

## CONTRIBUTIONS OF SCHOOL BASED SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ELDORET WEST SUB-COUNTY, UASIN GISHU COUNTY

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### ABSTRACT

Generally most public secondary schools in Eldoret West have been performing poorly as compared to other Sub-counties in the region. The dismal academic performance reinforces a widely held view that there are factors influencing academic performance. The purpose of the study was to determine the contributions of socio-economic factors on academic performance in secondary schools in Eldoret West Sub-county, Uasin Gishu County. Objective of the study was to determine the contributions of School based socio-economic factors on students' academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Eldoret West Sub-county, Uasin Gishu County. The study used descriptive survey and correlational research designs. The study was also guided by a conceptual framework. The targeted population was 45 head teachers, 547 TSC secondary school teachers, 14,523 secondary students, 5 ZQASOs. The researcher used saturated sampling technique to select 40 head teachers and 5 ZQASOs, simple random sampling was used to select 165 TSC class teachers and purposive sampling was employed in selecting 2250 students. The instruments of data collection were questionnaires, in-depth interview, observation and document analysis. Reliability of the instruments was addressed through piloting in 5 schools and reliability coefficients were obtained by subjecting the instruments to a Split-half Technique and Spearman "Brown Prophecy formula". To ensure face and content validity of the research instruments, 2 experts in the department of Educational Management and Policy studies, faculty of education were requested to scrutinize the research instruments so as to validate them. Data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data was analyzed using likert scale and other qualitative data were analyzed in an ongoing process as themes and sub-themes emerged. Findings and conclusions of the study were generated from the analysis. The study found out that 75.4 percent responded that laboratories are unavailable and are inadequate. The study concluded that text books are key and modern laboratories are key to academic performance. The researcher therefore recommended that, despite the fact that classrooms are adequate, exercise books available but stakeholders and respective Board of Management (BOMs) should endeavour to build laboratories and libraries then stock them properly for meaningful learning and improved academic performance.

**Keywords:** Kenya, School-based, socio-economic, Decision, public, academic performance.

### INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, Education has been declared a basic need just as food, shelter and clothing. The United Nations (1948) stated that everyone has a right to education. It was declared that

education is free at least in the elementary and fundamental state and elementary is compulsory (Verspoor, 2001). Education is an essential undertaking in the development of any society. It is seen as a means of raising political social consciousness as well as raising level of manpower. These benefits have led to increased number of pupils in primary schools and students in secondary schools; (World Bank, 1990). At independence, in Kenya, shortage of skilled labour was a major constraint to the achievement of the government's development goals. And to address these problems, government had to come up with appropriate education policies and to invest a lot in education. Investment in education can help to foster economic growth, enhance productivity. Education contributes to national and social development and reduces social inequality (World Bank; 1988). UNESCO (2005) argues that the level of a country's education is one of the indicators of its level of development. And so the Government of Kenya had to set up so many commissions to look into education problems.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Academic performance has been chronically poor in some public secondary schools in Eldoret West Sub-county, Uasin Gishu County as per the KCSE school means despite the Government's effort to improve quality of education by even introducing Free Day Secondary Education. The academic performance of the district is wanting. Many stakeholders have tried to attribute the wanting academic performance to the socio-economic factors. Very little has been done to look into these problems, therefore, it is against this background that the researcher was prompted to find out effects of socio-economic factors on academic performance in public secondary schools in Eldoret West Sub-county, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

### **School based-factors on students' academic performance in public Secondary schools**

Studies done in the Great Britain particularly in London, by Bell and Rhodes (2003) whose objective was to explore school determinants on examination performance, revealed that school facilities include the administrative offices, classrooms, staffrooms, laboratories, equipment, libraries, hostels or dormitories, staff houses and even school grounds. In order for a school to advance the learning opportunities offered to a student, it has to adequately utilize the facilities available. Here 450 participants were engaged. Similarly research done in America by Orloskey (2007) whose purpose was to look at management of school based assets came up with tangible conclusions. For instance, he asserted that libraries, hostels or dormitories determine the students' school time management and eventual academic performance. If these facilities are used responsibly such that teaching/learning takes place without a hitch, academic performance may be improved. However, due to over-enrolment most schools are overstressing the few facilities they have leading to poor academic performance in schools. It is the duty of head teachers to ensure that facilities are acquired and are effectively used for better performance.

School facilities determine the academic performance and in India as pointed out by Pandey (2005), research revealed that staff houses are vital to academic performance as staff would be within reach. In Africa especially in Kenya, experience of facilitators was considered a school-based factor and studies done by Ojera and Yambo (2014) when they considered instructional leadership styles and principals level of experience, contended that principals and teachers experience in school is of paramount significance. In their study 250 participants who responded

pointed out that single largest factor affecting academic achievement of students in a school is the teaching experience and effectiveness of individual teachers. In this regard, Yambo (2012) argued that effective teacher, is a teacher whose students achieve larger gains. He added that in order to advance students achievement, teachers and other staff must be professionally competent and experienced in instruction and assessment tools appropriate to the curriculum for their particular students. In addition, they must have high expectations of the students learning.

According to Onyango (2001) planning for material resources in school involves identification of resource requirements, assessing quality in terms of the needs, establishing criteria for standards, determining the cost per unit and use of materials whether by individual or groups. But with over-enrolment that has dogged many schools, resources are constrained resulting in poor performance of secondary schools like in the case of Eldoret West Sub-county. Studies done by Yambo and Tuitoek (2014) suggested that one of the duties of head teachers in Kenya is to develop school's physical facilities. They argued that in dealing with physical facilities a head teacher must know educational programmes, the population to be served by the facilities and the financial resources available, or else the school may continue to perform poorly in examinations like a case in some schools in Eldoret West Sub-County. Therefore the study found out whether teaching /learning resources may affect academic performance in Eldoret West Sub-county.

Studies done in Kenya by Onyango (2001) emphasized that human resource is the most important resource in a school as an organization. He adds that teachers comprise the most important resource, however the contribution made by other staff like secretaries, bursars ,accounts clerks, matrons, nurses, messengers and even watchmen are equally important. According to Odhiambo (2005), he observed that the most important purpose of a school is to provide students with equal opportunity for learning and this can be achieved effectively, if teachers are knowledgeable, skillful and dedicated to their work, i.e. teacher's commitment. Teachers therefore, need to be well managed; the head teachers' responsibility in human management involves leading and motivation of staff, delegating responsibilities effectively and conflict management. However, with the current situation over-enrolment in secondary schools, teacher/ student ratio is likely to be high leading to increase in teachers, high workload and finally poor academic performance even if the above are done. The study therefore was to find out if that applies in Eldoret West Sub-County as well.

Comparing studies in Kenya and London, Olembo and Cameron (1992), found that one of the most important roles of the head teachers is to supervise curriculum implementation, planning, adoption, and classroom management, arrangement of instruction programmes and out of class activities in any scholar Educational system. Bell and Rhodes (2003) stated that the responsibility of a head teacher is to ensure that curriculum is well managed through appropriate delegation to other teachers ,meaning that head teachers are not only responsible for articulating the school curriculum and co-curriculum, but also to delegate , coordinate curriculum implementation, monitoring the implementation and evaluating whether the implementation is effective or not . With the over-enrolment in secondary schools, teachers are expected to have heavy workload resulting to negative impact on curriculum implementation hence poor academic performance. A recent study by Gatheru (2008) in Narok County, Kenya, established that due to over-enrolment in public secondary schools, teachers are somehow overwhelmed and not able to give individual attention to students. Sometimes teachers do not mark assignments and this may

contribute to poor academic performance. This study found out whether the similar factor can as well be a contributing factor to poor academic performance in Eldoret West Sub-county.

Head teaches play major role in the management of all school finances which involves even disbursement of money. The money is obtained through various sources including school fees, government grants, FSE, and others. With the introduction of FSE all the schools get funds from the government while the parents are required to meet various costs such as school development projects, boarding fees, and school uniforms for the students and even pocket money (Republic of Kenya, 2005). It is not clear whether this arrangement is friendly to the schools. This study therefore, found out whether finances may also be a contributing factor to the poor academic performance in Eldoret West Sub-county public schools.

It is prudent for a principal to establish and clearly communicate goals that define the expectation of school with regard to academic achievement, and if principal can make teachers and students support these goals, and then the motivation to achieve those goals can be followed. Most review of effective school literature point to the consensus that culture and climate are central to academic success. Studies done both developed and developing countries by both Mackenzie (2009) and Purkey and Smith (2001) Stated that student's chance for success in learning cognitive skills is heavily influenced by the climate of the schools. School factors press in the direction of academic achievement helps shape Environments (climate) in which students learn. An academically effective school would likely have clear goals related to students' achievement teachers and parents with high expectation and designed to maximize opportunity for students to learn. A press for academic success is more likely to realize goals than would climate that emphasizes effective growth or social development (p, 440). The study found out whether school culture and tradition can also affect academic performance in Eldoret West Sub-county secondary schools, Uasin Gishu County.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a descriptive survey research design. The target population for this study consisted of 45 head teachers, 547 teachers, 14,523 students from 45 public secondary Schools and 5 zonal Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (ZQASOs) in Eldoret West Sub-county Uasin Gishu County. The researcher used purposive sampling technique to get 45 head teachers and 5 ZQASOs because they are the only ones who existed in the study area. The researchers' target population of students was 14,523 and sample size ideal for this sample was 370 according to Saunders et al. (2003). The target population of teacher was 547 and 30 percent of this was 165 teachers. According Krathwohl (1997) 30 percent is statistically representative enough. The main instruments of data collection for this study were questionnaires, interview schedules and observation. Pilot questionnaires were divided into two equivalent halves and their correlation confident for the two halves computed using the Spearman Brown prophecy formula, describing the internal consistency of the test then it shows that the instrument is reliable, according to Kiess and Boomquist (1985) minimum correlation coefficient of 0 .65 is recommended reliable. Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis were used in data analysis. Quantitative data involved both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies counts, percentages, and means were used (Frankael and Wallen, 1993). Ethically, researchers

assured the respondents of the confidentiality. The researchers endeavored to cite every source referred to so as to avoid plagiarism of any kind.

## Results and Discussion

This section presents more findings from the analysis of data to test the research question below:

**Research Question:** What are the contributions of school based socio-economic factors on students' academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Eldoret west Sub-county Uasin Gishu County? This objective aimed at identifying the school related effects of socio-economic factors that influence students' academic performance in public secondary school education in Eldoret west Sub-county. These effects included the availability of proper classrooms, text books, exercise books, latrines, laboratories in school among others.

**Table 1. School related socio-economic factors on students' academic performance in public Secondary School**

| Sch based factors     | Available/Adequate |            | Not Available/Inadequate |            | Total |     |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|-------|-----|
|                       | Frequency          | Percentage | Frequency                | Percentage | N     | %   |
| <b>Classrooms</b>     | 231                | 62.4       | 139                      | 37.6       | 370   | 100 |
| <b>Text books</b>     | 135                | 36.5       | 235                      | 63.5       | 370   | 100 |
| <b>Exercise books</b> | 272                | 73.6       | 98                       | 26.4       | 370   | 100 |
| <b>Latrines</b>       | 303                | 81.9       | 67                       | 18.1       | 370   | 100 |
| <b>Laboratories</b>   | 91                 | 24.6       | 279                      | 75.4       | 370   | 100 |

The study found that most of the students, 62.4 percent agreed that their schools had adequate classrooms while 37.6 percent considered them inadequate. Classroom is generally a key factor in academic performance in all education institutions all over the world. This fact was also identified and supported by Ojera and Yambo (2014) when they postulated that role of classrooms is paramount and books in these classrooms and library are unique in complementing and supplementing the teacher's work hence cannot be overemphasized as textbooks or reading materials stay on as companions long after the student and teachers have parted. Despite the fact that text books are useful in learning, the study found that a great number, 63.5 percent responded that the cherished text books are not available and the few that can be found are inadequate.

The study found out that exercise books and toilets are available/adequate and this was 73.6 and 81.9 percent respectively. Interestingly 75.4 percent responded that laboratories are not available/inadequate. Onyango (2001) states that planning for material resources involves identification of resource requirements, assessing quality in terms of the needs, establishing criteria for standards, determining the cost per unit and use of materials whether by individual or groups.

## CONCLUSIONS

This objective aimed at identifying the school related effects of socio-economic factors that influence students' academic performance in public secondary school education in Rongo Sub-county. The findings of the study indicated that:

1. Most of the students, 62.4 percent agreed that their schools had adequate classrooms while 37.6 percent considered them inadequate.
2. Despite the fact that text books are useful in learning, the study found that a great number, 63.5 percent responded that the cherished text books are not available and the few that can be found are inadequate.
3. The study found out that exercise books and toilets were available/adequate and this was 73.6 and 81.9 percent respectively.
4. In this study, 75.4 percent of students responded that laboratories are unavailable and are inadequate.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. The schools should have adequate classrooms to facilitate learning.
- ii. Text books which are useful and approved for learning, to be available in all schools.
- iii. The modern toilets facilities are needed for all gender.
- iv. Board of Governors (BOGs) should endeavour to build laboratories and libraries then stock them properly for meaningful learning and improved academic performance.

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