

**THE PREDICTORS OF PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN IMENTI SOUTH
DISTRICT IN
KENYA.**

BY:

**MUGAMBI JULIA MUGURE
MED/19706/72/DF**

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SUPERVISOR:

PROF. EMMANUEL FAGBAMIYE.

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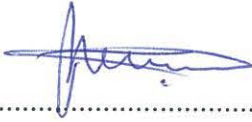
DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my original work and to the best of my knowledge. It has never been submitted before for any academic work or published at any university or any institution of higher learning.

MUGAMBI JULIA MUGURE

MED/19706/72/DF

Signature



Date:.....10/06/2010.....

APPROVAL

This research report is submitted for examination with my approval as a University supervisor.

Signed:

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Date:

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PROF. EMMANUEL FAGBAMIYE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this report to my husband Stephen Muriuki, and my sons Morris, Vincent and Mark Newton who encouraged and supported me during my studies.

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Above all I thank God who enabled me to successfully complete this research. He was my provider, gave me both the spiritual guidance and strength to pursue this project.

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learning materials, teachers' lack of experience, inadequate qualifications and motivation, ineffective school supervision, large class sizes, non-supportive home environment may hinder the success of pupils. Bank (1990) intimated that, the school cannot and does not take over completely from the family. If the environment of the pupil is conducive to learning, the pupil will gain from classroom teaching, the reverse is also true. Parents' attitude towards education is yet another aspect to be taken seriously. Poor attitude towards education by the parents in rural areas is a stumbling block to performance in public primary schools. Variations among families in terms of socio-economic status have a major effect on the attitude and behaviour of pupils. Unemployment has been rampant in Kenya and many educated parents without jobs cannot inspire their children to good performance. They even shun their responsibilities of providing the necessary scholastic materials to the children to the extent that many children go to school without the necessary materials for effective work.

Statement of the Problem

The poor performance in public primary schools in Imenti South District of Eastern province in Kenya has posed a challenge to children themselves who are the direct beneficiaries of education as well as to parents, community and nation at large. Some of the assumed predictors of poor performance include lack of classrooms, seats, toilets, clean water, electricity, instructional materials and equipments, unqualified, inexperienced and poorly motivated teachers, poor pupil motivation, non-conducive home environment, socio-economic status of parents, ineffective supervision, indiscipline both at home and in school, bloated class sizes and learners attitude. Though the government of Kenya introduced free universal primary education from 2003 to ensure that all children go to school, quality education has become a total mirage. There is thus a need to review the literature in order to identify the underlying causes of poor performance in primary schools.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to determine

Review literature on variables that influence the pupils' academic performance.

Determine school environmental factors that influence academic performance of pupils in the district.

Research Questions

What home context variables are related to the academic performance of pupils in the district?

What variables in the school environment are related to the performance of pupils?

What is the relationship between teachers' qualifications and experience and pupils' performance?

What is the relationship between school supervision and the performance of pupils?

Scope of the The study will be undertaken in typical rural primary schools in Imenti South District of Eastern province in Kenya. The study will try to sort out the assumed predictors of the poor performance in the district. It will consider the period between 2004 – 2008. it is hoped to offer a fair representation of typical primary schools in the country.

Significance of the Study

The study will be of great help to many stakeholders in education. Government, for instance, would need to focus on its role in providing the facilities required for effective operations in schools. Head teachers, Board of Governors/School Management Committees would need to discover how much they have done and what more they can do to improve the academic performance in schools. The research will be helpful to parents because they will discover where they have not given adequate support to their sons and daughters. Researchers may also find this study useful as a take off point for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The independent variables include the home environment, school environment, availability of school resources, teachers' qualifications, experience and satisfaction, class sizes and supervision. The dependent variable is pupils' performance. Literature is reviewed in this chapter around the stated variables.

Home Environment

Home environment is very paramount in determining the success of the child's education. Banks (1990) pointed out that the school cannot and does not take over completely from the family. Koontz and Weihrich (1980) intimated that individual's desires are conditioned by physiological needs arising from a person's background. Maynard (1976) while considering the home environment in rural areas in Africa, noted that where most people are poor, they may lack a radio, newspaper, magazines, television and books. Children from such homes since they are not exposed to current events may not compare with their counterparts in towns who are all the time exposed to such facilities. Ezewu (1990) noted that the family sets the style and influences the life chances for the children in the sense that a family may be supportive, neutral or antagonistic to school education. Such support determines the motivation with which its children pursue such education. He added that children from high socio economic status are often delayed in going to school and often without breakfast. During lunch time, they have nothing to eat and remain hungry until they go home in the evening. This no doubt has adverse effect on the performance of such children in school. The extent to which the family supports the school objectives directly affects its children's academic performance. (Joan littlefield Cook 1996, Karl C. Garrison, Robert A. Magoon, 1972)

The School Environment

Tienda (1991) stated that a caring and supportive climate is conducive to the learning process. It is also an important factor contributing to teachers helping pupils who are weak in learning to do well in class. Chaube S.P (1998) remarked in his studies of Indian primary schools that infrastructure such as school buildings, compounds, seats, electricity, toilets, play important role in education of child. Inadequate and unsuitable reading materials, unattractive school buildings, poor seating facilities can either attract or force children to drop out of school. Travers (2000) stated that a competitive study environment can enhance better social relationship among the students and increase their engagement in study.

School and Class Sizes

School and class sizes have also been identified as determinants of academic performances. Gregory and Smith (1987) argued that students in small schools are increasingly more positive towards school than the overly large schools where contributions of individual student is not recognized. Kraft (1994) in his study of the ideal class size and its effects on effective teaching and learning in Ghana concluded that class sizes above 40 learners have negative effects on students' achievements. Asiedu- Akrofi (1978) indicated that since children have differences in motivation, interests and abilities, health, personal and social adjustments, good teaching is best done in classes with smaller numbers that allow for individual attention.

Teachers' Qualifications, Experience and Remunerations

Farrant (1980) stated that professional skills of the teacher establish productive classroom atmosphere from the start by means of good organization and carefully planned teaching. Professional competence often transforms into high quality teaching which would influence the learning of pupils. According to Agyeman (1993), a teacher who does not have both academic

and professional qualification would undoubtedly have a negative influence on teaching and learning of his/her subject which subsequently affects the performance of students. Young (1989) examined the job satisfaction of Californian public school teachers in USA and found that one of the overall job satisfaction was the salary one earned. Maicibi (2005) noted that remuneration together with good working conditions have stabilizing effect on labour organization and act as attracting and retention forces for new labour which may be required. Even though remuneration and working conditions are not independent, good pay is assumed to give satisfaction as employees feel they receive value for their work. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development Kenya (2006) noted that the teachers in government payroll are poorly remunerated. As a result, most of them take up part time employment, such as buying and selling in order to make ends meet. Thus their commitment to teaching is reduced and even the few available resources for teaching are not put to use. Studies by Lockheed (1991) indicated that lack of motivation and professional commitment produce poor attendance, an unprofessional attitude towards teachers which in turn affects the performance of students academically.

School Supervision

According to Neagley and Evans (1970) effective supervision of instruction can improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. Musaazi (1994) suggested that the school inspectors are advisors and guides to teachers. They should by every means advise teachers so that the quality of education in schools can improve. It should be noted that inspection is often perceived negatively by teachers whereas supervision is seen as teacher friendly. Kettler and Zehnn (2003) observed that professional effectiveness comes from being guided and led by skilled supervisors who appreciate, recognize and upstage teachers' strengths and limitations. They also added that, it is not through exhibiting autonomy that the worker is given control of

what, how and when the work is done but emphasizing competence and efficacy. Etsey, Amedahe and Adjah (2005) in a study of 29 suburban schools and 31 rural schools in Ghana found that students performed better in private schools than in public schools probably because of more effective supervision in those private schools.

Kochhar (1996) affirms that interactive system of supervision is perceived as the corner stone of sound education.

CHAPTER THREE

DISCUSSION

Home Environment

Home environment is paramount in determining the success of the child's education. If the home of the child is conducive to learning, access, then the child will find it easy to gain from classroom teaching, the reverse is also true. A Family that can meet the requirements of their children at school such as essential learning materials, text books, writing materials, has removed a major hindrance to pupil performance. So the socio- economic status of parents is a predictor of their children's performance in school. Poor parents often engage their children in income generating activities at home in order for them to raise money for food. In doing so, the learners have little or no time to concentrate on their homework. This leads to poor academic performance. Homes that have no radios, newspapers and other reading materials handicap children in their studies. Language deficiencies are a major hindrance to children's performance in school. Furthermore, disadvantaged children come from homes where there are serious language deficiencies particularly where parents have little or no education. Lower class parental controls are often authoritarian with little or no explanation given for actions taken. Homes which offer wide range of thought and action and where children are free to contribute in class work tend to perform better academically. The family does not only transmit language patterns to their children but also attitudes, beliefs and values. It is in this social climate of the family that aspirations and for academic achievements find their first expression.

The School Environment

The school environment contributes significantly to the performance of students. If the learner perceives that the school is caring and supportive, he/she develops positive attitude towards school and this leads to better performance. Facilities in schools also determine the performance of the learners. Where there are no classrooms, seats, toilets, libraries, learners may perform poorly because of the discomfort of their environment than in schools which have adequate facilities. The administration should be supportive of children's aspirations and enhance a healthy school climate. They should also encourage students to engage in healthy competition in various aspects of school life.

School and Class Sizes

Schools that have small population and class sizes perform better than the one with high population and high number of students per class. This is because in small schools, students receive better attention from their teachers. Usually in a large school, it may be difficult to know all the students. Consequently unsavoury behaviour may go unnoticed. Teachers are able to keep eyes on small classes and interactions with students are more frequent.

Teaching and Learning Materials

Teaching and learning materials should be adequately provided and used to promote good performance. In public primary schools these material are often not adequately provided. Also the funds for public schools, are often not released as at when due. Text books are expected to be shared such that four pupils share one text book. This makes it difficult for the teacher to give homework to the pupils as some will not have access to the text book. The funds are often inadequate for revision books and evaluation tests which are essential for the learners. The

parents are reluctant in buying revision books and tests because they believe that government caters for all pupils. This is one reason why private schools perform better than public schools because private schools provide the required materials for teachers as well as students.

Teachers' Qualifications, Experience and Remunerations

Teachers are the heart of any strategy to improve pupils' performance. It is essential that they receive support at all levels of the education system from the society as a whole. Teachers who are competent, qualified and experienced have a positive influence on their pupils. It has been observed that from 2004, the year after free primary education was introduced, student numbers increased tremendously, perhaps more than anticipated by government. Classes with 80 pupils or more became common. Many schools were staffed by inexperienced and unqualified teachers. The teachers available or posted are often inadequate to cope with the number of pupils in many schools. Often parents are forced to employ unqualified and inexperienced teachers who may be keeping pupils busy and not giving them quality education. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in (2006) has admitted that teachers in public schools are poorly remunerated. For instance, a graduate is paid only half of the salary paid to a graduate in the civil service with equivalent qualifications. Teachers are thus not motivated to put in their best. Engaging in part time initiative to supplement their income is thus a natural reaction to an unsatisfactory situation. Thus, if teachers are well remunerated, and enjoy good conditions of service are likely to perform well.

Supervision

Supervision is often considered a useful tool in educational improvement. Supervision by the in-school staff such as headteachers, heads of departments and other senior staff, if done with the goal of developing better performance can yield positive results. Nevertheless, supervision in Kenyan schools has been minimal and irregular. This in a way is partly responsible for poor performance of teachers as monitoring does keep teachers on their toes.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Parents' income, level of education, occupation and social position in the community, the indices of socio-economic class are major determinants of pupils' academic performance. The school environment such as learning resources, class sizes, teacher-learner relationships and teachers' qualifications, experience and commitments are also important in the performance of pupils. It was found that there is a relationship between highly motivated teachers and their performance and the performance of the learners. This study has shown that the better motivated teachers are, the more effective their schools and the higher the performance. In-school Supervision should be strengthened to attain good performance. The head teacher, senior teachers, should be engaged in in-school supervision and encourage and motivate their teachers. Teachers should have an average of 40 pupils if they are to be effective. They need to give attention to normal and exceptional children as well as the slow learners, those with hearing and eye sight problems. All these need identification so that they are helped individually. The District Education Officer (D.E.O) should also engage in regular supervision of schools. The quality assurance officers who are in-charge of inspection should visit the schools and give advice teachers on what is required for quality education to be attained. The D.E.O should also make a follow up of the public funds so that they are disbursed to schools in good time to purchase the required materials. In fact, this is one of the major hindrances to performance because when public schools are compared to private and church-run schools, they perform well because they have all the materials provided promptly. The Teachers Service Commission should post enough teachers to the schools which are understaffed. Urban schools are well staffed with qualified and experienced teachers while the rural schools suffer from understaffing. The Government should construct more classrooms to reduce congestion and end a situation in which teaching is taking place under trees. Constituency Development Funds (CDF) are not distributed equally to all the schools. Therefore,

the Member of Parliament in the district should make sure that the public schools that are affected should receive more of these funds for the construction. Furthermore, these schools are supported by poor parents who cannot afford comfortable shelters in their homes. Teachers should be well remunerated so that they can work satisfactorily. A teacher should be considered as an engine of development because without quality education the country will lag behind. In conclusion, it is important for the relevant stakeholders in education such as government, local authorities, teachers, parents and guardians and the local community to prioritize and support education.

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