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Factors Influencing Students' Performance in English in Secondary Schools in Rachuonyo North Sub-County, Homa Bay County, Kenya

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this article was to establish the factors affecting performance in English subject in KCSE in Rachuonyo North Sub-County. Specifically, the study sought to establish the influence of teacher quality school based, home-related and student related factors that influence performance in English in KCSE in Rachuonyo North Sub-County, Homa - Bay County. This article was guided by the following research questions; what is the influence of teacher-related factors on performance of English subject in public schools in the sub county, how does school learning environment contribute to the performance of English in the sub county, how does the learners' home environment affect performance of English in the sub county and how does students' behavior influence the performance of English subject in the sub-county? Motivation theory by Abraham Maslow guided this research. The article targeted public secondary schools in Rachuonyo North Sub-County which have presented candidates for KCSE between 2014-2018. The study sampled 46 schools out of the 52 schools in the sub-county, 68 teachers of English and 342 students were given questionnaires which were filled and returned. Besides, 46 principals of the sampled schools were interviewed. This article adopted a descriptive survey method. For this article, primary data was collected using document analysis, class registers, questionnaires and interviews which were administered to students, teachers, and principals. The researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis. The data collected was presented in frequency tables and analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Primary data was appropriately coded and entered into the computer for analysis. The researcher considered ethical issues such as consent and privacy while in the field. The major findings of the article were; teacher quality such as level of education has significant effect on the performance of students in English in the sub-county. Further, home-based factors like availability of private study time and provision of learning materials are significant in influencing students' performance in English subject in addition; student performance in English subject will remain low as long as school factors such as class size and availability of teaching and learning resources remain poor in schools. Finally, student characteristics such as attitude towards the subject play a significant role in performance of students in English subject in Rachuonyo North sub-county. The research finally recommended that teachers should always be supported to attend in-service training and workshops to boost their efficiency in teaching of English subject, schools to provide adequate teaching and learning resources that aid in the process of teaching and learning process. In addition the government, through the Ministry of Education, to strive towards construction of enough classes to curb the problem of huge class size. The Teachers Service Commission should also employ qualified TSC teachers. Parents should also provide adequate study time for their children while at home and provide for them enough reference books. Finally, parents and teachers should work hard to provide rewards and incentives that will boost students' interest and attitude in the subject. The article may be beneficial to all stake holders in Educational institutions especially the teachers of English in secondary schools.

Key Words: Students' Performance, English, Secondary Schools, Rachuonyo, Homabay, Kenya

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Introduction

English has been accorded a lot of importance not only as a subject in the Kenyan education curriculum and nationally but also internationally. In the Kenyan constitution, English and Kiswahili languages are listed as both the national and official languages. Globally, it is the language of technology and internet (Zeen, 2012), social interaction (Baker and Westrup, 2000), international understanding and social relations (Ogwu, 2000) and education (Gilham, 1986). Students in Kenya, thus need English as a language and as a subject because it defines their career paths and must communicate effectively in official set ups. How important this subject is therefore cannot be underestimated.

Previous scholars have attested that low academic performance is a challenge that is mostly faced by students who do not have adequate proficiency in English as a language. In the USA, it is recorded that schools and other learning institutions comprehensively focus on the different tasks in learning English (Joyce & Showers, 2002). The preparation and transition of students academically in tending toward a new culture, is lost on the wayside. Students that have low proficiency of English as a subject in the USA are taken to low track classes since they are perceived to be slow learners. According to the scholars, in those classes, they are instructed through pen and paper method.

In most Africa countries where English is spoken as an official language, consequently, the subject plays a fundamental role in all academic institutions right from Primary to tertiary level. Notably, the comprehension of school subjects' content is transmitted in English at all education levels because it is the main medium of communication in the continent. Therefore, it is presumed that the academic achievement of students largely depends on the extent of their English proficiency. According to Orgunsiijili, (2009), the proficiency in English significantly affects the overall performance of students. Equally, there is a direct relationship between English subject and general academic success of students. In such a scenario, performance in the subject is paramount as it directly affects the performance of other subjects.

In Madagascar, several studies have concluded that leadership skills of the principal, community involvement in their children academic work, and availability of teaching and learning materials play a vital role in enhancing performance (Ramandiamatanantosa, 1995). Similarly, in Nigeria, Adenuga, (2002) concluded that the decline in performance in the national examination was as a result of inadequate infrastructural amenities such as libraries, laboratories, classrooms, and also inadequate professional personnel who are teachers. Studies done in Uganda by Carasco et al, (1996) showed a positive correlation between availability of school infrastructure and performance in various subjects.

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Various studies from Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar indicate that the performance of English subject in National Examination has been consistently poor for a long time (Roy-Campbell & Qorro, 1997, Yohanna, 2012). Almost more than half of the students have been obtaining between divisions four and zero in secondary exams. The implication is that the students finished their secondary schools with low English proficiency. Therefore, just like any other multilingual society in the world, Tanzania has not been able to eradicate the challenge of English performance in their education sector. The scholars went further to suggest that the country should switch from English to Kiswahili as a medium of instruction.

In Kenya, various scholars have based their studies on the possible causes of underperformance in English subject in the national exam and came up with various findings. For instance, Njuguna, (2012) based his study in Bomet District found out that factor such as teacher and student motivation are key in enhancing performance. Other factors such as effective leadership, teacher experience and parental involvement in the children performance were also looked at. Mekonge, (2012) in a related study in Turkana East District concluded that variety of teaching methods, mother tongue influence on English speaking are some of the factors that influence the performance of English subject.

Schools in Rachuonyo North Sub-County have consistently performed poorly in national examinations unlike their counterparts in neighboring sub-counties within Homa-Bay County as shown in the table below. It is important to understand the factors affecting performance in English subject in isolation. The following table summarizes the performance of English in Rachuonyo North Sub-County and its neighbors within Homa-Bay County from 2014-2018.

Table 1: Summary of Rachuonyo North and Neighboring Sub-Counties’ English Mean.

	R NORTH			R SOUTH		HOMABAY		RANGWE	
	MEAN	GRD	MEAN	GRD	MEAN	GRD	MEAN	GRD	
2014	5.8346	C	6.4327	C	6.1346	C	6.7540	C+	
2015	6.2010	C	7.0381	C+	6.6910	C+	7.4012	C+	
2016	3.3833	D	4.2417	D+	4.5842	C-	5.3582	C-	
2017	3.8350	D+	4.6351	C-	4.6014	C-	5.6812	C	
2018	4.4452	D+	5.1002	C-	4.9887	C-	6.0023	C	

Source: Homa-Bay County Education Office.

With the sub-county registering the worst performance among the four sub-counties, it is worth investigating the factors that influence performance in English in Rachuonyo North Sub-County and chart a way forward on how to improve performance.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, Kenya has witnessed a consistent decline in students’ performance in English as an examinable subject in the education system. The situation has led to serious concerns among curriculum experts and evaluators in the country’s education system. The country perceives English subject as one of the ways through which Kenyan students can be prepared to be better

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service providers not only in the country but also in the global arena (Ochieng' & Borg 2011). The dismal performance in English language in the sub-county in comparison to other subjects has raised concerns among parents, the general public and education stakeholders. This is despite the Ministry of Education giving the subject prominence like issuance of teaching-learning materials, qualified teachers, and highest allocation in the number of lesson. Since performance in the language has a bearing in a student's overall performance, questions have been asked and concerns raised. As a result, students in the sub-county are greatly disadvantaged when it comes to career placements after they have sat their KCSE. Other related studies carried in Kasipul Division, Rachuonyo South, Bomet and Turkana East showed that English is one of the most poorly performed subject in the Kenyan curriculum. The studies indicated that most students fail to achieve the university cut-off points because of dismal performance in English. Moreover, the studies pointed out that some students fail to secure a placement for their preferred courses at tertiary level because of poor performance in English. As such, there is a pressing need to find out why the performance is consistently dismal. This study therefore focuses on the factors that affect the performance of English subject in Rachuonyo North sub-county in Homa-bay County.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study;

- i. What is the influence of teacher-related factors on performance of English subject in public schools in Rachuonyo North Sub-County in Homa-Bay County?
- ii. How does the school learning environment contribute to the performance of English subject in public schools in Rachuonyo North Sub-County in Homa-Bay County?
- iii. How does the students' home environment affect performance of English in Rachuonyo North Sub-County?
- iv. How do students' factors influence their performance in English in schools in Rachuonyo North Sub-County, Homa - Bay County?

Theoretical Framework

The main proponent of this theory is Abraham Maslow, a psychologist who initially proposed the theory for individual motivation and development in the 1940s. Maslow believed that humans have hierarchy of needs (Gawel, 1997). As such, they act in ways that address the basic needs, as they aim at satisfying other needs, which he termed as higher level needs. In academics, students have their needs. The needs could be ranked in an order, similar to the hierarchy presented by Maslow. Notably, the main objective of learners is to perform well. However, other needs such as acquisition of reading materials have to be satisfied first before academic success is achieved. Maslow's argument presents the advantage of considering human nature (Gawel, 1997).

This study defines motivation as a construct that triggers an individual's desire to replicate their behavior or to abandon a given behavior. Similarly, motivation is also defined as a persuasive feeling which offers positivism to learners to accomplish tasks or activities to the end with an aim of succeeding no matter the challenges encountered in the process. This research is

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majorly concerned about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation; the two types of motivations that define an individual behavior towards achievement of a goal.

Intrinsic motivation, according to Black and Deci (2000), is derived from within oneself; activities are done for individual contentment hence no need for external expectations. The control, challenge and curiosity are the main factors that trigger motivation. In learning, a lot of will power as well as positive attitude are needed to sustain motivation. Academic achievement and intrinsic motivation tend to share positive and significant bonding. This kind of motivation steers an individual to engage in academic activities to experience the challenge, fun as well as its uniqueness without any external pressures or external gifts and rewards. Behavior in learning is perceived to be prominent and tends to influence achievement (Black & Deci, 2000).

Extrinsic motivation involves use of external rewards, punishment and compulsion. Individuals are externally motivated if they get rewards, pressure or expulsion from external forces. In extrinsic motivation, positive behavior is rewarded positively and vice versa. Motivation can be instilled extrinsically at an early stage but it can later be transformed into intrinsic motivation as the learning process gets deeper. This type of motivation offers high will power levels and engagement but is not as sustainable as intrinsic motivation. When teachers and students are externally motivated to perform so that they can get rewards and recognition in return, the habit might become habitual hence loss of meaning to why the academic activities are performed (Black & Deci, 2000).

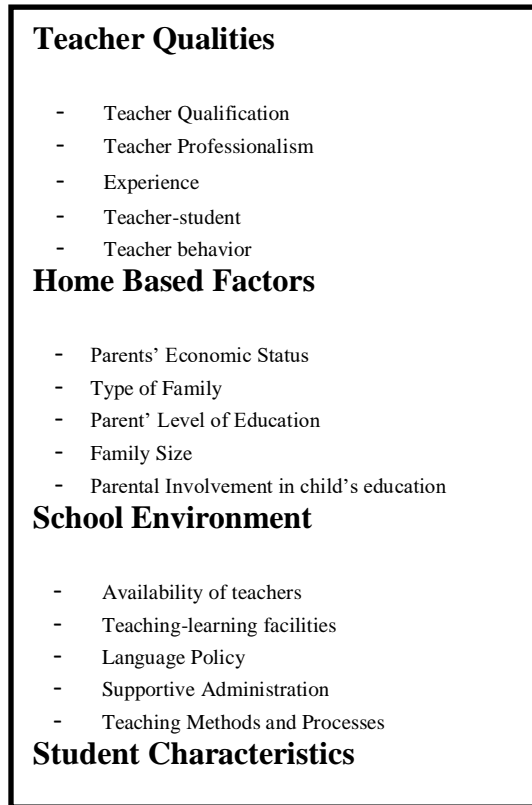
The researcher chose to use the theory of motivation in this study because of the immense influence that motivation plays in determining the behavior of people. The theory helps in unmasking the reasons why teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders behave the way they do within the education sector (Vansteenkiste, Lens & Deci, 2006). Both motivated teachers and students play a crucial role in the performance of English in secondary schools. Motivated teachers look at teaching through a different lens, and by doing so, they motivate the learners to work for better performance. As such, motivation assists in energizing, directing as well as sustaining positive behavior over a long time. Additionally, motivation helps in driving curiosity and creativity thus sparking the desire for students to want to learn more. This theory shows that the learning process does not just involve getting learners to develop interest in a moment but also deals with development of goal and aspirations that push the academic studies.

This theory is preferred because it explains that a student's performance in English is boosted by incentives and rewards as well as self-driven courses. Therefore, when proper goals are set by learners and instructors, a motivational process that improves academic performance holistically may be triggered (Vansteenkiste, Lens & Deci, 2006). When teachers have a solid grasp of motivation principles, they can use the theory to assemble more effective student behavior that leads to better performance. Additionally, this theory outlines the various intrinsic driving forces that make individuals to behave the way they do. As such, it provides insight to instructors and teachers on ways of helping the learners to explore the intrinsic motivational triggers which have also been described to facilitate long term sustenance among the students.

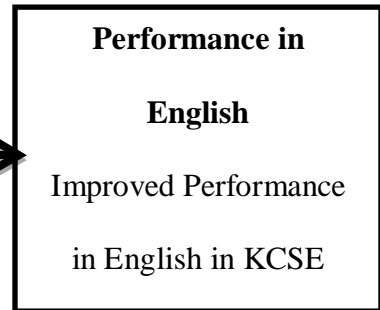
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Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable



Dependent Variable



Source: Researcher 2019

The above diagram indicates the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables. The researcher argues in the Conceptual Framework that four distinctive independent variables influence performance in English subject which is the dependent variable.

Dependent Variable

Performance in English subject is dependent on teacher qualities, student, school and home based factors (Applebee, Langer, Nystrand & Gamoran, 2003). Where teachers are academically and professionally qualified, have good mastery of content, have positive attitude towards their jobs and teaching environment and are also in a warm and cordial relationship with their students, it is expected that performance of the students will be good and encouraging (Applebee, Langer, Nystrand & Gamoran,2003). This is unlike a situation where the teacher has negative attitude, is less experienced, demotivates the learners and generally is unprofessional.

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Independent Variables

The school environment that includes but not limited to supportive administration, availability of qualified teachers, a strong language policy, availability of teaching and learning resources and facilities, and teaching processes and methods also determines the type of grades that students score in the final examination. A strong supportive school environment will yield students who perform well in their academics unlike unsupportive school environments.

Students' entry behavior, learning preferences, attitude towards English subject, reading culture and frequency of attending school and English lessons also determines students' academic achievement (Applebee, Langer, Nystrand & Gamoran, 2003). Students who have good reading culture, regularly attend school and have high entry marks from KCPE in English and with a positive attitude towards English subject will perform well in English unlike those with negative attitude, low entry marks, frequently absent from school, and are poor readers.

Apart from the above factors, home related factors like parents' economic status, their level of education, the family size of the student and parental involvement in their children education through supporting them in doing homework, monitoring their students' academic work, buying learning materials and allocating their children enough study time will motivate the student to work hard and achieve better results. If a child comes from a home where the parents are poor or chaotic and abusive homes, it is unlikely for such a student to concentrate in school work and perform well.

Review of Related Literature

Many studies have shown that academic achievement is dependent and affected by a number of independent, moderate and intervening variables, whereas many other direct and indirect variables are also involved.

Teacher Related factors and Performance in English

In a research on teacher quality and student achievement in England, Darling-Hammond, (2000) compared the effectiveness of professionally trained and untrained teachers of English and the effect they have on the student's performance. The results of the research indicated that good results were obtained by students who were guided by trained teachers who constantly supervised their work, corrected them lovingly and gave them work to do as opposed to those who were taught by untrained teachers (Matsuda & Gobel, 2004). Also, the study functioned to ascertain the professional distinctiveness of teachers, their skillfulness in delivery and the atmosphere they create for learning has significant effect on the performance of learners (Matsuda & Gobel, 2004).

However, in a contrary opinion, Harris and Sass (2011) researched on teachers training, teacher quality and student achievement in Botswana. The researchers found out that there is no statistically significant impact as long as the marginal increase in the in-service training is linked to reading achievement. The implication is that academic accomplishment in students in areas that are extremely poor could not be sufficiently improved by utmost investment in staff development. Harris and Sass (2006) researched on the effects of different types of education

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and training on the teachers' capacity to advance students' achievement of high performance. The researchers discovered that there is no evidence that the ability to improve student achievement is not influenced by undergraduate training or scholastic propensity. However, the study did not prove that scholastic propensity does not affect performance either.

Teacher motivation also influences the delivery of teachers in the secondary schools. Motivation of teachers not only involves monetary compensation but also factors such as promotion and recognition (Black & Deci, 2000). From available research, majority of teachers are not satisfied with their current work stations and would want to have their work environment improved. Motivated teachers are likely to stay close to students and provide adequate help to them at a personal level (Clotfelter, Ladd & Vigdor, 2010). However, lack of motivation for teachers affects performance negatively. Instructors in the rural areas get more frustrated because of the working conditions in which they operate as well as the relatively poor standards of living in their work environment (Menken, 2010). This negatively impacts on student's final performance in English subject.

Home-Based Factors and Performance in English

Drake (2000) studied the home challenges affecting education in Singapore. He argues that for the home challenges to be remedied, more collaboration between the school and home will be needed. Education level of parents can affect academic achievement of their children. This is because educated parents can provide such an environment that suits best for the academic success of their children while the same can lack where the education level of the parents is low (Drake, 2000). The study suggests that the school authorities can provide guidance and counseling to parents towards positive home environment for enhancement in students' quality of work. Further, Gravaas, Haegland, Kirkeboen, Steffenson (2008) documented that students from well-connected families are likely to receive preferential treatment in schools and in this way, the external social hierarchies are replicated in the school setting.

Chinyoka and Naidu (2014) researched on the influence of home based factors on performance of girl learners in Zimbabwe. The study revealed that students from various home environments are affected differently by such variations. The researchers also note that students from less favorable home environments face greater academic challenges due to such factors as added demands on their time and less adult academic support (Gaomab, 2007). Although this relationship is not deterministic, the overall trend is clear and its influence powerful. More importantly, some parents expect their children to help them after school, during the time the children are expected to do their school assignments.

According to Mwoma (2010), education usually requires expenses such as buying reading materials, stationery among others. In the developed economies, research indicates that parents play a significant role in their children's education by getting involved in activities such as completion of homework and acquisition of reading materials. Okantey, (2008) holds that parents are the first teachers to their children. The parents feel sidelined once the children start attending school. However, it is rational and responsible for the parents to continue getting

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involved in their children academic progress by constantly monitoring their performance, reading achievements, language comprehension as well as expressive skills in languages such as English.

Okantay (2008) observed that home environment is hardly mentioned by researchers as a factor affecting academic performance in Kenyan Secondary Schools. A family is largely a socializing agent. It is thus significant in determining the level of motivation in children to achieve success in various aspects of life including education. The driving force behind excelling in academics is motivation to achieve good results in all subjects and attain recognition to some extent. Overall, Okantay defines home environment as objects, forces and conditions that affect children mentally, physically, emotional and intellectually while they are within the home vicinity. There has been little research on how parental characteristics affect educational matters of children in Kenya. Parental characteristics are considered to be a vital home factor that influences academic achievements of learner.

School Related Factors and Performance in English

Cummins, (2000) argues that the role of a school principal cannot be underestimated in provision of teaching and learning resources. Availability of teaching and learning resources enhance effectiveness of schools, since they are basic elements that contribute to good academic outcome. For instance, the principal oversees the execution of school curriculum, provision of teaching and learning resources, motivation of teachers, supervision of formative evaluation to ensure that curriculum is properly implemented and setting of mechanisms for curriculum evaluation and innovation. As such, school management endeavors to offer necessary resources to support teaching and learning particularly through purchases of reading materials, building classrooms and hostels, equipping laboratories and facilitating effective learning in the schools (Cummins, 2000).

Adeogun (2001) studied the relationship between school resources and academic performance. The study noted that there is strong positive correlation between teaching resources and academic performance. According to his study on instructional materials and academic performance, schools that are properly endowed with resources perform better than those which are less endowed with the same. Teaching and learning resources in English such as course books, dictionaries, set books, audio and video tapes are crucial as learners need to read comprehension, poems and do grammar assignments among other sub-genres. For effective teaching and learning to occur, these resources have to be availed. In their absence or inadequacy, teachers might handle the subject in an abstract manner, thus portraying it as dry and non-existent exercise leading to poor results (Adeogun, 2001).

Mwangi (2009) noted that a glance of secondary school syllabi for any subject will reveal the numerous topics which a reasonably good library could provide comprehensive information by means of reference books, supplementary texts, encyclopedia, good reading books, magazines, and journals, local and international newspapers. This will contribute immensely to students' wealth of knowledge. According to Ministry of Education (2000), the availability and quality of teaching and learning materials is a key in the effective delivery of the curriculum. The

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materials include textbooks, teachers' guides, and libraries, audio and visual materials. All schools in Kenya are required to have KICD approved learning materials.

Student Related Factors and Performance in English

Several studies have been conducted to identify and analyze the numerous factors that affect academic performance in various learning institutions. The students' effort and previous schooling have an impact on students' performance (Fadel & Khaled, 2013). In an analysis of some factors affecting student academic performance in an introductory Biochemistry course at the University of the West Indies, it was discovered that parents' education, family income, self-motivation, age of student, learning preferences, class attendance and entry qualifications have a significant impact on the student academic performance in different settings. The usefulness of these studies lies in the need to take remedial actions that enhance the academic performance of students, especially in public-sponsored schools.

Homework is among the teaching strategies used by instructors to determine the engagement level of their students. Donald (2006) performed a research in the US that homework has both positive and negative effect on students. The positive effects include longer retention of factual knowledge, better critical thinking, increased understanding and improved comprehension of concept formation and information processing (Donald, 2006). Long-term impact of homework was highlighted by scholars in the US as improved study habits and skills. On the other hand, homework can lead to negative effects such as loss of interest on a subject, competition and good performance pressure, parental interference and emotional fatigue among others. Study skills are also student related factors that hugely affect their performance in all subjects offered in a curriculum (Moyi, 2011). Study skills can be described as the abilities, techniques, activities and approaches which are largely applied to learning to promote effective and autonomous process. Some of the skills include taking notes in class, proper listening to teachers' guidance, regular studies, participation in lessons, completion of homework, efficient writing of explanations in assignments and exams and proper preparations for exams. Students who effectively employ the skills stand a better chance of exemplarily performing in the national examination (Mary, 2014). On the other hand, strategies of learning are hugely classified as meta-cognitive, cognitive and socio-effective. Students who plan their learning strategies and skills effectively achieve their goals and attain high levels of performance.

Auma (2010) examined the quality of education and performance trend of learners Kenyan schools. Entry qualifications and prerequisites is an additional factor that affects students' performance (Auma, 2010). In this case, entry qualification is the KCPE mark attained by the student. For most institutions, student admission is based on a number of different previous qualifications to the extent that students in the same class vary widely in terms of their prior knowledge. This is especially a factor to be explored further with the government introduction of 100% transition to secondary despite the marks attained. Learning, being a cumulative process, therefore means that a student enrolled with higher entry requirements will be well prepared for the course material as compared to a student admitted based on the bare minimum qualifications (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). It is essential for educators to have an

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idea of how well-prepared or ill-prepared admitted students are based on their prior qualifications. Poor reading culture in students also contributes to low performance index. Auma (2010) concurs with the same sentiments and stresses that though there is continued expansion of schooling at all tiers of the 8.4.4 system in Kenya, the quality of teaching has been on the downward trend and students’ performance in KSCE in all subject areas has been generally poor.

Methodology

This study was carried out in Rachuonyo North Sub-County, Homa - Bay County. The sub-county was chosen because the researcher is well acquainted with the area and has observed academic performance over years. The study adopted a descriptive research design. Orodho (2009) defines a descriptive survey as a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering questionnaire to a sample of individuals. The descriptive survey can be used when collecting information about people’s attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social issues. This study targeted 52 public secondary schools in Rachuonyo North Sub-County which have presented candidates for the KCSE between 2014-2018. Principals targeted were 52, teachers 82 and students 3048.

Target Population

Table 2	Schools	Principals	Teachers	Students
Target Population	52	52	82	3048
Sample size	46	46	68	342

Source: Rachuonyo North Sub-County Education Office

Out of the 52 schools, 46 were sampled using simple random sampling method. According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009) sampling approximately 20-30% of a target population is sufficiently adequate in a small population. A sample of 342 was drawn from a population of 3048 students using a formula from Krejcie and Morgan (1970). 68 teacher participants were sampled using purposive sampling procedures. The researcher used interview schedules with the principals and selected teachers of other subjects to collect required data such as actual information about the school. This study also used questionnaires to collect data from the teachers of English and students. The questionnaires were self-administered to the respondents through face to face and ‘drop and pick later’ methods. The qualitative data were collected using interview schedules which were also be developed and administered by the researcher (Muhammad, 2010). Questionnaires were designed for both teachers and students. Document analysis to verify teachers of English professional records was done. Validity and reliability was ensured by the researcher through relevant authorities and procedures. The researcher first evaluated the accuracy and relevance of the data after which the data was coded and tabulated. The researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis. The tabulated data was entered in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) which was used to analyze the data. Primary data was appropriately coded and entered into the computer for

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analysis. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically. Data was organized into themes, categories and patterns relevant to the study. Quantitative data was coded and analyzed using SPSS and the results was represented using mean, frequency distribution tables, bar graphs and pie charts. To ensure confidentiality, names of the respondents were not used in the study and no respondent were forced to participate in the study. The findings of this research were not concealed (Cohen, 2000).

Results and Discussions

Teacher Quality

The descriptive statistics in chapter four indicates that respondents acknowledged the significance of training and in-service seminars and workshops in improving performance in their schools. The professionally qualified teachers produced excellent results in English. The respondents agreed that teachers needed to engage in in-service trainings to boost their confidence in mastery of the subject.

School Based Factors

The school based factors that were considered in this study were adequacy of text books, adequacy of teaching/learning aids and adequacy of teaching staff, and the impact of school environment on performance of English. The study revealed that availability of text books, teaching/learning aids and adequate number of teachers improved effectiveness of teaching and learning hence boosting performance of students in English subject. It also came out that class size enabled teachers to pay close attention to the learners. Furthermore, the study indicated that adequate time is often allocated for teaching and learning of English in the schools within Rachuonyo North Sub-County. The availability of learning materials helps in building the interest of learners in the subject. Availability of set books also makes studying literature easy. Moreover, existence of enough teachers in the schools improves achievement of students in the subject. The correlation analysis showed that there was no significant relationship between teachers' perception on availability of teaching and learning materials with performance in English subject in Rachuonyo North Sub-County. The students observed that their teachers were among the best as they showed concern over their academic welfare. The school environment such as teacher punctuality, language policy in the school and support from the school management also contribute positively to the performance of English subject. However, the students were indifferent on the notion that the school provided enough textbooks for English, together with revision materials. According to the correlational analysis, there is an average significant relationship between the school-based factors and performance of English in secondary schools in Rachuonyo North Sub-County.

Home Based Factors

The major home based factors that were considered in this study include, parents level of education, parents' support to the school, availability of private study time for the students, parental provision of books and revision materials, parental motivation and parents attending

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their children academic clinics. The study revealed that most students come from homes where parents have average to low levels of education, students also did not get favorable home based factors to improve their performance in English subject. The students did not attain adequate private study time hence making them to entirely rely on studies in schools. Again, parents did not avail adequate books and revision materials to the learners as they considered the ministry to be responsible for provision of books to the learners.

Additionally, the study revealed that learners did not get parental motivation, a situation that made them feel that their parents were not concerned about their school performance. Majority of parents also do not find time to attend their children academic clinics. In this regard, majority of the learners feel neglected and uncared for by their parents. According to the correlational analysis, there is an average significant relationship between the home-based factors and performance of English in secondary schools in Rachuonyo North Sub-County.

Student Characteristics

The study showed that teachers and students had a general feeling that the school administration, through the principal supported the teachers of English to improve the performance of the learners in English. As such, the teachers and the administration had great commitment to ensure that the students performed better. However, the principals suggested that the attitude of the learners determined their level of performance in English. It also came out that students' commitment to learning the subject is dependent on their teachers motivating them. Notably, the teachers were in disagreement over the belief that the students were inquisitive on matters learning English as subject. Furthermore, the students feared visiting their teachers for consultations and would rather seek help from their peers. Further still, majority of the students did not take English subject as their favourite, a factor which has an impact on whether they liked studying the subject or not. It also came out clearly from the principals that students are overwhelmed by the many demands of the English subject and also the testing and answering techniques which they consider technical.

The students were in agreement that their teachers were sensitive about the issues that affected them. They showed their satisfaction with the teachers' commitment to assist them. They equally indicated that they had the best teachers in their schools. However, majority of the students claimed that they did not like studying English and that the subject was not their favorite. Moreover, they cited the inadequate teacher motivation to study the subject.

According to the inferential statistics, there is no significant correlation between the attitude of the learners and the performance of students in English. As such, the indication was that the attitude of teachers had no influence on the performance of students in English subject in Rachuonyo North Sub-County. Conversely, the findings showed that there was significant average positive relationship between the behavior of the students towards learning the subject and performing in it. As such, enhancing the behavior and attitude of the learners in English would presumably lead to better performance.

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Conclusions and Recommendations

Various conclusions were inferred from the study with regards to factors affective performance in English subject in Rachuonyo North Sub-County. First, the researcher concluded that quality of teachers had a weak positive significance on students' performance in English in KCSE. The correlation analysis demonstrated that teacher quality had statistical significant relationship with the performance of learners in English in secondary schools in Rachuonyo North Sub-County. Therefore, the teacher quality affects the performance of students, but not in isolation.

This study also concluded that the school based factors have significant positive influence on the performance of students in English subject. Consequently, enhancement of such factors as provision of learning and teaching materials and properly populated classes together with conducive school environment has paramount importance if performance in the subject has to be improved. However, teachers have to put extra efforts in making sure that the learning materials and teaching aids are effectively used, otherwise their availability would have no significance in the schools. The school administration also needs to put in mechanisms to ensure there is an appropriate language policy and teachers adequately manage and use teaching and learning aids. Again, the study concluded that the students' characteristics such as commitment, attitude, inquisitiveness and behavior have direct influence on performance in English subject in Rachuonyo North sub-County. The study revealed that there is significant positive relationship between the attitude, commitment, behavior and inquisitiveness of learners with their performance in English subject in Rachuonyo North Sub-County. Therefore, improving such students' characteristics in learning English would result into improved performance. On the other hand, the characteristics of teachers have no significant positive relationship with the performance of students in English. Therefore, the researcher concluded that students' behavior, inquisitiveness, commitment and attitude, rather than those of the teachers had direct influence on the performance in English subject in Rachuonyo North Sub-County.

Finally, the study inferred that home-based factors had significant positive relationship with students' performance in English subject in secondary schools in Rachuonyo North Sub-County. Availability of private study time, provision of text books and revision materials, parental motivation as well as arrangement of private tuition had significant relationship with performance in English language. The researcher noted that students who reported poor performance in English were disadvantaged by the home-based factors. As such, enhancement of such factors would result into improved performance in English. The research thus concluded that parents are responsible for enhancing the home-based factors to boost performance of learners in English.

Recommendations

From the findings and conclusions made the study recommended that the school administrations provide more in-service training programs for the teachers to boost their teaching skills. School management boards need to make sure that learning and teaching materials are sufficiently provided in the schools. Furthermore, the study recommended that schools should construct more classes to reduce the population of students per class. Finally, the ministry should employ more

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teachers who are qualified to teach English subject to enhance a more individualized learning. parents and teachers should work together to ensure that the behavior, attitude and commitment of the learners towards English language is maintained on the positive side. Based on the conclusions and recommendation made, the study suggests that future studies should focus on the relationship between in-service training and performance in English language as well as other subjects. Additionally, the researcher recommended that this study should be replicated in other sub-counties to enhance its generalization across the country.

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