

**INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS ON
KENYA CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION
PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF
LAMU WEST SUB -COUNTY, LAMU COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Academic performance in national examinations like the Kenya Certificate Secondary Education is a very important measure of the educational achievement of students. The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of selected parental socio-economic factors on the academic performance in Lamu West Sub-County in Lamu County, which has persistently registered low academic performance. The parental socio-economic factors leading to this dismal performance in Lamu West Sub-County had not been adequately addressed. The study was guided by the following objectives; to establish the types of parental factors that influence academic performance in Lamu West Sub-County, and how these parental factors influence performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Lamu West Sub-county. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population comprised of teachers and Board of Management parents. The sample size was 144 teachers and 48 Board of Management parents. The data were elicited by the use of questionnaires and interview schedules. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data while qualitative data was analysed through content analysis. The findings were presented by the use of frequency distribution tables. The results showed that parental factors influenced the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education national examination in Lamu West Sub-County. Interviews from Board of Management parents also provided data to show how these economic factors influenced Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education academic performance. Based on the findings, the study established that gender stereotypes, as well as parental socio-economic status, influenced the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education academic performance in Lamu West Sub-County. Among the recommendations was that parents should take an active role in availing the necessary materials required at school as well as advising their children about the importance of education.

Keywords: examination, socio-economic factors, educational level, parent, gender stereotype, academic performance, income, and marital status

1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Education is a very important asset which all countries in the world emphasize provision in order to have citizens who are holistic and self-reliant. It enables young people to acquire knowledge, realize their potentialities and work towards their self-actualization. Countries have therefore made education especially elementary, compulsory and a human right for their citizens (G.O.K, 2007; Koech, 1999). Thus education is an important asset for national as well as socio-economic development. There are individuals who have used Education to move to the better economic status from their previous ones. Through education, children of poor people can also become doctors, teachers and other desirable professions (Mandela, 2013).

Kombo (2005) explains how high socio-economic status of family promotes better academic achievements of children in such families. Such children are provided with all the required necessities to succeed in their academic work. Thus the school community where the school is located as well as the home environments are all contributing factors that would promote or hinder the academic performance of children in schools. Therefore, the academic performance of a child is influenced by a wide array of factors.

In Britain, the report by the United Kingdom Government's Social Exclusion Unit (2004) found out that a child born into the bottom social class is still more likely to leave school with no qualifications. This shows how socio-economic factors affect the schooling of children either positively or negatively in the United Kingdom. Thus children of working-class and of high socioeconomic status are more likely to perform better in academic work than those born from a poor background. Children of wealthy and well-educated parents are provided with a favourable learning environment, better education and good jobs. On the contrary children from low socio-economic status, parents do not have access to extra learning facilities and hence the opportunity to get to the top of the educational ladder may not be easy. Drummond and Stipek (2004) concur by explaining further that poor parents have limited funds and hence making them have limited resources to provide children with basic and socio-economic needs like clothing and emotional needs. By extension, such parents would also not provide their children with the necessary educational needs which automatically lead to their failure in academic work.

Similarly, in the United States of America, Parental socio-economic status is very crucial in enhancing education among children. This includes the parental level of education, their occupation, as well as their involvement in the education of the children. Thus children from families of high income were having better performance than those from low-income families. Parents of higher-income take their children to school earlier than their lower-income counterparts. Such parents can also afford to take their children through preschool learning and this has a greater impact on children later on educational outcomes because it provided children with the required cognitive and social development. This is unlike their low-income counterparts who do not afford preschool learning for their children and just prefer to commence their learning from class one (grade one) onwards. The low-income parents were also eager and desired to take their children to school earlier as their high-income families. It is only because their low social-economic level could not allow them to take their children to school earlier (Sean, 2013).

In Kenya, the socio-economic factors also affected academic performance in schools. In other words, the socio-economic background of learners and academic performance are statistically dependent. This is supported by Kieti (2017) who found out that the socio-economic factors affected academic performance in Matungulu sub-county in Machakos County, for example, the inadequacy of learning resources negatively affected academic performance in the study area. Furthermore, Abdinoor (2012) found out that various socio-economic factors negatively affected performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E.) in Isiolo County of Kenya. Such factors were poverty where the majority of students' families reared livestock and small scale farming as their source of income and hence did not sufficiently cater to the students' needs in schools. Others were parental occupation as well as the parental level of education which affected performance in K.C.S.E. For example, the nomadic lifestyle adopted by some parents did not favour the performance of their children in K.C.S.E. since the studies of children were always being disrupted. Illiterate parents also saw no need for education and could not inspire their children to go to school and acquire academic education.

In Public secondary schools in Tana River County, it was found that the higher the income of parents, the higher the academic performance of their children (Juma, 2016). This was because parents were able to pay school fees without delay and also avail the necessary learning materials and also provide a more conducive learning environment at home unlike the low-income parents who do not have the financial ability. Highly educated parents appreciated the value of education and therefore assisted their children by providing them with a conducive environment to do assignments and homework. Also, parents in good formal employment tended to promote the education of their children because they valued educations and also had money to help their children with the necessities in education. Furthermore, such parents helped in improving the children academic performance by attending school meetings, monitoring students' educational progress, assisting students with assignments at home, setting rules and regulations for children at home to check their discipline, and by providing learning material as well as paying fees for their children. All these efforts by parents helped to promote academic performance in K.C.S.E. examination.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Lamu is among the first towns in Kenya to receive Islamic education and western education from the Arabs and missionaries. It would be expected that this area would have progressed to high levels in academic performance especially in Kenya Certificate Secondary Education examinations (K.C.S.E) because of the early infiltration of education. Despite all the efforts put in place by the government and other stakeholders to promote education in Lamu County, the efforts have not borne fruit. Lamu West Sub-county has continued to perform dismally in K.C.S.E. Parents play a crucial role in the professional expectations of their children. They are role models who provide financial support that enables their children to succeed in their academic work. This study would look at the influence of parents on the K.C.S.E. academic performance in Lamu West Sub-County, in Lamu County. In the previous years, the Sub-County has been among the worst-performing counties in the K.C.S.E. national examinations. This is illustrated by the mean grades in the K.C.S.E examinations in the last five years where it has remained grade D+ and below (KNEC, 2018). This is in comparison with the national mean grade in K.C.S.E. of C-.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of socio-economic factors on K.C.S.E academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Lamu West Sub County. The study specifically looked at parental factors, socio-economic factors and student-related factors in the Sub County.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- I. To identify the types of parental factors that influence K.C.S.E. academic performance in Lamu West sub-county, Lamu County, Kenya.
- II. To establish the influence of parental factors on K.C.S.E. academic performance in Lamu West sub-county, Lamu County, Kenya.

1.5 Research Questions

The study was been guided by the following research questions:

- I. What are the types of parental factors that influence K.C.S.E. academic performance in Lamu West sub-county, Lamu County, Kenya
- II. How do parental factors influence K.C.S.E. academic performance in Lamu West Sub County, Lamu County?

1.6. Significance of the Study

On the basis of this study, the socio-economic factors influencing academic performance in Lamu County would be known. This would help boost the academic standards in Lamu West Sub County. This would benefit the county in the following ways in case policymakers come across this study:

It is expected that the County Directors of Education from the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Teachers' Service Commission (T.S.C.) would use the findings to improve the performance of K.C.S.E. examination of Lamu West Sub-County in particular and Lamu County at large. The findings would also benefit the school Principals and teachers to improve performance in their respective schools. At the same time, it would assist the national and County government officials to put measures in place to turn around the Lamu County academic performance, so that the graduates can compete favourably for job opportunities in the County and national government respectively.

Furthermore, students would be expected to pass their K.C.S.E. examinations and therefore qualify to train in various professions in the institutions of higher learning. They would then get jobs which would help in boosting the economic status of Lamu West Sub County. At the same time, successful graduates from schools, colleges and universities would participate in the various upcoming projects in the county, for instance, Lamu Port South Sudan Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET), the Amu Power to generate coal for Electricity for the county and

Kenya at large, as well as the largest fertilizer firm in Africa to be built in Hindi Zone, Lamu West sub-County. This would avoid sentiments and feelings of marginalization among the Lamu residents.

Success in examinations would make young people use the knowledge and skills acquired in school and training for self-reliance and self-actualization. This would help eliminate involvement in criminal activities like radicalization into terrorism. Once the youth have acquired knowledge and skills, they would participate in the economic development of their Sub-county, County and Kenya as a whole. The youth would get employed or even be self-employed and therefore serve the whole society and country as a whole. Kenya as a country would therefore be in a better position of being an industrialized country and hence achieving vision 2030.

2.0 METHOD OF STUDY

A survey method was adopted to study the influence of selected parental socio-economic factors on the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance in secondary schools in Lamu West sub-County, Lamu County in Kenya. The target population has comprised of all teachers and B.O.M. parents in all the 20 public secondary schools in Lamu West Sub County. This has constituted 277 teachers, and 360 B.O.M. parents of these students in public schools in the sub-county. The sample was 144 parents and 48 B.O.M parents. Quantitative data was analyzed through simple statistics for example use of percentages, and tables. Qualitative data were analyzed by thematic analysis.

3.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data were analysed as per the answers obtained from the respondents during the collection of data. The information obtained is presented as indicated below.

3.1 Response Rate

The sample population was for 144 teachers and 48 B.O.M parents in Lamu West Sub – County in Lamu County. However, the duly completed and returned questionnaires and interview schedules were 76 for teachers and 25 for B.O.M parents. The percentage response for teachers was 52.78% and for B.O.M parents was 52.08%.

The average income of parents per month
The respondents were asked to provide their average income per month. Their responses are reflected in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Average income of parents per month

Income per month	Parents	
	Frequency	percent
Below Ksh. 20, 000	13	52
Ksh. 21, 000- Ksh.100, 000	10	40
Above Ksh. 100, 000	2	8
TOTAL	25	100

Source: Author (2019)

Table 1 above indicates that 52 % of the BOM parents, belong in the low socio-economic income bracket earning below twenty thousand shillings (Ksh. 20,000). This amount could be earned through selling fish, small scale farming, some earnings from tourists, as well as involvement in small scale economic activities like carpentry, boat sailing industry, and having retail shops.

From the study findings, fishing forms an important source of income for residents of Lamu. Majority of residents in Lamu West sub-County are Bajuns by a tribe who have been known from ancient times as sea-faring people (Spilsbury, 2018). This means their livelihood is derived from activities in the sea or ocean and this is mainly fishing. Even other tribes in the sub-county have also taken up fishing as their source of earning a living. However, this fishing activity has been interrupted negatively because of the Al- shabab terrorist threats that come from the neighbouring Somalia country. Because of such threat, the government has gone further to ban fishing at night hours and even further banning people going to deep seas. This has resulted in the harvesting of less fish and hence translating into less income for families and this is of course very discouraging to the fishermen. At present, a kilo of fish in Lamu West sub- County ranges between Ksh.200 to Ksh. 300. This prize is very low and does not serve to encourage fishermen in their work. Furthermore, fishermen do not go fishing always but only go depending on the tides of the ocean and the calmness of the waves from the ocean and hence resulting in less fish being harvested and therefore less and unsteady income for the Lamu residents. The study found out that residents like fishermen generally earn less than Ksh. 10,000 a month. From these findings, the level of poverty in Lamu West sub-County still remains high. This high poverty does not enable the residents of Lamu West sub-County to provide adequate and high-quality education for their children (County Government of Lamu, 2018).

Farming is another source of income for people in Lamu West sub-County. However, they carry out this farming on a small scale and therefore, this does not translate into a lot of income per month. This activity puts them in the range of earning less than 20, 000 shillings per month. They cultivate on a small scale crops like tomatoes, pepper, maize, millet, cassava and sweet potatoes. Such products are cultivated so much on the small scale such that they do not produce even enough for home consumption. This makes the farmer not even get extra savings from the farm produce to sell in order to invest in important activities like in their children education. Farming also involves the cultivation of other crops like cotton and bixa. Bixa is plants which is grown and when harvested are used to make painting colours.

Areas in Lamu where farming takes place are Mokolwe, Mpeketoni, and Witu. The land has been cultivated for many years and this has reduced the production and consequently translating into low income. Despite government intervention of supplying farm subsidies like fertilizers, this has not improved the situation in terms of farm yields (County Government of Lamu, 2018).

Another factor that has led to an increase in poverty in the Lamu West sub-County and generally in Lamu County is the serious decline in the tourism industry. In fact, the tourism industry in the whole county has nosedived. This is because Lamu county borders Somalia

which harbours a terrorist gang called Al-Shabab which has frequently launched attacks in Kenya and also attacks targeting foreigners especially Europeans. Many air flights companies have pulled out from Lamu route and those remaining have reduced their frequency flights to the county. At the same time, many hotels have been forced to close down due to the downfall of the tourism industry. Many industries that were depending on tourism have also been negatively affected and they include fishing, transport, trade and the hotel industry. Before the decline in the tourism industry, the many residents in the County used to earn their income from the industry by providing some services to the tourists like dhow sailing, taking tourists for fishing, escorting tourists to historical sites, as well as being employed in tourist hotels. This loss of jobs has translated into less income for the residents. The remaining less income is not enough to support their children education in terms of providing more and better quality education (County Government of Lamu, 2018). At the end of the O- level cycle, children end up performing dismally in their K.C.S.E. national examination.

Apart from the above main activities, residents of Lamu West sub-County also involve in other scale economic activities in order to earn living. These small scale activities include carpentry, boat sailing, and owning retail shops. All these activities have been negatively affected because of the decline in the tourism, fishing and farming industries. The residents of Lamu therefore do not have enough income even for their upkeep. These residents also do not have enough income to invest in the education of their children (County Government of Lamu, 2018). In the end, the performance in the K.C.S.E. National examination is very dismal.

Just like this study, while carrying out a study about socio-economic, socio-cultural and school-based factors affecting K.C.S.E. performance in Isiolo County, Abdinoor (2012) also found out that poverty negatively affected K.C.S.E. Academic performance in Isiolo County. The study found out that the economic mainstay of many parents in Isiolo County was livestock and that the persistent drought had led to deaths of many animals and hence parents were unable to pay school fees. Therefore, children ended up missing a lot of lessons which led to poor performance in K.C.S.E. From the BOM parents' interviews, it was established that many parents faced problems of non-payment of school fees.

3.2 Influence of Parental factors on Academic performance

The respondents were asked to state their agreement levels about the influence of parental factors on K.C.S.E. academic performance by ticking on the Likert scale. These results are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Influence of Parental factors on Academic performance

	SA		A		UD		D		SD	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Parental education level	50	45	22	20	16	15	11	10	11	10
Income level of the	45	40	16	15	22	20	16	15	11	10

parent											
Marital	55	50	11	10	22	20	11	10	11	10	
status of											
the											
parent											

Key: SA: Strongly agree, A: Agree, UD: Undecided, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly disagree, F: Frequency

Results on Table 2 shows that 45% of the respondents strongly agreed and 22 % agreed that parental educational level influences the K.C.S.E. Performance in public secondary schools in Lamu West Sub- County in Kenya. This is because parents who are educated know the value of education and support their children in school and academic work. Similar views were expressed by Okoko (2012) who noted that children who belong to parents who are educated inspire their children to work hard in order to go to higher levels academically and to get good jobs. Educated parents provide good role models to their children to emulate and children are motivated to work harder and excel even more than their parents. Educated parents also take an informed interest in their children to work.

Fifty-five (55%) per cent of the respondents shows that income level influences the K.C.S.E. performance in public secondary schools in Lamu West sub- County. Parents who have good income provide most of the school requirements in order to uplift their children academic standards. Such parents would organize extra tuition for their children as well as provide books and other necessary requirements. Whatever is required at school, the parent would readily provide and the children learn without stress and aspire to succeed and please their parents. These findings are supported by Mwetli (2013) who carried out a study in Igembe South and found out that such parents were able to provide the necessary material and financial support in order to promote their children academic performance

Marital status of parents also influences the K.C.S.E. performance in public secondary schools in Lamu-west sub- County as indicated by 60% of the respondents. Furthermore, married parents tend to promote education among their children because the two parents would pull their resources to assist and support each other in providing financial and moral support for their children. The two parents would help each other in paying fees, buying required material resources at schools as well as advising the children especially to work hard at school. In other words, married parents provide a stable and supportive environment for their children and this probably influences K.C.S.E. academic performance.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The conclusions of the study were drawn from findings on the parental factors that the study explored. The study concluded that parental factors influenced K.C.S.E. academic performance. Most of the respondents strongly agreed that parental factors influenced this academic performance. These indicators included educational level, income level and marital status of the parents.

On educational level, it was noted that the parents who were well educated possessed a Diploma certificate or Bachelor's degree certificate. Such parents provided more chances for their children to perform well in their K.C.S.E. examinations. However, the parents who were not well educated were just having K.C.P.E certificates or had dropped out in secondary school or had even scored low grades in their K.C.S.E. examinations. Such parents provided very few chances for their children to perform well in the national examinations.

Furthermore, the income levels of parents also strongly affected the performance of children in the K.C.S.E. national examinations. Students who came from a poor background performed dismally in school because they were frequently sent home to collect school fees. This made them miss crucial content hours and hence affected them negatively during examinations. However, those who came from well off families performed better in their K.C.S.E. examinations because they were always in school which increased the contact hours with their teachers and therefore performing better in K.C.S.E. national examinations.

On marital status, it was observed that the parents who were together in marriage life had more chances for their children to do well in school academic work because they combined their efforts in helping their children. Children from single parents had a high likelihood of performing poorly. This problem was further complicated because single parents were struggling to make their ends meet even in terms of providing their basic needs.

Thus the study also concluded that the level of education of the parents had a direct influence on the performance of their children. Thus where the parents were well educated, their children performed better. Contrary to this, when the parents were poorly educated, their children performed poorly in K.C.S.E examinations.

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