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Influence of Parental and Cultural Factors on Students Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Lamu County, Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to establish Influence of Parental and cultural Factors on Students Academic Performance in public secondary schools in Lamu west sub- county, Kenya. The study was carried out in Lamu West Sub-County because schools in the county has persistently registered low academic performance. The study was guided by the following objectives; To examine the influence of parental factors on students' academic performance in Lamu county. To determine the influence of cultural factors on students' academic performance in Lamu county. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population comprised of teachers, and Board of Management (B.O.M.) parents. The sample size was 144 teachers and 48 B.O.M parents. The data was elicited by use of questionnaires and interview schedules. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data while qualitative data was analysed through content analysis. The results showed that parental and cultural factors significantly influence academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Lamu County. Simple regression analysis established that there was a significant correlation between parental and cultural factors and students' academic performance. 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. Furthermore, the study recommends that the government should take stern measures against outdated cultures that negatively influence performance in schools.

Keywords: Parental factors, Cultural factors, Student's performance, Public schools

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1.0 Introduction

Globally, poor academic performance has been attributed to factors like absenteeism from school by students, family factors as well as the culture where the student comes from. Parental socio-economic status is very crucial in enhancing education among children. This factor includes the parental level of education, their occupation, as well as their involvement in the education of the children. In the United States of America, Sean (2013) carried out a comprehensive study which showed that children from families of high income perform better in schools compared to those from low income families. The study showed that 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 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 research also showed that 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. In a related study in Pakistan in the South Punjab town, Rana (2015) carried out a study on the relationship between parents' level of education and academic performance of their children. The results showed that there was a significant and positive relationship between parents' level of education and students' academic performance.

In Kenya, various studies have also looked at how the parental socio-economic status can influence academic performance. For instance Juma (2016) studied this problem in Public secondary schools in Tana River County but only concentrated on the parental socio-economic status. The study showed that the higher the income of parents, the higher the academic performance of their children. This is because parents would be able 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 financial ability. The study also found out that parents with high level of education highly appreciated the value of education and hence assisted their children and provided 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. Lastly the study found out that parents who were involved in the education of their children helped in improving the children academic performance. Such parents for example attended school meetings, monitored students' educational progress, assisted students with assignments at home, set rules and regulations for

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children at home to check their discipline, and provided learning material as well as payment of school fees. All these efforts by parents would lead to better academic performance.

Statement of the problem

Lamu is among the first town 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. Despite all the efforts put in place by the government and other stakeholders to promote education, Lamu West Sub- county has continued to perform dismally in K.C.S.E examinations. 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 at grade D+ and below (KNEC, 2018). This is in comparison with the national mean grade of C- in K.C.S.E. Studies done in Lamu to alleviate the problem have not specifically looked at the cultural and parental factors that influence K.C.S.E performance. This study will examine influence of the cultural and parental factors on academic performance in the Lamu West Sub-County

1.1 The cultural factors that influence academic performance

Various cultural factors are prevalent in society that influence the academic performance of children in school. Countries which are multi-ethnic especially African countries tend to have different cultures which affect education. Unlike many studies where cultural activities cause deterioration in academic performance, the study by Diame (2011) found out the opposite among the school children in the communities in Senegal especially the serer community, where the understanding of a parent goes beyond that of a biological father and mother. In the Senegalese culture, having one's uncle, brother, parent's friend or neighbours to represent biological parents at school is acceptable. The study found that parents never or rarely visited schools to inquire about their children's school work. Because of the culture in that country, some parents did not find it necessary to go to school to oversee their children's progress. Parents are only called upon only twice a year to pick their children's end of semester exam papers, or when their children have administrative issues or misbehaved at school. During this time the school administrators and teachers take advantage to talk with parents and exchange ideas. In such cases therefore the culture of a particular people does not necessarily lead to poor academic performance.

Mwageni (2015) carried out a study in Namtumbo District in Tanzania where he identified that parents have attitudes of pulling girls out of school rather than boys because of their culture that boys bring income and are guardians in the home. Girls on the other hand get married and leave their home to go to another family. The study also revealed that early marriages occur among girls because they are married off for bride price. Furthermore, the study established that the number of children the father had out of marriage, and also the number of household members as well as the time spent by children on household chores all negatively affected the academic performance of children in school. In the present study, the research was done in a different setting to find out how the cultural factors affect academic performance in K.C.S.E. examination.

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In Kenya, Chege and Sifuna (2006), observe that parents tend to discourage their daughters to acquire too much education for fear that they would have difficulties in finding educated husbands or being good wives. In this case, the cultural beliefs of the households influence their attitudes and practices in relation to girl child education. Therefore, parental attitudes determine the child's chances of education as the parents control the initial decision of a child to attend school and often influence the nature of participation in education. The two authors show that culture favours education for boys as opposed to that of the girls. In other words, boys receive more parental support than girls when it comes to education accessibility. Another in County which

The culture of the Kipsigis people who live in that Bomet County does not support education especially for the girls. A study by Kilel (2013) expounded how culture has a very big effect on the schooling of children. He found that there was preference for the boy child in relation to the girl child transition to secondary school. The boy child was more preferred to continue with schooling than a girl child. Therefore in a situation of economic challenges, a girl child was pulled out of school to enable the boy child to continue with schooling. The preference for the boy child ensures that the girl child is neglected whenever arrangements were being made for children to go to school. Hence in situations where financial resources were scarce because of poverty, or large number of children in the family, the girl child was forced into early marriage and the limited resources used to finance boy child education. This study thus shows these cultural hindrances to education in Bomet County but this study examined the cultural practices in Lamu West sub-County.

Mwakio (2017) found out that in pastoral communities, culture accommodates customary values and laws which the communities perpetuates. For example in the Maasai and Samburu communities, there is practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) which is an important rite that marks the transition from childhood to adulthood. This is a type of child abuse because it violates the child's rights like freedom from injury, sexual health as well as violating the right to physical protection. Above all this initiation to adulthood allows the girl to get married since she is now mature enough. This often leads to a lot of early marriages among the communities which practice FGM. The communities which engage in FGM view it as a preservation of virginity, control of promiscuity as well as for economic reasons like acquiring bride price. Despite the value placed on FGM and early marriages by such communities, it all negatively affects the academic performance of children in school who eventually drop out of school altogether.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the influence of parental factors on students academic performance in lamu county
2. To determine the influence of cultural factors on students academic performance in lamu county

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2.0 Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population comprised of all teachers, and B.O.M. parents in all the 20 public secondary schools in Lamu West Sub County. Twelve teachers were randomly selected from 12 school selected through stratified sampling. Teachers were first stratified into their respective zones and then into their respective schools. From the sampled 12 schools, a total of one hundred and forty four (144) teachers were selected to participate in the study. Similarly, four B.O.M parents from 12 school were also chosen using stratified random sampling. A total of forty eight parents was used in the study. Data was collected by use of questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire was made up of section A and B. Section A asked questions to provide background or demographic information while Section B asked questions to provide information about the objectives of the study. Section B questions included short answer and structured questions while opinions from teachers were obtained by use of the Likert scale. In this case the items seeking the opinion of teachers about cultural factors affecting K.C.S.E performance were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1= Strongly agree, 2= Agree, 3= undecided, 4= Disagree up to 5= Strongly disagree. Data from B.O.M parents was collected by use of interviews because their number is not large (Orodho, 2005). Considering that that the sample size of B.O.M. parents was fourty eight (48) this is comparatively a small number which calls for the use interviews as a means of data collection.

3.0. Results and Discussion

Table 4.9 above indicates the mean responses of parental factors and students performance in public secondary schools. The mean of the responses from the results was 3.42 which means that most of the respondents were in agreement with the statement above with the standard deviation was 0.277 which shows that the answers received were close to the mean.

3.1 Influence of Parental factors on students' Academic performance

The respondents were asked to state their agreement levels about the influence of parental factors on KCSE academic performance by ticking in the Likert scale. These results are presented in the Table 4.8 below:

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Table 1: Influence of Parental factors on Academic performance

	SA		A		UD		D		SD	
	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Parental education level	45	22	20	16	15	11	10	11	10	
Income level of the parent	45	40	16	15	22	20	16	15	11	10
Marital status of the parent	55	50	11	10	22	20	11	10	11	10

Key:

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

Results on Table 4.8 shows that 67% of the respondents strongly agreed that educational level of the parents influences student’s 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 Ooko (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 work harder and excel even more than their parents. Educated parents also take an informed interest in their children work.

Fifty five (55%) percent of the respondents indicate that income level influences of the parents influence students’ 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 Mwet (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 KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Lamu County as indicated by 66% 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

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words married parents provide a stable and supportive environment for their children and this probably influences KCSE academic performance.

3.2 Influence of Parental factors on Students Academic performance

Table 2. Parental factors and performance in public secondary schools in Lamu West sub-County

Statement	Mean	Standard deviation
Educational level	3.7	0.28
Marital status	3.2	0.26
Income level	3.35	0.29
Average	3.42	0.277

Source: Author (2019)

Table 3: Influence of Cultural factors on KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Lamu West sub- County

Table 4.11 indicate that the mean of the responses from the results was 3.35 which shows that the respondents were agreeing on most of the statements while standard deviation was 0.84 which indicates that the answers received were closer to the mean.

Statement	mean	Standard deviation
Early marriages	3.38	0.85
Sex	3.35	0.84
Religious practices	3.32	0.83
Average	3.35	0.84

Source: Author (2019)

3.3 Regression of Coefficients

Regression coefficients in the table 4.15 below show that there is a negative effect of parental factors, cultural factors and student related factors on performance of secondary schools in Lamu West sub- County in Kenya. These were supported by coefficients of 0.788, 1.063, 0.109, 0.025 and 0.029 respectively. These results shows that a unit change in any of the variables will definitely have a negative change on performance among public secondary schools in Lamu West County-Kenya. The results further indicates that Parental factors, Cultural factors and Student related factors were statistically significant in measuring performance in Lamu West sub- County-Kenya as it had a probability of 0.008, 0.002, 0.033 and 0.020 respectively which is lower than the p value of 0.05.

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Regression of Coefficients

Model	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.788	0.832	0.948	0.008
Parental Factors	1.063	0.226	4.711	0.002
Cultural Factors	0.109	0.223	0.487	0.033
Student related factors	0.025	0.242	0.102	0.020

Source: Author (2019)

4.0 Conclusion

The study concluded that parental factors have influence on performance. Cultural factors influences performance in public secondary schools in the following ways, religious practices like Muslim children involved in frequent Islamic practices e.g. Maulid festivals. Most of the respondents strongly agreed that parental factors have influence on performance. The indicators included; educational level, income level and marital status.

On educational level it was noted that the parents who are well educated i.e. having Diploma or Bachelors, the chances of their children performing well is very high while the parents who are not well educated i.e. just having K.C.P.E certificates or a drop out in secondary school or even scoring a low grade in K.C.S.E examination, the chances of their children to perform poorly in national examinations is very high.

On income level it was noted that the students who come from poor background perform dimally in school because their children are frequently sent home to collect school fees. This makes them to miss crucial content hours thus affecting them negatively during examinations, while those who are coming from well off family do perform better in exams because they are always in school increasing the contact hours with their teachers therefore KCSE performing well in national examinations.

On marital status it was observed that the parents who are together in marriage life the chances of their children to do well in schools are very high while those who are coming from single parents the chances of performing well are very remote. This problem has further been complicated when that single parent is struggling to make the ends meet. A few respondents disagreed that the same indicators have influence on KCSE performance.

Most of the respondents agreed that cultural factors have influence on performance. These indicator included religious practices, sex (gender) and early marriages.

Ramadhan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. In this month Muslims are supposed to observe fasting for 29 or 30 days depending on the siting of the lunar moon. During this month most schools in Lamu west sub-county especially those found in Amu Island namely; Shella Bright Girls secondary school, Lamu Boys Secondary school, Wiyoni Secondary school and Matondoni secondary conduct their tuition hours only on half a day. Therefore most hours are wasted during the Ramadhan period thus affecting negatively the academic performance of KCSE results of Lamu west sub-county.

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Most students are Muslims and they celebrate to remember the birth of Prophet Muhammad – Peace Be upon Him. This festival occurs during the third month of the Islamic calendar, during the whole month Muslims all over the world do celebrate this festival especially in Lamu County because it is believed the founder of Maulid festival known as Al Habib Swaleh comes from Lamu.

The climaxes of these celebrations are done during the last week of this month. During this week most schools are closed to allow students and teachers to take part in the celebrations which include Maulid recitation, donkey ride competition, swimming competition, dhow competition, henna competition just to mention a few among others. All these celebrations affect negatively the results of national exams especially KCSE in Lamu west sub-county. Furthermore Maulid is celebrated to observe the beginning of a new year according to the Islamic calendar.

During this month Muslims in Lamu County do procession around the town to welcome the New Year. There are also other activities which accompany this festival which includes donkey ride competition, swimming competition, dhow competition, henna competition just to mention a few among others. During these festivals Muslims celebrate by slaughtering goat, cow, sheep or camel and giving out sacrifice to the needy and the poor in the society. Lamu County being a majority Muslim inhabited county, these festivals takes center stage at the expense of academic performance. Close to a week is lost in both two festivals which translate to loss of tuition hours of the students, therefore affecting negatively the results of national exams especially KCSE in Lamu west sub-county.

The study also concluded that the level of education of the parent has a direct influence to the performance of their children, whereas when the parents are well educated their children perform well and when the parents are poorly educated their children perform poorly in K.C.S.E examination.

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