

**FAMILY BASED SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS THAT
AFFECT STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RONGO SUB-
COUNTY, MIGORI COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Quite a number of factors have been found to influence students' achievement. Secondary schools in Rongo sub-county have been performing dismally as compared to other Sub-counties in the region. The purpose of the study was to determine the contributions of socio-economic factors on academic performance in secondary schools in Rongo sub-County, Migori County. Objective of the study was to identify family based socio-economic factors that affect students' academic performance in public Secondary schools in Rongo sub-County, Migori County, Kenya. 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 Administration, Planning and Economics were requested to scrutinize the research instruments so as to validate them. Data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Findings and conclusions of the study were generated from the analysis. The study found out that Parental level of education significantly affects academic performance 4.6(92%). The study concluded that Parents and guardians should be more enthusiastic about their children’s academic performance. The researcher therefore recommended that home environment should be made conducive for learning to supplement what the school provides.

Keywords: Kenya, Family-based, socio-economic, public, academic performance.

INTRODUCTION

Research done in America by Downing (2004) placed guidance and counseling as a social factor that influence learning. Schools with active Guidance and Counseling Departments may perform better since, guidance and counseling services on students’ academic performance supplement, strengthen and adds real meaning to the students’ regular experience. It improves students self – understanding, making students become more active in studies, they become realistic and enlightened about themselves (Downing, 2004).Bright students may not be aware of their potential and aptitudes; and so guidance and counseling may provide helpful information for proper educational function to them. In England, Gross (2010) holds that through guidance and counseling students get to understand their teachers and appreciate them, thereby boosting their

academic performance. It can be argued that personal development is a major aim of guidance though; it also fosters student's personal interest, supplementing teacher's effort in assisting with academic problems. According to Pandey (2005), in studies done in India, argued that guidance and counseling provides for establishment and attainment of long-term goals. He asserted that all the students with or without problems are all looking for bright future. Guidance and counseling, therefore, help them give more or serious attention to the goals.

According to Velocia and Ronald (2002) who studied Mexican children, argued that students whose parents are learned are more fluent in English than their counterparts. The study established that educated parents' functional value attached to education is a function of their education achievement. Conversely, Ogunlando (1995) from Nigeria also argued that children from illiterate homes perform poor than their counterparts from rich homes. Smart (2000) concluded that in most cases today it is apparent that parents 'education level correlate positively with academic performance. Good and Brophy (2004) stressed that educated parents usually show interest in their children academic performance. However, Hawkes (2006) confirmed that student's academic performance in most cases do not necessarily depend on parental enlightened occupation or education attainment.

The work of Shvrathanamma (2005) and Khan, Siddiqui & Hussain (2010) indicated that mode of motivation from the parents and favorable parental responses encourage achievements of the children and improve their academic performances. Family expectation and supervision (e.g. Priority of school work over time of recreation, expectation for performance, correct use of languages, monitoring of time, parental knowledge about a child progress), have been identified as one pattern of family life that contributes to child ability to learn in schools. These family practices create positive habit of learning of students. The habit of learning enhances teachers'

effectiveness, parents set standards for their children and these standards determine what children views as important. The internalization of these parents' values motivates students to pursue the same goals that are valued at school (Wentzel, 2003).

In Kenya it was interesting to learn from the work of Onyango (2001) who did a study in Migori County on competencies needed by school heads, that parents' efficacy for involvement and education goals for their children were stronger predictors of schools' success than parental level of education and ethnicity. Additionally, the study found out that teachers' communication to parents predicted parents' involvement, suggesting that regardless of level of education; parents need encouragement from educators to become involved in their children's education for better performance. It is against this background that the researcher developed a need to explore on socio-economic factors that affect academic performance in Rongo sub-county, Migori County, Kenya.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Academic performance has been chronically poor in some public secondary schools in Rongo sub-county, Migori County, Kenya 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 family based socio-economic factors that affect students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rongo Sub-County, Migori County, Kenya.

Family based socio-economic factors that affect students' academic performance in Public Secondary schools

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Research conducted by Chinapah (2013) in London secondary schools on factors affecting child's participation and performance in primary schooling. The study used descriptive research design, where 78 pupils in upper grade classes were given questionnaires to provide quantitative data. Using descriptive statistical analysis such as mean and mode, the study found that pupils whose parents are educated score higher on standardized tests than whose parents are not educated. Educated parents can better communicate with their children regarding the school work activities and the information being taught at school. However given that these findings were for the general performance in primary schools, it did not capture comprehensively the effects of parent's level of income on educational entertainment of girl-child. Besides, it did not get information specifically from female pupils but rather from the general main stream. The present study is about socio-economic factors affecting academic performance and not participation in schools.

In many societies and communities, home-environment practices have been identified as significant influences which affect the education of children. Study by Coombs (2010) postulated that cultural values, norms and practices, and attitudes significantly influence the enrollment and participation of children. He observed that these things contribute to sexual disparities in education of a given society. Home environment factors have a direct relationship with a child' education. Research done in America as a developed country according to Casanovas, Garcia, Lnares, Torne and Carpio, (2005) on socio-economic determinants of students' performance in high school, showed a combination of factors, where family influence contributed to academic success. In this study 208 participants were used where they noted that a student who has not eaten for days and has clothes that do not fit he /she cannot focus in class. Children coming from poverty are not provided with the same

tools as the wealthy ones, are entering schools already behind those living in wealthy conditions.

The work of Mette and Mohammed (2012) who conducted a study in Denmark on effects of parents' education, living conditions, and other background factors on Danish child education attainment. Using cross-sectional design with qualitative data on how their level of education influences their children participation in education. The study found that parents' education, and especially mother's education, matters for children's educational attainment, and that living conditions also had some significance the above reviewed study focused on the general child's education attainments regardless of the gender hence it may not provide a clear picture on how parental education status influenced specifically girl-child education and academic achievement. The present study is focused on how gender of either male or female affect academic performance and is not one sided like Mette and Mohammed's study.

In Thailand, Ahmad and Najeemah (2013) conducted a study on parents' perspective on female high school dropout in Ban Khai district. The data on dropout was collected from 20 junior secondary schools Ban Khai district. Quantitative research design was adopted for study and data was collected from the parents of female students' dropouts and non-dropouts through questionnaires. T-Test was used to examine the significant difference between parents' social-economic support, parents' cultural traditions and practice and parents' religious belief on female students' dropouts from parents' perspective. The results of the study reveals that though the enrollment rate of female students increased from time to time there is serious problem of the dropouts more especially in junior secondary schools. This is further worsened by traditional system and belief pattern of gender disparity, and high incidence of early marriages of very young girls based value system. However, this study

provided data on high school female students, but failed to capture both sexes of students which is the intent of the present study.

In Africa, another research on socio-economic determinants of students' performance in schools was carried out by Rugh and Bossert(2008) in Zimbabwe where 455 members of the community were interrogated on socio-economic factors and impact of child labour on education which was reflected on school attendance, grade performance, dropout rate, literacy achievement and overall human capital and finally poor academic performance. These conditions were also found to be common in other African countries Kenya inclusive. In India, Jayachandran, (2002) carried out a study on the social-economic determinants of school attendance in Almora District in India in the 5-14 age group for boys and girls. The study used cross-sectional survey design. The study of 56 parents and 11 head teachers as the major respondents. These groups were administered with questionnaires and in-depth schedules respectively. Using inferential statistical analysis such correlation coefficient, the results indicate a positive association between adult female work force participation and school attendance. This finding illustrates the crucial role played by women in education of children especially so when the women are working as that increases their say in the intra-household decision making process as well as in the society at large. However, a review of this literature shows that girl child, was never involved in sourcing the data, yet their input could also be significant on what is happening on the ground. A correlation tells us that the two variables are related, but could not say anything about whether one caused the other. The present study used a likert scale and descriptive statistics to analyze similar variables.

In Nigeria, Felter (2002) conducted a study on influence of social-economic and educational background of parents on their children' Education in Chibok, village, Nigeria. The study

used descriptive study design. Out of the 5019 parents in this village, 213 were administered with questionnaires to provide quantitative data on how their social-economic statuses influence their children's education. Using descriptive statistical analysis such as mean, mode and median, the study found that students whose parents have higher socio-economic status and higher levels of education may have an enhanced regard for learning, more positive ability beliefs, a stronger work orientation, and they may use effective learning strategies than children of parents with lower socio-economic status and lower levels of education. A review of this study shows that the literature failed to give information on how parents' level of income affect girl-child education but rather provided the information of child's education in general. Further, the study only provided quantitative data meaning qualitative data were ignored yet they could also provide in-depth information on what is happening on the ground the present study fills this gap in the literature.

In a study conducted in Uganda by Sentamu (2013) in Wakiso District on the influence of family income on pupils' performance at school, using cross-sectional study design among 58 pupils in upper primary school with different socio-economic status, it was found that family income was the determinant of the kind of a school a child attends. However, this study failed to provide comprehensive information on how parental level of income or financial status influence girl-child education attainment and achievement. Another study was done in Ghana by Dubow, Boxer, and Huesmann (2013) on the long-term effects of parents' effects on children's educational and occupational success. Data came from the Columbia County York state were interview along with their parents; participants were reinter viewed at ages 19, 30, and 48. According to the study, parents' educational level when the child was 8 years old significantly predicted educational and occupational success for the child 40 years later.

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Review of this literature depicts that that study used longitudinal design and focused on the general child education and occupation success, without giving much specification on the gender, its findings might not reflect on boys and girls in secondary schools. The current study is concerned with socio-economic factors affecting academic performance of both boys and girls and not on only the girl child as it is for this study.

According to Jacquelynn, Eccles and Daviskean (2005) in a study conducted in Nigeria among the students in 58 secondary schools in Kano state using descriptive study design found that relation of parent's educational qualification is linked with their language competence, which has a significant influence in a manner in which parent's communicate with their children. Consequently parental education does have a major influence on children's academic achievements. As a mother shares more close bond with her children than the father, so mothers' education is more important. However, the above reviewed study focused on students' education attainment in secondary schools and failed to show the socio-economic factors responsible for the performance.

The work of Atieno, Simatwa & Ayodo, (2012) who conducted a study on the impact of Family Social Economic Status on Girl Students' Academic Achievement in Secondary Schools in Kisumu East District. Using a case study design with a study population of 1560 form four girls, 33 head teachers and 33 class teachers and data collection instruments such as questionnaire, interview schedule and document analysis guide. The study established that the girl students' from high family income performed better than those from low income families. Parents with high level of education greatly enhanced girl students' academic achievement. Moderate family sizes of about 4 children had a big positive influence on girl students' academic achievement. The study concluded that family income, parental level of

education birth order and family size influenced academic achievement of girls in secondary schools. However, this study was based on secondary school female students as its major target population and so did not have any information on both boys and girls in secondary school. The present study fills the gap in this study.

According to a study done by Ibrahim (2012) on social-economic social-cultural and school base factors that are affecting the performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in Isiolo County, the study adapted survey descriptive design. The target population for this study there for constituted about 500 form 4 students, 17 form4 class teachers representing all the 17 classes (streams) in the 10 schools and 10 head teachers totaling to 527 people. The sample size comprised of 124 respondents or about 18 respondents in each of the seven schools including head teachers form four class teachers and form four students. The study used questionnaires, interviews and observation schedule. Findings revealed that social-economic and social-cultural factors affected KCSE performance in the county. It also revealed that school based factors like teacher shortage among others contributed to poor KCSE performance in the county. However, this study was majorly based on the factors affecting KCSE performance of general gender and failed to provide any information on social-economic factors affecting students' education attainment especially in public day secondary schools.

According to Chepleting, Chepkemei, Yano & Chepet, (2013) carried out a study on factors influencing girls' participation in free primary education in Kapenguria Division –West Pokot District, the descriptive survey design was adopted. The study population comprised of 40 public primary schools in Kapenguria Division. Out of this population, a sample of 18 schools was drawn and selected through the process of stratified random sampling technique. All head

teachers and class teachers in the sampled schools were purposively selected while simple random sampling was used to select pupils from class seven and eight. The study found that lower enrollment and higher dropout of girls than of boys could be explained by inadequate and poor condition of physical facilities in school, low income levels of parents, gender stereotyping in school which discriminate against the girls and negative social-cultural factors which act as barriers to education of girls. There was high opportunity cost of girls in the division; girls were engaged in domestic chores and agricultural activities at times for pay to supplement their incomes. When girls remain at home to take care of their siblings and farm work, they miss school and would eventually dropout. Therefore more girls than boys did not participate in FPE in Kapenguria Division. The study dwelled on girl's participation and its focus was on participation in school. It failed to bring into light the socio-economic factors which are the focus of the present study.

In a study conducted in Kenya by Bicer, Capraro and Capraro (2011) on the effects of parent's SES and educational level on students' Mathematics achievement. The study used across-sectional study design. Administering questionnaires among the parents and students in 23 secondary schools and having analyzed data through descriptive statistics method, the study found that those parents with higher educational backgrounds set a higher success expectation from school to their children. However, the mediation effects of parental expectation are small on parents' income to explain students' mathematics achievement. However, this study was mainly concerned with the performance in mathematics among the students and focused on the students in general. It therefore failed to give any information on the performance of other subjects especially on their mean scores which the current study explores.

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Another study was conducted by Prewitz (2010) in Kenya among the parents and the pupils in Bungoma District on the relationship between parents' educational attainment and child education attainment. 300 parents and 100 pupils learning in primary schools in Bungoma District were sampled for the study using simple random technique. Analysis was done through Pearson correlation coefficient to establish the relationship between the variables. According to the findings, the study showed that parents' level of education is very crucial for the performance of their children because educated parents take their children to school early, in most cases at the age of five to six. Further findings reveal that the more the parent was well educated the higher education attainment of the child. Reviewing this study shows that it gave a relationship based on the general children irrespective of the gender, but failed to bring out how parental education could influence education attainment of the girl-child. The work of Tuitoek, Yambo and Adhanja (2015) on contributions of School Based Socio-economic factors on students' academic performance in public secondary Schools in Eldoret West Sub-County, Uasin Gishu County found that 62.4 percent of students agreed that their schools had adequate classrooms while 37.6 percent considered them inadequate. In the same study, despite the fact that text books are useful in learning, the study revealed 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. Now that the most needed books are not in schools where they are supposed to be, then it was so difficult to find the same at home.

While further interrogating research done in developing and developed countries, Ombuya, Yambo and Omolo (2012) who studied effects of orphan-hood on girl-child's access and retention in secondary school Education in Rongo Sub-county of Kenya, purposed to determine the contributions of socio-economic background on orphaned girls academic

performance. They found that children and families living in poverty are at great risk of hunger, violence, teen parenthood, family stress and educational failure. These factors contribute to children that live in poverty being many times likely to have learning disabilities than non-poverty students. This study also sought to find out whether poverty is also one of the factors affecting academic performance in Rongo Sub-county public schools. It revealed that 67 percent of 390 respondents concluded that poverty should be eradicated for it deters learning.

RESEARCH 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 public secondary schools in Rongo Sub-County, Migori County, Kenya.

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, Philip and Adrian (2003) because it was large. 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 coefficient 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 ever 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 is family based socio-economic factors that affect academic performance in public secondary schools?

The respondents to this research question were students and Guidance and Counseling teachers. They were requested to score on the likert scale their perception about family socio-economic factors that affect academic performance in secondary schools. Their responses are

The significant family based socio-economic factors that affected academic performance in Rongo sub-county according to the students were: parental enthusiasm, parental attitudes, parental income level, gender of the student, occupation of parents, and category of primary school attended.

Parental Level of Education

Parental level of education significantly affects academic performance (4.6(92%, 3.6(72%, response from guidance and counseling teachers and students respectively). For a mother, this phenomenon could perhaps be attributed to the fact that: educated mothers reduce the time

spent doing household chores while increasing the time spent with their children than their uneducated counterparts; also, educated mothers are more effective in helping their children in academic work in doing so, they are also able to monitor and supervise their children's academic progress⁹. While for fathers it's attributed to the fact that educated fathers are also interested in the academic progress of their children thus they would be willing to spend more time helping their children in academic problems. Also, as suggested by Leclercq (2001), educated parents are more aware of the possible returns to their children's education and they are more likely to have access to information and social networks necessary for their children to engage into relatively human capital intensive activities yielding high returns to education.

Family size

The study discovered that family size affected academic performance in the sub-county (4.4(84%), 3.4(67%) responses from guidance and counseling teachers and students respectively). Though this finding is contrary to the general belief, Chernichovsky (1985) and Gomes (1984) too agree with this finding. These interesting findings could perhaps be attributed to the fact that other household members either substitute for child labor so that the children could take advantage of FPE or contribute part of their earnings to educating younger members of the household. On the other hand in smaller households, children are more likely to be diverted to offer family labor or stand-in in case of family shocks like sickness. Secondly, it could be that FPE has lessened the school fees burden, which could have been a major contributor to pupil dropout for larger family sizes.

Parental attitudes and enthusiasm

These findings point to the role of parental decisions in influencing children remaining in schools. Aged parents often appreciate the importance of education and influence their

children to stay at school especially young ones (3.2(64% and 3.7(74% responses from guidance and counseling teacher; 4.4988% and 4.2(84% responses from students). But as children grow, they begin to take on their own decisions and the influence of parents tends to reduce. Parents have got a crucial role to play in the affairs of the school. These findings are in line with Yambo (2012) who posited that parents have got a crucial role to play in the education of their children. He says that parental interest in education was repeatedly identified as being the major factor which affects children's level of attainment at school. The favorable attitudes of parents to their children's education distinguish the successful from the unsuccessful children. (sic) says that: "children who are supported by interested parents tend to get on rather better at school than those children who lacked such support".

This positively elevates the professional work of a teacher by ensuring that the information a teacher gives has got home support. Parent-teacher associations further strengthens professionalism. The parents are invited to support the school in practical ways such as fundraising for teaching equipment and carrying out other vital improvements. Parents using such avenues can discover how best they can help their own children's education. Such visits made by parents to schools also help to clear up any misunderstandings that there might be. However, parental enrolment in school affairs works against ideals of professionalism for instance a common attitude of parents especially in the rural areas is that a school is a place for book learning. The idea that children should learn through a field work is opposed. They call this "exploitation". Teachers who might be away from school on official permission are subjected to unjustifiable criticism which does not guarantee achievement of educational objectives. This reduces academic performance. Parents are key stakeholders in schools and their infrequent visit is highly questionable. This finding was supported by the work of

Ombuya, Yambo and Omolo (2012) who concluded that lack of motivation from parents results into many students getting demoralized hence perform poorly and thus dropping out of school to work at home in the family farm in order to feed themselves and their siblings especially among orphans and disabled parents.

Distance to school

The odds that a student's academic performance is affected by distance a student moves to school. Students traveling long distances to school are more likely to perform poorly. Distance was found to be insignificant in affecting academic performance in Rongo sub- county (3.0(61%) and 1.7(34%) responses from guidance and counseling teachers and students respectively). This phenomenon could be attributed to the easier access to schools in county (Tuitoek et al 2015).

Occupation of parents/ Guardians

Occupation of parents/Guardians was believed to be significant in affecting academic performance in the sub-county (4.38(88%) and 4.3 (86%) response from guidance and counseling teachers and students respectively. Across the board of analysis, it is evident that as the proportion of economically active household members increases, the odds that a pupil will perform better in school increases. This finding suggests that a large percentage of the economically active are employable in one way or another thereby vindicating households' dependence burden. It was also found to be in line with Abongo (2009) who emphasized parental commitment. This ensured that students are always in school for learning purposes. The interview with ZQASOs revealed that 60.0 percent of parents are poor peasant farmers. This level of poverty sometimes normally translates negatively on the students personal needs as they directly depend on their parents (Ombuya et al. 2012). Lack of parental provision

might make the student become indisciplined and this might interfere with their academic achievement. Hence this would warrant proper school discipline. Okumbe (2001) stated that school discipline is a system of arranging conditions for healthy learning. This means that if the conditions arranged are not for healthy learning then that is indiscipline which leads to poor academic performance.

CONCLUSIONS

- i) The significant family based socio-economic factors that affected academic performance in Rongo sub-county as given by guidance and counseling teachers were: parental level of education, family size, occupation of parents, and category of primary school attended, home environment, child labour activities.
- ii) The study found out that the significant family based socio-economic factors that affected academic performance in Rongo sub-county according to the students were: parental enthusiasm, parental attitudes, parental income level, gender of the student, occupation of parents, and category of primary school attended.

RECOMMENDATION

Parents and guardians should be enthusiastic about their children's performance and progress in school

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