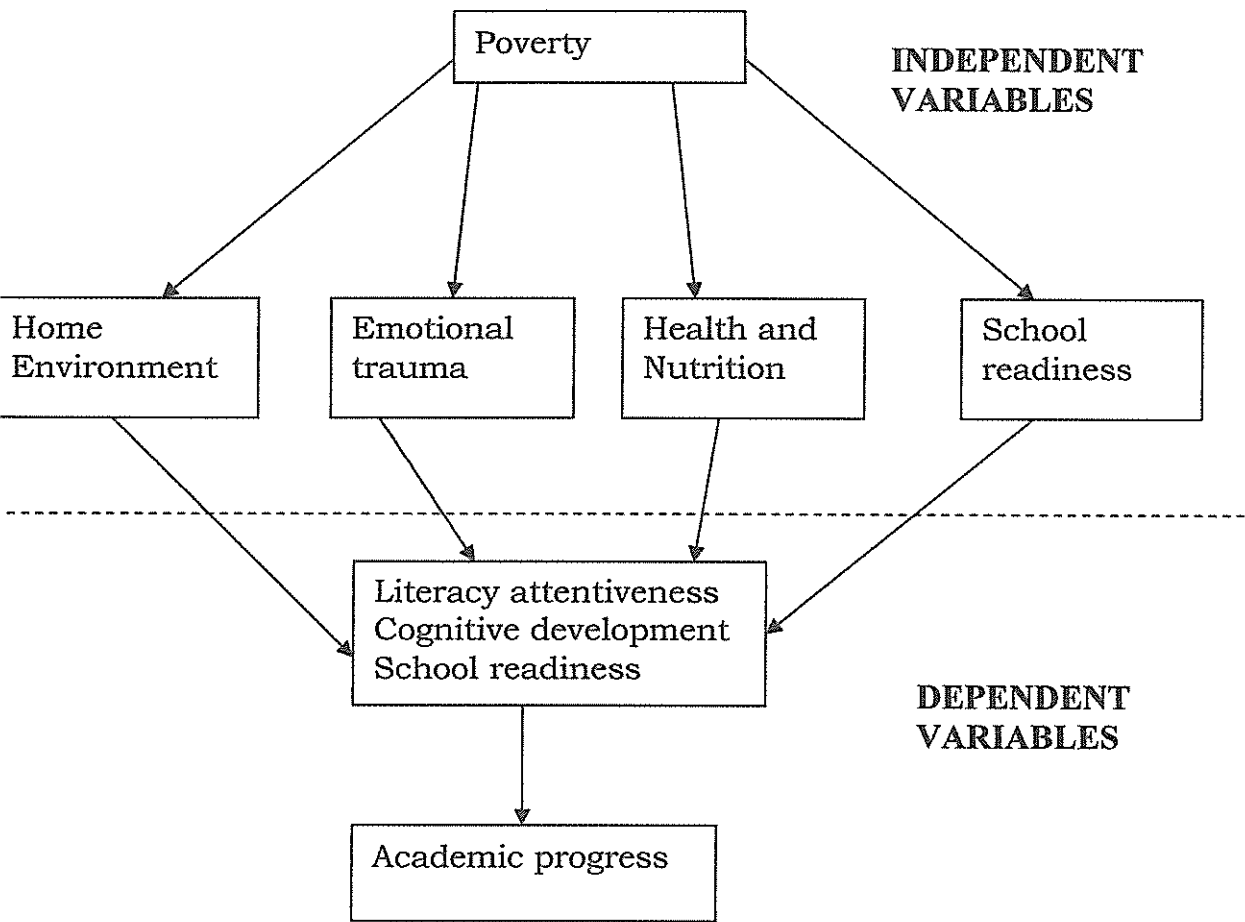
The culture of poverty theory was also developed by Payne in her book **a framework for understanding poverty**. In this book she explains how there is a class system in United States of America (USA) where there is a wealthy upper class, a middle class and the working poor class. These classes each has its own set of rules and values which differ from each other. Fayne describes the rules and how they affect the poor; for example time is something which is treated differently by the poor; they generally do not plan a head but simply live in the moment which keeps them from saving money which will help their children escape poverty.

In a nutshell, the two theories shows that low SES background affect children academic progress. They also can explain why such learners will only end up in public primary schools where do not access quality education (The cycle of poverty), I can conclude that pupils academic progress depend on factors such as health, nutrition, parents interest in education, parental education and emotional stability of the child all of which are influenced by poverty.

Conceptual framework

In order to enable the reader of this work see the relationship between poverty and academic progress at a glance. The researcher illustrates the relationship diagrammatically as below:

FIGURE 1: SHOWING CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



Source: Field data

The impact of home environment on academic progress of learners

According to study done by Susan Mayer, Associate professor in the Irving B Harris Graduate school pf Public Policy studies in USA, increasing family income alone is not enough to break the cycle of poverty; she found that children who were ahead in school were usually those who had been read to as children but she also found that reading to one’s child was a value that parents had based on their interest (Cycle of poverty).

As pointed out by the theory of culture of poverty, most of parents of low income have little interest in the education of their children especially due to frustration caused by poverty. According to Garlett (1993), proactive teachers will make certain that parents know the curriculum being taught, and the methods being used to teach; the class rules and regulations including the consequences of breaking such rules and the value that the uniqueness of each child adds to the classroom. If parents get interested in those aspects, it will help improve the learners self esteem (Rick McCone et al, 1996:76).

According to Anita E Woolfolk (1998:75), higher self-esteem is related to more favorable attitude towards school, more positive behavior in class room and greater popularity with other students (Cauley and Tyler, 1989; Mefcalfe;1981; Reynolds, 1980).

Literacy as of these learners is another aspect of academic progress affected by poverty. According to illustrated Oxford Dictionary, literacy is the ability to read; it includes oral language as well as reading and writing (Anita E. Woolfolk, 1998:57).

Especially in early years, home experiences are central in the development of language and literacy (Roskos and Neuman, 1993; Snow, 1993; Whitehurst of education (1999:7).

According to US Department of education (1999:7) in the highest poverty, schools, a whopping 68% of fourth-graders fail to reach the basic level of achievement. Only one in ten fourth graders at these schools can read at the proficient level, the ideal goal for all students.

According to National Dropout Prevention Centre and Network (2006), many at risk students which include those from poverty backgrounds, read below grade level, which contribute to their lack of academic achievement.

However this research has not explained the factors in low-income families that contribute to this; but there is also need to know why some learners from such families still excel in literacy.

The level of parents education also affect the learners academic progress. This could be yet another result of the cycle of poverty. Majority of parents who do not get educated that state as a result of poverty their own and their parents (cycle of poverty).

A study by Canadian pediatric society (2007:4) on the impact of poverty on educational outcome for children, revealed socio-economic disadvantages and other risk factors that are associated with poverty (for example lower parental education) have a negative effect on cognitive development and academic achievement but smaller effect on behavior and inconsistent effect on socio-economic outcomes. Could this be same phenomenon in Jera zone?

Poverty and learners emotional trauma

One of the social issues facing children of poverty is emotional trauma. Trauma can be said to be an emotional shock having a deep, often lasting affect upon the personality according to the New International Webster's comprehensive Dictionary of English Language.

Emotional trauma can also be referred to as emotional stress- students function less effectively when they are under stress and many low (SES) families live in chronically stressful conditions (McLoyd, 1998), as a result students from lower-income families show higher than average rates of depression and other emotional problems (Caspi et al; 2000; Seaton et all, 1999) in Ormr (2003;132).

Lack of emotional nurturing can lead to feelings of alienation, Inadequacy, depression and anxiety. It can also result to loss of self esteem.

Emotional draining and negative self status can literally zap the motivation to learn out of children (Karen M. Pellin, 2007:3).

Health and nutrition and academic progress

Nutrition is a process by which living organisms assimilate food and uses it for growth and for replacement of tissues. Some lower income families cannot afford nutritional meals for their children. Poor nutrition in the earlier development years is associated with lower IQ scores. It is also associated with poorer attention and memory, impaired learning ability and lower school achievement (D'Amato et al, 1992: LS Miller, 1995).

Poor nutrition can influence school achievement both directly for instance by hampering early brain development and indirectly for instance by leaving children listless and inattentive in class (Sigman and Whaley, 1998: Thompson and Nelson, 2001) in Ormond (2003:32).

Allen Burez in his Attention Deficit Disorder and Hyperactivity, writes that Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Learning disability (LD) are caused by nutrition deficiencies, food and chemical allergies to food additives, preservatives, chemicals or inhalants. He adds that to deal with this illness, all these imbalances have to be addressed such as calcium, magnesium, iodine, iron and zinc.

According to him, Good nutrition during pregnancy and in the early years of the child's life may help in preventing ADD. These aspects of nutrition are not usually looked into in the low SES. The result is exposing their children to poor academic progress.

Poverty and school readiness

School readiness reflects a child's ability to succeed both academically and socially in a school environment. It requires physical well-being and appropriate motor development, emotional health and positive approach to new experiences, age-appropriate general knowledge and cognitive skills, age social knowledge and competence and age-appropriate language skills (Canadian Pediatric Society, 2007:3).

School readiness should not be considered with regard to school entry only but it should be considered at all levels as the student approaches any new learning experiences or activities.

According to Canadian Paediatric society (2007:3), it is well documented that poverty decreases a child's readiness for school through aspects of health, home life, schooling and neighborhood. Six related factors are known to impact child development in general and school readiness in particular. They are the incidence of poverty; the timing of poverty-age of the child; community characteristics such as concentration of poverty.

Crime in the neighborhood and school characteristics and the impact that poverty has on the child's social network, parents, relatives and neighbors; Children from low income families often do not receive the stimulation and do not learn the social skills required to prepare them for school.

On the other hand, Elkind in Earl J Ogletree (1990) and others have diagnosed the origin of ADD with forcing the premature child to; learn narrow categories of intellectual information; be separate from its parents, adapt to an unfamiliar environment-teachers and children and learn school rules and regulation. As a result, the child is overwhelmed by many demands made on him. To the contrary, this culture is common with families of

high SES. There is need for a research to find out why children from high SES are taken to school prematurely but still end up performing better academically.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the procedures to be used by the researcher in conducting the research. It contains the population targeted by the study, sample and sampling techniques, research design, research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis.

3.1 Research design

A qualitative and quantitative approach was used in this study to gather information about poverty and academic progress of learners and to analyze the information gathered.

3.2 Study area and population

The study was undertaken in Jera Zone, Ugenya district in Kenya to investigate on poverty and academic achievement of learners in selected primary schools.

3.3 Sample and sampling techniques

The researcher selected on ten primary schools which respondents 50% of the primary schools in Jera Zone. 50% was able to give a more reliable result. Cluster technique of sampling was used so as to ensure proper and even distribution of respondents.

3.4 Sampling procedure

Out of the four bases within Jera Zone namely: Jera base, Nyamsenda, Sihay and Anyiko with five, four and six schools respectively

In Jera base, the researcher picked Relak, Jera and Lela primary schools. In Nyamsenda base, Uchola and Udira Kamrembo were picked. In Sihay base, Sihay and Nyangungu primary schools were picked while in Anyiko base, Ulumba, Anyiko and Muhuwayo primary schools were picked at random.

3.5 Research instruments/tools

The researcher used the questionnaire to conduct the study. The questionnaires were meant for the pupils only. Interview technique was also used where it was necessary.

3.6 Data collection procedure

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the institute of study (CODL), which was presented to primary schools and permission was granted. The researcher then gathered information from the respondents using questionnaires to conduct interviews.

3.7 Statistical treatment of data

The data collected was compiled, analyzed, interpreted and inferences drawn based on the finding. The analysis and presentation of data was done by descriptive statistics.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This research on poverty and academic progress of learners is aimed at finding out how learner's academic progress is influenced by aspects of poverty. The following objectives guided the study:-

- i. To investigate the impact of the home environment on learners academic progress
- ii. To find out the influence of emotional trauma on academic progress of learners.
- iii. To assess the relationship between health and nutrition and academic progress of learners.
- iv. To find out the influence of poverty on child readiness for school and learning

This chapter analyses the data collected from the respondents (Pupils) followed by a brief discussion on the same.

A total of 100 questionnaires were sent out and all were received back, however 13 of them were considered spoilt as the respondents did not indicate their position, which was the indicator of academic progress.

Table 1: Responses to questionnaires

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Spoilt	13	13
Unresponded	0	0
Correct responses	87	87
Total	100	100

Source: Field data

Table 1 showing how questionnaires were responded to;

Due to the spoilt questionnaires, the 87 correctly answered questionnaires were used for analysis.

Table 2: Distribution of questionnaires

Schools	Questionnaires
Ralak	10
Jera	10
Lela	10
Uchola	10
Udira Kamrembo	10
Sihay	10
Nyang'ungu	10
Muhwayo	10
Anyiko	10
Uluma	10
Total	100

Source: Field data

Table 2 shows that questionnaires were distributed equally among the ten selected schools.

4.1 The impact of home environment on academic progress of learners

According to Roskos et al, home experiences are central to the development of language and literacy. In order to discover the effect of home environment on academic progress of children, the researcher has focused on parents level of education, children attendance of school and parents monitoring off their children academic progress.

4.1.1 Poverty, parent's level of education and children academic progress

The effects of parents level of education on children academic progress was assessed by looking into the effects of father's level of education and that of mother's education on children academic progress.

Table 3: Father's level of education

Response	Rank	Frequency	Percentages
None	1-5	0	4
	Last 5	4	
Primary	1-5	22	40
	Last 5	18	
Above primary	1-5	27	43
	Last 5	16	
Spoilt		13	13
Total		100	100

Source: Field data

According to table3, 4 out of 100 respondents forming 4%, have fathers with no education at all. 100% of these respondents got the last five positions in their classes.

40 out of 100 respondents forming 40%, have fathers with primary education, 22 (55%) of them got the first five position in class while 18 (45%) of them got the last five positions in the class.

Table 4: Mothers level of education

Response	Rank	Frequency	Percentages
None	1-5	1	8
	Last 5	7	
Primary	1-5	27	44
	Last 5	17	
Above primary	1-5	21	34
	Last 5	13	
unanswered		1	1
spoilt		13	13
Total		100	100

Source: Field data

Table 4 shows that 44 out of 100 respondents have mothers with primary education, 27(61%) of them got the first five positions in their classes while 17 of them got the last five positions. Here, there is an indication that parents education begins to influence positively their children academic progress.

Table 3 shows that 43 out 100 respondents forming 43%, have fathers with education above primary (secondary and above). 27(63%) of them got the first five positions in their classes while 16 of them got the last five positions in their classes. The trend is similar when it comes to the education of the mothers as shown in table 4. 34 out of 100 respondents forming 34% have mothers with education above primary. 21 (62%) of them got the first five positions in their class while 13 (38) of them got the last five positions in their classes.

Table 4 also shows that 8 out of 100 respondents forming 8% have mothers without any education. 7(87%) of them got the last five positions. Only 1(13%) of them managed to fall in the first five positions of the class. Both table 3 and table 4 indicates that a larger percentage of those respondents whose parents had no education performed poorly in class.

4.1.2 Children attendance of school

The children attendance of school was assessed by the researcher by looking into how many times children are sent home for school levies.

Table 5: The number of times children are sent home for school levies

Response	Rank	Frequency	Percentages
Always	1-5	5	20
	Last 5	15	
Rarely	1-5	44	67
	Last 5	23	
Spoilt		13	13
Total			100

Source: Field data

Table 5 shows that 20 out of 100 respondents forming 20%, have parents who do not willingly pay school levies and they have to be sent home always whenever the same is required. This reflects negative attitude to education by these parents. 15(75%) of these respondents got the last five positions in their class while only 5 of them managed to get the first five positions in class.

67 out of 100 respondents forming 67% are rarely sent home for school levies hence they have enough time at school. 44(66%) of them got the first five positions in their classes while 23 got the last five positions in their classes.

13 out of 100 respondents forming 13% have their questionnaires notified.

4.1.3 Parents monitoring of their children on academic progress

In order to assess parents monitoring of their children academic progress. The research tried to look at the checking of children exercise books when they are at home.

Table 6: Checking of books by parents

Response	Rank	Frequency	Percentages
Yes	1-5	37	59
	Last 5	22	
No	1-5	12	28
	Last 5	16	
Spoilt		13	13
Total			100

Source: Field data

Table 6 shows that 59 out of 100 respondents have their books checked by their parents when they are at home. 37 of them got the first five positions in the class while 22(37%) of them got the last five position. This indicates that the majority of the respondents whose parents checked their books performed better than those whose parents did not. 28 out of 100 respondents forming 28% did not have their books checked by their parents when they are at home. 16(57%) of them got the last position in class while 12(43) of them managed to get the first five positions in class. This also indicates the effect of parents failure to check their children's books or work on their children academic progress.

4.2 Poverty and learner's emotional trauma

According to Karen M Pallin (2007), emotional draining and negative self status can literarily zap the motivation to learn out of children. The research focused on parent's guidance, emotional status, allocation of domestic chores by parents and allocation of study time for children at home by parents.

4.2.1 Poverty, parental guidance, emotional status of children and their academic progress

The above aspect was measured by finding out how often the children were punished by parents.

Table 7: Parents punishment

Response	Rank	Frequency	Percentages
Always	1-5	4	6
	Last 5	2	
sometimes	1-5	37	63
	Last 5	26	
Scarcely	1-5	8	18
	Last 5	10	
Spoilt		13	13
Total			100

Source: Field data

The analysis of the fourth question as indicated in the table 7 shows that 6 out of 100 respondents are punished always by their parents at home. 4(67%) of them got the first five positions in their classes while 2(33%) got he last five positions in their classes.63 out of 100 respondents are only punished sometimes by their parents 37(59) of them got the first five positions in their classes while 26(41%) of them got the last five positions in their class.

18 out of 100 respondents are scarcely punished by their parents. 10(56%) of them got the last five positions in their classes while 8 (44%) of them got the first five positions in class.

The above indicates that punishment by parents had positive effect rather than a negative one on the respondents academic progress. May be it was not the best tool to measure emotional trauma.

4.2.2 Poverty allocation of domestic chores and children academic progress

The researcher tried to find out who performs most of the domestic chores between the children and their parents.

Table 8: Allocation of domestic chores

Response	Rank	Frequency	Percentages
1	1-5	21	38
	Last 5	17	
Parents	1-5	28	49
	Last 5	21	
Spoilt		13	13
Total			100

Source: Field data

The analysis of the fifth research question as in table 8 shows that 38 out of 100 respondents forming 38% do most of the domestic chores rather than their parents. 21(55%) of these respondents managed to get the first five positions while 17(45) of them got the last five positions in their classes. 49 out of 100 of the respondents have most of the domestic chores done by their parents. 28(57%) of them got the first five positions in their class while only 21(43%) of them got the last five positions.

The finding of this analysis shows the contrary of the expected. Most respondents who did most of the domestic chores performed almost equally well just as those whose parents did most of the domestic chores.

However. 49 out of 100 respondents who got positions between 1 and 5, 28(57%) have domestic chores mostly done by their parents while 21 (43%) do most of the domestic chores. It also shows that 80 out of 100 completed their homework, 47(59%) of them got

the first five positions in their classes. 33(41%) of them got the last five positions in their classes.

7 out of 100 did not complete their home work, 5(71%) of them got the last five positions in their classes while only 2(29%) managed to get the first five positions in their classes.

The analysis shows that failure to complete homework has a negative impact on the respondent's academic progress. The failure to complete homework may be as a result of certain factors not investigated in this research but one of them could be lack of time due to too much domestic chores.

4.3 Health and nutrition and academic progress

According to Ormond (2003), poor nutrition can affect school achievement both directly by hampering brain development and indirectly by leaving children listless and inattentive in class. In order to assess the influence of health and nutrition on children academic progress, the researcher investigated the frequency of sickness in the children, provision of meals and access to balanced diet.

4.3.1 Poverty, health status of children and their academic progress

Health of the child is highly affected by poverty. For a child to be healthy, he or she needs receive all the required immunizations, receive proper health service at the correct time in case of sickness and so on. Parents from poor family normally do not bother about these and their children may frequently fall sick. The table below shows the effect of health status of children on their academic progress.

Table 9: Showing health status of children on their academic progress

Response	Rank	Frequency	Percentages
Rarely	1-5	47	82
	Last 5	35	
Always	1-5	02	05
	Last 5	03	
Spoilt		13	13
Total		100	100

Source: Field data

Table 9 shows that 82 out of 100 of the respondents rarely fell sick. 47(57%) of them got the first five positions in their classes, 35(43%) of them got the last five positions in their classes.

5 out of 100 of the respondents fell sick always. 3(60%) of them got the last position in their classes while 2(40%) of them managed to get the first five positions in their classes.

This analysis indicates that health affected the academic progress of the respondents. The majority of those who rarely fell sick performed well in class, however the majority of those who fell sick frequently, performed poorly in their classes.

4.3.2 Poverty and parents ability to provide meals for their children

Parents ability to provide meals for their children was investigated by asking the children how often they missed meals at home.

Table 10: How often children miss meals

Response	Rank	Frequency	Percentages
Rarely	1-5	29	53
	Last 5	24	
Occasionally	1-5	16	26
	Last 5	10	
Always	1-5	04	08
	Last 5	04	
Spoilt		13	13
Total		100	100

Source: Field data

Table above shows that 53 out of 100 respondents rarely missed lunch or supper an indication that they were well fed according to the local standards; 29(55%) of them got the first five positions in their classes but 24(45%) of them got the last five positions in their classes. 26 out of 100(26%) of the respondents missed lunch occasionally, 16(62%) of them got the first five positions in their classes, 10(38%) of them got the last five positions in their classes.

8 out of 100 (8%) of the respondents missed lunch or supper always. 4 out of 8(50%) got the first five positions and another 4(50%) got the last five positions.

This analysis indicates that access to food had a positive impact on the learner's academic progress.

4.3.3 Poverty, Nutrition and children academic progress

The effect of nutrition on children's academic progress was assessed by finding out the academic performance of these children who accessed balanced diet and those who did not.

Table 11: Access to balanced diet

Response	Rank	Frequency	Percentages
Yes	1-5	34	61
	Last 5	27	
No	1-5	15	26
	Last 5	11	
Spoilt		13	13
Total			100

Source: Field data

Table 11 shows that 61 out of 100 of the respondents accessed balanced diet. 34(56%) of them got the first five positions in their classes, while 27(44%) of them got the last five positions.

26 out of 100(26%) of the respondents did not access balanced diet. 15(58%) of them got the first five positions in their classes while 11(42%) out of them got the last five positions.

This analysis shows that the majority of the respondents who accessed balanced diet performed better in class by 56%. However there is a contradiction when it comes to those who did not access balanced diet where the majority, 58% performed well in class.

4.4 Poverty and school readiness

Readiness for school is one of the things that are affected by poverty as noted by the Canadian Paediatric society (2007) that children from LOW-SES often do not receive the stimulation and do not learn the social skills that prepare them for schooling. In order to confirm this, the researcher investigated the effects of attendance and non-attendance of nursery school on children academic progress.

4.4.1 Poverty, early childhood education and children academic progress

Although the government initiated free primary education in the whole of Kenya, early childhood education is still left in the hands of parents and they have to pay dearly to have their children in pre-primary schools. Some parents due to inability to pay for the same, opt not to

take their children to pre-primary schools; this in the end affect the children academic progress. The researcher investigated the effect of attendance and non attendance of nursery schools to the children's academic progress.

Table 12: Attendance of Nursery school

Response	Rank	Frequency	Percentages
Yes	1-5	48	84
	Last 5	36	
No	1-5	01	03
	Last 5	02	
Spoilt		13	13
Total			100

Source: Field data

The findings in the table 12 shows that 84% out of 100 of the respondents attended nursery school. 48(57%) of them got positions between 1 and 5 in their classes compared to 36(43%) who got the last five positions in their classes.

3 out of the 100(3%) respondents did not attend nursery school. 3(67%) of them got the last five positions in their class compared to only 1(33%) who managed to get the first five positions.

This analysis indicates that the majority of those respondents who attended nursery school performed better in their primary education, but those who did not attend nursery school, the majority did not perform well in academics.

4.4.2 Poverty, literacy and children academic progress

Literacy of children is another thing that is influenced by poverty. In order to improve literacy of children, parents may have to buy text books for their children, hire teachers to coach their children at home and so on. Due to poverty, some parents are not able to provide such hence leaving their children to be victims of illiteracy. This research tries to find out the effect of literacy or illiteracy on children academic progress.

Table 13: Literacy of learners

Response	Rank	Frequency	Percentages
Yes	1-5	49	82
	Last 5	33	
No	1-5	00	05
	Last 5	05	
Spoilt		13	13
Total		100	100

Source: Field data

The table above shows that 82 out of 100 of the respondents are literate. 49(60%) of them got the first five positions in their classes compared to 33(40%) of them who got the last five positions in their classes.

5 out of 100(5%) of them respondents are illiterate. 5 of them got the last five positions in their classes.

This analysis shows that the majority of literate respondents performed well in their class while all of the illiterate respondents performed poorly in class.

4.4.3 Distribution of respondents

In order to ensure that the results of the research is not influenced by the trends of a given class, the researcher chose his respondents from the targeted classes almost equally as shown in the table below;

Table 14 : classes of the respondents

Response	Rank	Frequency	Percentages
5	1-5	17	32
	Last 5	15	
6	1-5	15	26
	Last 5	11	
7	1-5	17	29
	Last 5	12	
Spoilt		13	13
Total			100

Source: Field data

The above table was used only by the researcher to show that the questionnaires were fairly distributed to the respondents among the chosen three classes (5, 6 and 7). The distribution was meant to be almost equal but the inequality was caused by the disqualified questionnaires.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENTIONS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher gives the discussion of the analysis of data according to research objectives. The conclusion of finding is drawn and thereafter ways forward in form of recommendations are suggested.

5.1 Summary of findings

Having gone through the responses and analyzed them, here is a detailed discussion of what is reflected in every table.

5.1.1 Home environment and academic progress of children

Table 3 indicates that all those respondents whose fathers had no education at all got the last five positions in their classes; this is almost similar with table 4 where among the respondents whose mothers had no education 87% of them got the last positions in their classes.

Both tables show a change when it comes to those respondents whose parents had primary education. 55% of those respondents whose fathers had primary education got the first five positions in their classes and 61% of those whose mothers had primary education also got the first five positions.

This trend is improved as evident in both tables. 63% of those respondents whose fathers had education above primary got the first five positions in class and similarly 62% of

those whose mothers had education above primary got the first five positions in their classes.

This suggests that there is a relationship between parents' education and their children academic progress.

Table 5 indicates that 75% of those respondents who were sent home for school levies always got the last five positions in their class and 66% of those who are rarely sent home for school levies got the first five positions in their classes.

The fact that some respondents were sent home always for school levies may be as a result of their parents lack of interest in their children's education which may result to other things such as failure to provide what their children need for school such as books, pens, not following their children closely in education matters and so on.

The opposite applies to those respondents who were rarely sent home for school levies. They wasted less study time and it could be an indication that their parents have interest in education and they are followed closely apart from being provided with what they require for education.

Table 6 shows that 63% of those respondents whose parents checked their books got the first five positions in their classes, 57% of the respondents whose parents did not check their books got the last positions in their classes. Just like the payment of school levies, checking of children's books is an indication of parents interest in their children's education. According to this table 6, those pupils who got the last positions in their classes may have been victims of their parents' lack of interest in their education while those who performed well may have been beneficiaries of their parents' interest in their education.

5.1.2 Poverty and learners emotional trauma

Table 7 indicates that 67% of those respondents whose parents punished always performed better in class. 59% of those who are punished sometimes also performed better in their classes. 56% of those who were scarcely punished performed poorly in class. This could support that punishment had a positive influence on children's performance rather than negative as expected by the researcher.

According to table 8, it is surprising that 55% of those respondents who did most of the domestic chore performed well in class just like the 57% of those whose parents did most of the domestic chores who also performed well in class. This indicated that these respondents were not very much affected by the performance of domestic chores.

Table 9 shows that 59% of those respondents who completed their homework performed well in class compared to 71% of those who did not complete their homework and performed poorly in class.

Failure to complete homework by the respondents may have been due to a lot of work the learner is engaged in at home or even due to the learner's lack of interest. Lack of interest in education by the learners may be as a result of psychological problems such as emotional trauma.

5.1.3 Health, nutrition and academic progress of children

Table 10 indicates that 57% of those respondents who rarely fell sick performed well in class but 60% of those who fell sick always performed poorly in class. This is a clear indicator that poor health affected the learner's academic progress negatively.

Table 11 shows that 55% of those respondents who rarely missed lunch or supper performed well in class and 62% of those who only missed the same occasionally performed well. The result of those who missed lunch or supper always did not show

whether it had a negative or positive effect on the learners. However, based on the first two categories (rarely and occasionally) there is an indication that academic progress improved with provision of lunch and supper.

Table 12 indicates that 56% of those who accessed balanced diet performed well in class but the performance was almost similar with those who did not access the same where 58% of them still managed to perform well in class. It is difficult to understand why this happened; may be the concept of balanced diet was not well understood.

5.1.4 Poverty and school readiness

Findings indicates that 57% of the respondents who attended nursery school performed well in class and on the other side 67% of those who did not attend nursery school performed poorly. Nursery school prepares children and makes them ready for primary school education. The 57% of respondents among those who attended nursery school may have performed well because they were ready for primary education and the 67% who performed poorly among those who did not attend nursery school may have been victims of lack school unreadiness.

Table 13 indicates that 60% of these respondents who are literate performed well in class and on the other side 100% of those who are illiterate performed poorly in class. This result shows that illiteracy affect academic progress negatively. Literacy may determine school readiness at all levels.

It is something to worry about that as high as classes five, six and seven, some respondents were still illiterate.

Table 14 was not really meant to investigate something but rather to show the distribution of the respondents among the chosen classes.

5.2 Conclusion

The study investigated the relationship between poverty and academic progress of learners in Jera Zone, Sihay division, Ugenya district-Kenya.

The study has shown that children whose parents do not have any education are more likely than not to perform poorly in class. Those children whose parents have basic education and higher education are more likely to perform well in academics.

Further more, the study has shown that home environment influenced children performance at school; such home environmental factors may include financial capability of the parents, parents' interest and concern in the education of their children.

In addition it has revealed that health and nutrition influenced the academic progress of children. Those learners who fell sick rarely performed well in class as well as those who accessed adequate food. It is also clear according to the study that school readiness improves the children ability to perform well in class. Those children who attend nursery school get prepared for primary school education hence the evidence of lack of school readiness even in the middle upper classes indicated by illiteracy at those levels. Those illiterate children were not able to perform well in class.

This study has shown that some aspects of poverty influence academic progress of learners; such aspects reveled by this study include home environment of poverty background, parents lack of interest in their children education as well as failure by parents to make their children ready for school.

5.3 Recommendations

The revelations of this research calls for certain steps to be taken by different groups of people. The following were the recommendations:-

Advocate for and support schools which strive to achieve equity of outcomes.

Advocate for and support intervention programs that provide academic, social and community support to raise the success of disadvantaged children.

Make others aware of the short, medium and long-term costs of allowing these children to fail or leave school.

Advocate for and support system changes within schools to maximize educational attainment for example longer school days, school feeding programmes and so on.

Advocate for and support quality early education and care to minimize differences between children's school readiness before entering school.

Observe and encourage good parenting, mutual attention and contingency of interaction, sensitivity and responsiveness to their children's needs, role modeling and reading to their children.

5.4 Further area of study

Since this research was not able to clearly find the effects of emotional trauma on the academic progress of children, a research is recommended to be done further in this area, in addition some research should be done to find out why some children were able to perform well in class despite doing most of the domestic chores.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questions to pupils

The information you give will be treated with a lot of confidentiality for research only.

Tick the right answer or fill in the blank space

1. What is your parent's level of education?

Responses	Mother	Father
None		
Primary		
Above primary		

2. How often are you sent home for school levies?

Always ☐

Rarely ☐

3. Do your parents check your books always?

Yes ☐

No ☐

4. How often do your parents punish you at home?

Always ☐

Sometimes ☐

Scarcely ☐

5. Who does most of the domestic chores?

I ☐

Parent ☐

6. Do you complete your homework always?

Yes

No

7. How often do you fall sick?

Rarely

Always

8. How often do you go without Lunch or Supper?

Rarely

Occasionally

Always

9. Do you eat balanced diet always?

Yes

No

10. Did you attend nursery school?

Yes

No

11. Are you able to read and write?

Yes

No

12. Which class are you presently?

.....

13. What position were you in the previous exam?

1-5

Last 5

APPENDIX B: UGENYA DISTRICT MAP

[illegible]



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**INSTITUTE OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**

Date: 23rd August, 2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Re: Recommendation for data collection

This is to introduce **Mr. OCHIENG CHARLES OPONDO** Reg. No. **BED/15601/71/DF** a student pursuing a Bachelors Degree in Education of Kampala International University from **August 2007** in the Institute of Open and Distance Learning Programme. He is writing his research on 'Poverty and Children Academic Progress: A case study of Jera Zone, Sihay division Ugenya District, Kenya'. He is at the data collection stage and your Institution/ Organization has been chosen for his research study.

It will be appreciated if you can accord him the necessary assistance.

Thank you,

