

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY BACKGROUND AND ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS STUDENTS: A CASE OF
SIKAKAGO DIVISION, MBEERE NORTH DISTRICT, KENYA**

BY

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other award in any other university. No part of this work should be reproduced without the authors' consent or that of the institution.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my husband, Samuel Kamau, my son, Njenga and my daughter, Yvonne who encouraged me to go back to school.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

SES	Social Economic Status
U N	United Nations
PLCC	Pearson Linear Correlation Coefficient
SPSS	Scientific Package for Social Studies
UK	United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

One of the major aspects of the social pillar of the Kenya Vision 2030 is education. Kenya Vision 2030 points out education and training is an instrument to develop Kenya to be a middle-income economy. Family backgrounds have been highlighted as of great important in molding the performance of children in schools worldwide. This study therefore investigated the relationship between family background on the academic performance of students in Siakago Division, Mbeere North District. This study focused on the influences of; parental marital status, family financial status, parents' education level and family size on the academic performance of students in Siakago Division, Mbeere North District. The study employed a descriptive research design. The target population under study was 1,081 students in Siakago Division and 1,081 parents. The study used a sample 338 students and parents which were selected by use of a proportionate stratified random sampling method. Data was collected by use of questionnaire for parents and interview schedule for students. The data was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively and presented using frequencies, regression coefficient and Pearson's coefficient correlation. Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21 was used to aid in generating a summary of results which were represented in tabular form. The findings of the study, showed that parental marital status, family size, parents education level and family financial status had a positive relationship with academic performance of students. However, the findings showed that while the marital status of the parents was not significant in explaining the academic performance of students, but the type of family, either cohesive or conflictive had an effect in academic performance. The findings also showed that only 7% of students' academic performance would be explained by the parents' education level.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The United Nations Report (2010) highlighted education as a basic right and need which is significant in the accomplishment of the second goal of the Millennium Development Goals. This is because good education academic performance guarantees skilled and dynamic citizens. In addition, one of the aspects of the social pillar of Kenya Vision 2030 is education. Kenya Vision 2030 points out education and training as the media that will take Kenya to be a middle-income economy

Family backgrounds have been of great important in shaping the performance of children in schools worldwide. This is because; academic performance is usually as a result of motivation that children get from the people they interact with in their initial stages of life. A study conducted in the U.S.A by Rouse and Barrow (2006) revealed that years of schooling completed and educational achievement of students, varied widely by family backgrounds. Rouse and Barrow (2006) found out that students who came from less disadvantaged families had higher average test scores and were more likely to have never been held back a grade as compared to students from the more disadvantaged families. However they highlighted that it was not clear to reflect the causal effect of family backgrounds on the child's educational achievement which creates a gap that this study sought to fill by finding out the influence of family backgrounds on the students' academic performance.

Further McIntosh (2008) in his study concluded that in Canada, children who came from low income households, having divorced or separated parents, would actually perform better than average scores if they came from homes that had positive attitudes and that strongly supported their children. This was supported by another study on Children and Youth in Canada that was carried out by Ryan (2000) who reported that there was a significant effect of family background variables, parental support, and teacher support on a child's educational achievement.

The relationship between parental resources on the academic performance of children has received a great deal of attention in the economic literature in African Countries. For instance, Guo and Harris (2000) observed that in Ghana and South Africa states, students' performance in school was strongly associated with their parents' educational attainments. The strong correlation between parental income and student's scholarly achievements is one of the major findings in the literature on the determinants of children's attainments. However, the fact that children of parents with high levels of schooling or income perform better than those from less advantageous family backgrounds does not necessarily imply that the former exert relatively more effort. Consequently, the significance of education attainments and academic performance are related in most African countries. This is because, how well an individual performs in primary and secondary school largely determines the individual's final post-secondary educational destination (Charles, 2003).

In East Africa for instance, parents try to influence the activities that relate to their children's schooling performance, make investments of time and money in their children, and serve as their role models and set objectives and priorities for them to follow (Venkatesh, 1999). In Kenyan situation, financial constrains, education level of the parent and the marital status of the parents are the key determinant of student motivation to study. For instance, a study by Pamela and Kean (2010) stated that those students whose parents had a tertiary level of education performed, significantly better in tests of science, reading and mathematical ability than do those whose parents had only basic schooling. Thus, across these three disciplines, the average grades achieved by students with well-educated parents ranged from 7% higher than those achieved by students with poorly educated parents in developing countries to 45% higher in most developed countries. This therefore, shows that parents' education has some influences on the students' beliefs and behaviors, leading to positive outcomes for children and youth. A study conducted by Kamar (2008) revealed that parents of moderate to high income and educational background held beliefs and expectations that were closer than those of low-income families to the actual performance of their children, Low-income families instead had high expectations and performance beliefs that did not correlate well with their children's actual school performance.

Recent studies of Kenya populations indicated that children from two-parent homes performed better than children from single-parent homes on a variety of social indicators. For instance, Kitainge (2011) found that in most regions within Kenya children living with one parent were less likely to be in school at age 17 than their two-parent counterparts. In another study by Kamar (2008) showed that a significant positive relationship was found between father presence and self-esteem. In addition, father-present youths also exhibited stronger scholastic achievement and more stable peer relations. Another recent study (Otieno, 2010) found that living in a single-parent home was a significant risk factor for violent behavior in Nyanza, rift valley and north eastern children. For given levels of ability, student effort as determined by family background is one of the most important input factors for the production of education, and different from other inputs like teacher quality, school autonomy, or class size (Otieno, 2010).

However, relationship between family background in the academic performance has received only limited attention both on theoretical and empirical grounds. One of the few works in the theoretical literature that takes into account family background, is a paper Ng'ang'a (2008) who compared a standard grading system to a competitive grading system in terms of the level of student effort each family was able to motivate, and showed that the family system's relative advantage depended crucially on the nature of the family background distorting academic achievement. Ng'ang'a (2008) further showed that when leisure is a normal good and students are given monetary rewards by their parents unrelated to their academic performance they become less diligent. Ng'ang'a (2008) however focused on the motivation that families provide to students in terms of monetary rewards. This therefore creates a gap on other ways that family background influences the performance of students. There is also need for empirical study from a Kenyan situation, to assess whether the findings in Canada and U.S.A can be generalized in Kenya hence creating the gap that this study sought to fill.

Mbeere North district is a district in Mbeere County. It is one of the thirteen districts in Eastern Province with a population of 89,035 people and it covers an area of 744.80 square Kilometers. Mbeere North district is made up of two divisions

Euverore and Siakago and it has a total of 18 public secondary schools with a total of 3,500 students.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Poor academic performance of students has been of great concern to educationists, guidance and counselors in particular (McClland, 2000). Despite all guidance programmes and counseling strategies mounted in schools to improve the students' academic performances, poor performances are still recorded yearly in Kenya and it has become necessary to find out the cause of such poor performance. In Mbeere North District, there was an evident increase in the mean score on the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations from 4.89 in the year 2010 to 5.299 in the year 2011 and a drop to 5.01 in the year 2012. This mean score is still quite low as compared to other topping districts in the country (Ministry of Education, 2013). Hence this background created a need to study on the relationship between family background on the academic performance of secondary students in Mbeere North district using a case of Siakago Division.

The Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) is the main examination that is administered to Form four students and it involves taking written and practical examinations in at least eight subjects. Each subject usually has two exam papers commonly referred to as paper 1 and paper 2. Usually for the sciences, paper 1 is the theory exam while paper 2 is the practical exam. For the language exam, paper 1 is the grammar and essay exam while paper 2 is the literature exam. Each exam lasts 2 to 4 hours. Each subject has 12 possible points for a possible total of 72 points. The possible scores in KCSE are as follows:

Table 1.1 Grading system

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Points	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Whereby the scores are described based on the average score in all 8 subjects. This means that a student with an average score of 12 points in the 8 subjects is said to have the highest grade which is denoted as A in the KCSE exam (Kamba, 2010).

Research conducted by scholars on academic performance has consistently shown that family background is important in predicting children's educational achievement (Gunn and Klebanov, 2007). However, the mechanisms for understanding this relationship have not been well studied. This is because, in general, family process models such as those developed by Linver and Brooks (2002) have examined how parenting behaviors, such as the structure of the home environment influence children's achievement outcomes. Others have focused on specific behaviors such as harsh parenting, nurturing, and warmth. Hence, there has been less work on how factors like parental beliefs, education level and marital status influence students' motivation and achievement outcomes. Further, the studies that do exist generally examine young children in low-income or at-risk populations and focus on income-related variables as the moderator variables and family stress as a mediator to achievement outcomes. In addition, none of the scholars has focused on Siakago Division in Mbeere North District in Kenya.

Further, Rouse and Barroe (2006) in their study revealed that parental socio-economic status had a causal effect on children's educational outcomes, but however, they stated that the current studies could not identify precisely how parents' education and income changes affected educational achievement of the students. This therefore creates a gap to find out how parents' education and income changes had a relationship on educational achievement of the students, as well as provide empirical evidence of the same. It is therefore based on this background that this study investigated the relationship between family background and academic performance of students in Siakago Division, Mbeere North District.

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between family background and academic performance of secondary school students in Siakago Division, Mbeere North District. The study examined the relationship between; parental marital status, family financial status, parent education level, family size and the age of the learners, and the academic performance of secondary school students in Siakago Division.

1.4 Research Objectives

The following were the specific objectives of the study:

1. To establish the relationship between parental marital status and academic performance of secondary school students in Siakago Division, Mbeere North District
2. To assess the relationship between family financial situation and academic performance of secondary school students in Siakago Division, Mbeere North District
3. To investigate the relationship between parents' education level and academic performance of secondary school students school in Siakago Division, Mbeere North District
4. To examine the relationship between family size and academic performance of secondary school students in Siakago Division, Mbeere North District

1.5 Research Questions

The following were the research questions answered by the study:

1. What is the relationship between parental marital status and academic performance of secondary school students in Siakago Division, Mbeere North District?
2. What is the relationship between family financial situation and academic performance of secondary school students in Siakago Division, Mbeere North District?
3. What is the relationship between parents' education level and academic performance of secondary school students in Siakago Division, Mbeere North District?
4. What is the relationship between family size and academic performance of secondary school students in Siakago Division, Mbeere North District?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is of importance to different individuals who include: To parents; in order to make them aware of the importance of family background in shaping the academic

performance of their children's; To the school management in order to enlighten them on the important factors in the children's family background so as to be able to deal with or pay more attention to those factors which may affect adversely the students' academic performance; The study will also benefit other future researchers in the same field with the literature to support their arguments and hence improved knowledge. These will have enriched available information on family background specific factors and how they affect students' academic performance in secondary schools

1.7 Limitation of the Study

The study was limited by time and therefore the researcher employed research assistants to ensure that the expected scope was covered within the given time limit. Some respondents did not respond due to issues of confidentiality. The logistics was also a hindrance to the researcher.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

This study was limited to students' academic performance in Siakago Division, Mbeere north district. Mbeere north district is among the five districts in Embu County. Mbeere north district is the largest district in the Embu County, Kenya and it has the highest number of both private and public secondary schools in the county.

1.9 Basic Assumptions

The researcher assumed that all the identified respondents would be cooperative in answering the questions posed and they will answer questions correctly and truthfully.

1.10 Definition of Terms

Academic- The process of teaching and learning in school. It involves reading, studying and examinations.

Educational level- The rank of a person's formal education attainment

Family- A group consisting of blood related people including those adopted to the group.

Family background- refers to circumstances and past events that help to explain how a child develops.

Family background relationship- refers to any positive or negative impression or effect that families exercise on their children while studying in the schools.

Family size- it is the total number of children in the child's family in addition to the child himself.

Family financial Status – This is the money that a person earns at a given time and place. It can be in form of monthly salary or wages as well as returns got from a business.

Performance - Refers to degree of attainment of the required grades in school situation.

Marital Status- The condition of being married or unmarried

1.11 Organisation of the Study

This report is organised into five chapters. Chapter one comprises of background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study, limitation and delimitations of the study and assumptions of the study. The study focuses on the effects of family background on the students' academic performance in Siakago Division within Mbeere north district. Chapter two of the study comprises of the literature review which will present the past study by different scholars on family background and academic performance. The chapter also comprise of the theoretical framework of the study and the conceptual framework. The third chapter is the research methodology, which comprises of the research design, the sampling methods and the data collection and analysis methods. Chapter four comprises of the data analysis, presentation and interpretation, while chapter five comprises of discussion of findings, conclusion and recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the themes that were used to conduct the study. The themes include family background, parental education level, parent marital status, family financial status and family size. This chapter contains also theoretical review and the conceptual framework.

2.2 Theoretical Review: Socialization theory.

Socialization is the process by which human infants begin to acquire the skills necessary to perform as a functioning member of their society, and is the most influential learning process one can experience. Although cultural variability manifests in the actions, customs, and behaviors of whole social groups the most fundamental expression of culture is found at the individual level. This expression can only occur after an individual has been socialized by his or her parents, family, extended family, and extended social networks. This reflexive process of both learning and teaching is how cultural and social characteristics attain continuity (Chao, 2000).

This theory therefore adapted the socialization theory. Socialization theory was developed by Charles Cooley in 1929 and it refers to the parenting practices that influence children's development. Socialization is a lifelong process that involves inheriting and disseminating norms, customs and ideologies hence providing an individual with the skills and habits that are necessary for participating within one's own society. Socialization therefore is the means through which individuals acquire skills that are necessary to perform as functional members of their societies and is the most influential learning process. Although cultural variability manifests in the actions, customs and behaviors of the whole social groups, the most fundamental expression of culture is usually found at the individual levels, and this expression is usually socialized by one's parents, extended family and extended social networks (Harkness, 1996).

Chao (2000) highlighted that usually it is assumed that cultural models define desirable endpoints for development that inform socialization goals which define the

ideas about parenting in terms of parenting ethno theories. He however added that the cultural model is represented mainly by familism which encompasses loyalty, reciprocity and solidarity with the members of the family and therefore the family is an extension of self. Therefore this study added to the knowledge of socialization theory by relating the influence that family background has on only one aspect of a child's life, which is academic achievement. Further, it tested to find out whether this model is applicable in a developing country scenario which is Kenya and specifically Mbeere North District.

2.3 Academic Performance

Education is an essential need in the society today, and therefore academic performance is positioned quite high on the national agenda, with educators and policy makers putting effort in testing, accountability and other related concerns (Mark 2003). In Kenya, education is examination oriented and hence the only evaluation for performance is through examinations (Maiyo, 2009).

2.4 Family Background and Students' academic performance

No doubt, that it is important to investigate the different aspects of academic achievement within a specific family situation. However, the family situations cannot be detached from the general culture (example, societal values, traditions, attitudes and home environment). Accordingly, one applied aspects of this study is secondary school students' performance as influenced by family structure, functions, values and other psychological dimensions such as parent beliefs. Lumsden (2004), for example, stated the role of the significant others (parents and home environment) in students' academic performance as a main factor which shapes the initial constellation of students' attitudes they develop toward learning. He stressed that "When children are raised in a home that nurtures a sense of self-worth, competence, autonomy, and self-efficacy, they will be more apt to accept the risks inherent in learning." (P.2). Fleming and Gottfried (2004) supported this trend and emphasized that their study "strongly suggest that parental motivational practices are causal influences on children's academic intrinsic motivation and school achievement" (P.110). Accordingly, there was a need to instruct parents on motivational practices such as encouragement of persistence, effort, mastery of subject area, curiosity and exploration that are likely to impact on the academic performance of the student (Gottfried et al., 2004).

In fact, the impact of family on students' motivation and school achievement is an old issue that was stressed by since 1953. Recent studies in Australia, for example, had pinpointed the role of social integration in academic integration (McInnwas, Hartley, Polesel & Teese, 2000). Some of these studies showed that experiences with peers and family members do influence social and academic integration in complex ways. The demands, for example, of family and friends outside the academic institution can limit opportunities for social integration (Chrwastie and Dinham, 2001). Ryan et al (2000) stressed that despite the fact that humans are liberally endowed with intrinsic motivational tendencies, the evidence was now clear that the maintenance and enhancement of this inherent propensity requires supportive conditions, as it can be fairly disrupted by various unsupportive conditions.

Research has revealed that external negative impacts such as threats, deadlines, directives, pressured evaluations, and imposed goals diminish intrinsic motivation. Consequently the same reported that studies showed that autonomy-supportive parents, relative to controlling parents, have children who are more intrinsically motivated (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

2.5 Family Financial Situation

Family background can be analytically separated into at least three distinct components as raised by Coleman (2008). These are: financial (physical) capital (family income or wealth), human capital (parent education), and social capital (relationship among actors). With respect to children's educational achievement, Kim (2002) maintained that, there is a direct relationship between parental financial and human capital and the successful learning experience of their children. However, he stressed that while both of these factors are important determinants of children educational success, there remains a substantial proportion of variation in educational success, which was unaccounted for by these variables alone. Kim (2002) explained that this variance by what he called the "social capital" which mediates the relationship between parents' financial and human capital, on the one hand, and the development of the human capital of their children on the other. A research conducted using a sample of low-income minority families, found that mothers with higher education had higher expectations for their children's academic achievement and that

these expectations were related to their children's subsequent achievement in math and reading (Kim, 2002).

The economic deprivation perspective has been given enormous attention by researchers of African family processes, specifically with regard to single-mother homes (McLanahan, and Wilson, 2009). Fifty percent of African female-headed families live below the poverty line, which makes them the most impoverished group in Africa (Taylor et al., 2000). The proponents of the economic deprivation perspective argued that the potential effects of single parents is not due to the physical absence of one parent but to the absence of the economic resources generated by the absent parent. Therefore, the effects of marital status on child well-being will be reduced when income is statistically controlled or when families are matched on income level. For instance, McLeod et al. (2004) argued that parents who experienced income loss became more rejecting of their children and that their children were at risk for developing feelings of inadequacy associated with parental rejection. However, the empirical research on the effects of income has not been adequately tested (Amato & Keith, 2001) nor has it consistently supported these assumptions for African children.

The limitations and small effect sizes found by family structure studies, as well as the income perspectives, led many researchers to criticize both approaches for several reasons (Murray et al 2009). For instance, Ng'ang'a (2008) argued that the major problem with pathological-based studies was not the harsh facts that described an important number of African families but the failure to study how these families survived in extremely adverse conditions.

A study revealed that single motherhood generally reduces the economic resources available to families because non-custodial fathers contribute far less to their children's household than they otherwise would. In fact, only a minority of children with non-custodial fathers receives any child support payments, and the amount is typically very small. This means that by reducing income and necessitating greater paid work by mothers, single motherhood increases the time children must spend doing housework and working for pay, which might negatively affect educational achievement and progress (Zulauf and Gortner,1999). Another study conducted by

Becker (2001) revealed that family income also affected children's educational aspirations, their status among their peers, their neighborhood quality, the stability of their lives, and insecurity within their family, any or all of which may influence child outcomes. Furthermore, the inability to exploit the work/home specialization afforded by two-parent families' means that child care expenses are often greater for single mothers than they would be with a husband. Another benefit of specialization is that married parents may self-invest strategically in forms of human capital that, over time, magnify the gains from a work/home division of labor (Becker, 2001). Husbands and wives can exploit the comparative advantage each has in household and market production so that investment in children is greater than it would otherwise be in the absence of specialization.

2.6 Parental Marital Status

A number of significant changes have occurred in African families over the past 50 years (Tucker and Mitchell-Kernan, 2005). In 1950, married couples headed 78% of African families. By 1996, this number dropped to only 34% (Amato and Keith, 2001). The divorce rate has also increased dramatically for African. In 1960, only 78 per 1,000 African women's marriages ended in divorce. In 1990, this number jumped to 358 per 1,000 (Tucker and Mitchell Kernan, 2005), It is expected that 75% of African children born to married parents will experience their parents' divorce before the age of sixteen (Amato and Keith, 2001).

Studies conducted on African populations indicated that children from two-parent homes do better than children from single-parent homes on a variety of social indicators (McLeod, et al, 2008). Coley (2008) found that African children living with one parent were less likely to be in school at age 17 than their two-parent counterparts. In another study, a significant positive relationship was found between father presence and self-esteem (Alston and Williams, 2002). Father-present youths also exhibited stronger scholastic achievement and more stable peer relations and that the father-son relationship facilitated the adoption of an adequate self-concept because boys were able to model their fathers. The study further found that living in a single-parent home was a significant risk factor for violent behavior in African children.

A recent longitudinal study found that African children in two-parent homes had significantly higher math and reading scores and lower behavioral problems than did children in single-parent homes. The results held up over a 4-year period for both older and younger siblings in the sample (Paschall et al 2006). However, some researchers highlighted the fact that not all studies show advantages for two-parent homes as evident by the study carried out by Vollmer (2006) ,and even for the studies that do, the effect sizes may not be large enough to be socially relevant. Many researchers also argued that the consequences of single- parent homes were mainly related to the economic deprivation of the single-parent home and others argued that the studies did not account for important aspects of family functioning or extended kin (Scott and Black, 2009). For instance, Wilson (2009) argued that the strength of flexible family roles in African families has not been taken into consideration.

The family structure model fails to consider aspects of parent-child relationships (Partridge and Kotler, 2007) and socialization processes within African families (Wilson, 2002). The family functioning model suggests that children may be better off in a cohesive single-parent home than in a conflictive two-parent home (Vollmar, 2006). Research on the effects of family functioning quality on African children has generally been very supportive of the family functioning theory (Heiss, 2006). Dancy and Handal (2004) found that family-environment quality significantly predicted African adolescents' perceptions of family climate, psychological adjustment, and grade point average. Heiss (2006) also found that family structure had weak effects on academic variables for African adolescents, but parental involvement had a very strong effect on the same variables.

Numerous studies showed that fathers and mothers treated their girls and boys differently. For instance, Wilson (2009) found differences in children's and mothers' perceptions regarding the African fathers' socializing strategies of their girls and boys. Specifically, mothers, grandmothers, daughters, and sons perceived the fathers of sons as using more controlling, demanding, and supporting parental behaviors than was perceived for fathers of daughters. Fathers of sons were also perceived as more involved with their children than were fathers of daughters. Other studies showed that fathers hold more masculine gender role attitudes toward their sons and more feminine attitudes toward their daughters (Hokoda and Fincham, 2005). In general,

fathers appeared to be more strict with their boys than were mothers and more strict with boys than they were with girls. Therefore, the effects of parental marital status may be more apparent for boys than for girls.

Further as study conducted by Turker (2003) reported that those who grow up in fatherless families do worse on measures of scholastic achievement, educational attainment, psychological health, behavioral problems, delinquency, stable family formation, early sexual debut, partner satisfaction, economic success, and even physical health. The bottom line is that single motherhood may reduce the quantity of parental time with children, both for mothers and fathers. This may translate into less socialization, less supervision and monitoring, and less involvement and emotional support.

Household composition is less stable among single-mother families, with extended family, boyfriends, and stepfathers entering and exiting the picture over the course of childhood. Such instability may be psychologically disruptive to children. To the extent that it reduces income, growing up with a single mother may shape educational aspirations by making college seem more or less plausible an option. Furthermore, single mothers may be unable to afford luxuries such as stylish clothes, sports equipment and fees, and orthodontics for their children. Their children's status among their peers may suffer as a result (Harris, 1999). Finally, having a single mother itself may be stigmatizing to children.

Furthermore, single parenting can rob children of gender-specific role-modeling (Sigle-Rushton and McLanahan, 2012). Father absence – resulting either from divorce or non-marital pregnancy – might harm the ability of children to form healthy relationships (Fleming and Gottfried, 2004). Coley (2008) has argued that single-mother families feature less hierarchical and more peer-like relations between parent and child than two-parent families do. Single mothers are more reliant on their children for support and assistance than married mothers are. As a result, their children are under-exposed to authority relations typical of hierarchical institutions related to education and employment. Fathers may also have cultural capital that mothers lack, such as knowledge about professions and industries dominated by men (Scott and Black, 2009).

2.7 Parental Education Level

The influence of the level of education of parents on the academic performance of their children is evident in all countries. Pamela and Kean (2010) states those that students whose parents have a tertiary level of education perform, on average, significantly better in tests of science, reading and mathematical ability than do those whose parents have only basic schooling. Thus, across these three disciplines, the average grades achieved by students with well-educated parents ranged from 7% higher than those achieved by students with poorly educated parents in developing countries to 45% higher in most developed countries.

Even though the majority of the literature on parents' education pertains to the direct, positive influence on achievement (Ryan and Deci, 2000), the literature also suggests that it influences the beliefs and behaviors of the parent, leading to positive outcomes for children and youth (Heiss, 2006). For example, Alston and Williams (2002) found that parents of moderate to high income and educational background held beliefs and expectations that were closer than those of low-income families to the actual performance of their children, Low-income families instead had high expectations and performance beliefs that did not correlate well with their children's actual school performance.

Research on parenting also has shown that parent education is related to a warm, social climate in the home. Gottfried et al. (2004) found that both mothers' education and family income were important predictors of the physical environment and learning experiences in the home but that mothers' education alone was predictive of parental warmth. Likewise, Smith et al. (2007) found that the association of family income and parents' education with children's academic achievement was mediated by the home environment. The mediation effect was stronger for maternal education than for family income. Thus, these authors posited that education might be linked to specific achievement behaviors in the home. Murray and Fairchild (2009) also found that maternal education had the most consistent direct influence on children's cognitive and behavioral outcomes with some indirect influence through a cognitively stimulating home environment. However, they examined only two, quite broad

aspects of family mediators: learning stimulation and parental responsiveness. Mediation might have emerged if other parent behaviors and attitudes were examined.

On the same line, Iverson & Walberg (2002) had revised 18 studies of 5,831 school-aged students on a systematic research of educational, psychological, and sociological literature. Accordingly, they had concluded that students' ability and achievement are more closely linked to the socio-psychological environment and intellectual stimulation in the home than they are to parental socio-economic status indicators such as occupation and amount of education.

2.8 Family Size

Family size in this context refers to the total number of children in the child's family in addition to the child himself. The type of family that a child comes from either monogamous or polygamous family usually has impact on the child academic performance. Moreover, either of the family type (monogamous or polygamous) family dictates the size of the family. Polygamous family is peculiar to Africa in general and in Kenya in particular. According to Gottfried et al. (2004), polygamous family is a common among well educated families as well as among poorly-educated families. He added that it is equally common among professional and managerial fathers of the top of the occupational hierarchy although to unskilled workers polygamous is prominent.

Children from larger families are found to do worse than children from smaller families as revealed by Lacovou (2001). He found out that children lower down the birth order do worse than those higher up the birth order. According to Adler (2009), first borns or the oldest child is usually advantaged by a good deal of attention and warmth during the early stage on age of life, which he entertains all alone. Observations and studies have shown that more attention and time are usually accorded to the first born (Seigal, 2007). Lacovou (2001) reported that parental attention by parents declines as the number of sibling's increases and later born children perform less well than earlier born siblings.

Studies carried out in the past on the relationship between academic achievement and birth order have shown that there were positive relationships. For example, Scott &

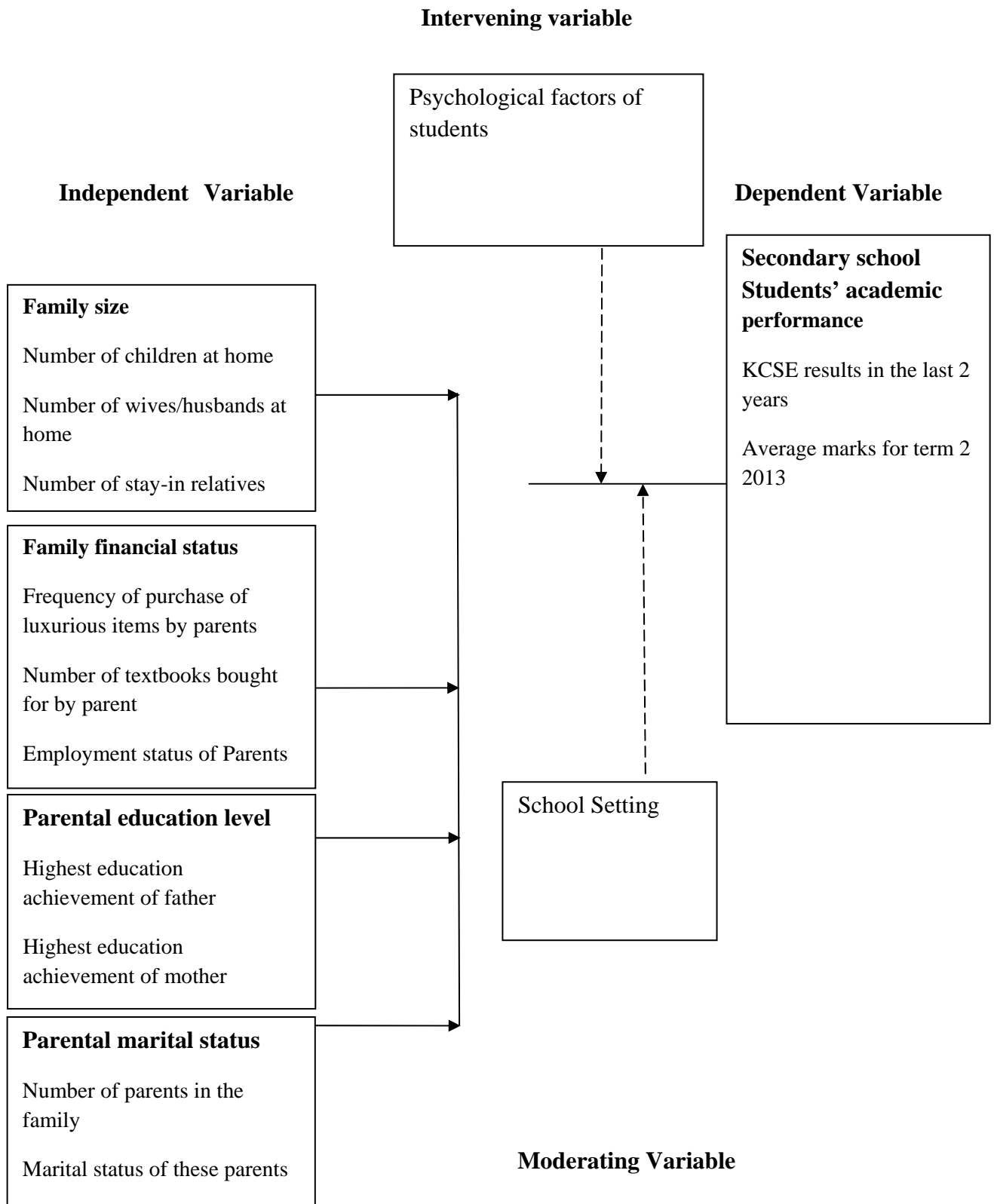
Black (2009) discovered that on relationship of birth order and creativity, first born and configurations of oldest and only children are significantly more creative on verbal test of creativity than later born. Smith et al. (2007) observed that there was more significantly outstanding academic performance amongst first birth children. Seigal (2007) observed that there was a significant difference in intelligence capacity between the first born children and later born children.

A study conducted by Rushton and McLanahan (2012) found out that children's attainment depends on inputs of time and money from their parents; the more children there are in the family the less of both inputs. These inputs are not money alone, but other essential things like time, attention, resource dilution and so on. However, Seigal (2007) confirmed that children from larger families have lower levels of education.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework explains the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. It briefly explains the relationship between family size, family financial status, parental marital status, parental education level and academic performance of students in secondary schools in Siakago Division in Mbeere North . This is presented in figure 1.

Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework



2.9.1 Explanation of the conceptual framework

The independent variable of this study is family background, which is divided into the following components; family size, family financial status, parental educational level and parental marital status while the dependent variable is secondary school students' academic performance. The intervening variable is the psychological factors of students and the moderating variable is the school setting which is believed to have a contingent effect on the dependent variable. The school setting is made up of the characteristics of an individual school such as the type of school, the administration, the decision making processes in the school, degree of students' participation in decision making among others.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the research design, the target population and sample procedure, data collection instruments and methods of data analysis and validity and reliability of research instruments and finally methods to be used for data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to answer the research questions of this study. The researcher selected a descriptive survey design since it attempts to describe the characteristics of the variables of this study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). According to Robson, (2002) asserts that descriptive research design studies have advantages in that they may be adopted to collect information that can be generalized from all population and that they provide relatively simple and straight forward approach to the study of values, attitudes, beliefs and motives.

3.3 Target Population

The target population of this study were 1081 secondary school students in Siakago Division, Mbeere North District. (District Education Office, 2012). The study also focused on parents. For this study, an assumption was made that for every student, there is a parent and therefore targeted a population of 1081 parents as shown in (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Population distribution

Population	Number	Percentage %
Students	1,081	50
Parents	1,081	50
Total	2,164	100

3.4 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

This study adopted a stratified random sampling to select a sample of 338 participants. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) pointed out that a 10% sample is a sufficient representation of the target population. The sample parents were selected by use of convenience sampling while teachers and students were proportionately selected from the 18 schools in Siakago division.

$$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2) \text{ and } n_h = (N_h / N) * n$$

Where:

N = Total population size, n = Total sample size, N_h = Population size for stratum., n_h = Sample size for stratum, e = error margin (0.05)

$$n = 2164 / [1 + 2164(0.05^2)]$$

$$= 338$$

Table 3.2 Sample Frame

Category	Population	Sample	Percentage %
Students	1,081	169	50
Parents	1,081	169	50
Total	2,164	338	100

3.5 Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

A questionnaire requiring subjects not to disclose their identity was used to collect data from parents. The questionnaire had both structured and unstructured questions. The researcher also used questionnaires in order to uphold the confidentiality of the respondents and also in order to save time. The study also used structured interview schedules to collect information from students.

The procedure for data collection was be as follows: Permission was requested from the respective schools showing that the study is for academic purposes. Written questionnaires were hand delivered to the subjects. The subjects were instructed not to

reveal their identity and were assured that the information given was purely for research purpose and would not affect them individually.

3.6 Reliability of the Instruments

Reliability of the instruments was carried out in order to find out whether the measures of the research instrument yield the same results on other occasions (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2008) Therefore, to ensure reliability, this study used triangulation, in which there was more agreement of different data sources on the research objectives, thus ensuring easier and reliable interpretation of the data. Orodho (2003) argued that the idea behind triangulation is that the more agreement of different data sources on a particular issue, the more reliable the interpretation of the data.

3.7 Validity of the Instruments

Validity is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure according to the researcher's subjective assessment (Nachmias & Nachmias, 2007). Validity deals with the adequacy of the instrument for example, the researcher needs to have adequate questions in the written task in order to collect the required data for analysis that can be used to draw conclusions. To ensure validity of the instrument used, the designed questionnaire for this study was given to the two academic advisors to determine their suitability. The instrument was amended according to the experts' comments and recommendations before being administered. Frenekel (1993) suggested that the individual who is supposed to render an intelligent judgment about the adequacy of the instruments should be given the instruments before the actual research is carried out.

3.8 Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected was edited and analyzed by use of SPSS package version 21. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data and the findings were presented in Tables and figures.

3.9. Operationalization of variables

Table 3.3: Operationalization of variables

Objective	Variable	Indicator	Measurement	Scale	Approach of Analysis	Data collection method
Academic performance of secondary school in Siakago Division, Mbeere North District	Dependent Variable Academic Performance	KCSE results in the last 2 years Students performance in the past term	Results Rank	Ordinal	Descriptive	Questionnaire
To establish the relationship between parental marital status and academic performance of secondary school students in Siakago Division in Mbeere North District	Independent Variable Parental marital status	Presence of single parent or two parent family	Number of parents in each family Marital status of the parents	Interval	Correlation Regression	Questionnaire

<p>To assess the relationship between family financial status and academic performance of secondary school students in Siakago Division, Mbeere North District.</p>	<p>Independent Variable</p> <p>Family financial status</p>	<p>Income of parents</p>	<p>Number of times parents buy luxurious good per month</p> <p>Number of text books that a student possess</p> <p>The type of job parent are doing</p>	<p>Interval</p> <p>Ratio</p>	<p>Correlation</p> <p>Regression</p>	<p>Questionnaire</p>
<p>To investigate the relationship between parent education level and academic performance of secondary school students in Siakago Division, Mbeere North District.</p>	<p>Independent Variable</p> <p>Parent education level</p>	<p>Academic qualification</p>	<p>Diploma</p> <p>Degree</p> <p>Postgraduate</p> <p>Masters</p>	<p>Ordinal</p>	<p>Correlation</p> <p>Regression</p>	<p>Questionnaire</p>

<p>To examine the relationship between family size and academic performance of secondary school students in Siakago Division, Mbeere North District.</p>	<p>Independent Variable</p> <p>Family size</p>	<p>Type of a family (polygamous or monogamous)</p>	<p>Number of children at each family</p> <p>Number of wives/ husbands present per home</p> <p>Number of stay-in relatives</p>	<p>Ratios</p>	<p>Correlation</p> <p>Regression</p>	<p>Questionnaire</p>
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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides summary of the data collected. Data was collected by use of questionnaires for parents and structured interview schedules for students. The chapter contains two sections; the response return rate and findings of the objectives of the study which are explained in tabular form by use of descriptive and inferential statistics.

4.2 Respondents return rate

Table 4.1 Respondents return rate

Category	Instruments distributed	Instruments collected	Percentage %
Students	169	159	50
Parents	169	156	50
Total	338	315	100

The total number of questionnaires disbursed were 169 and 156 (92%) were returned. A further 169 interviews were carried out among students and the study managed to carry out interviews among 159 students which constitute 94% as shown in Table 4.1. This rate of return was considered adequate according to (Dilliman 2000).

4.3.1 Demographic information

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The characteristics discussed in this section are; gender and the category of school attended by the students.

4.3.2 Gender

The study sought to find out the gender distribution of the respondents. as showed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Gender distribution of parents and students

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	180	57
Female	135	43
Total	315	100

The findings showed that (57%) were male while (43%) were female.

4.3.3 Category of school attended

The study asked the respondents to identify the type of school that the students attended. As for the interview by students, they were identifying the type of school that they go to while the parents were identifying the type of school that their children school in. the findings are indicated in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Category of school

The category of the schools were analyzed and cross tabulated as shown below.

School	Frequency	Percentage %
Boys boarding	97	31
Girls boarding	126	40
Day school	92	29
Total	315	100

The findings showed that majority of the respondents 31% were in girls' boarding school and 29% were in day schools.

4.4.1 Academic performance

The dependent variable of this study was academic performance of secondary school students in Siakago Division. This section presents the finding of improvement of school in KCSE and the trend of the performance of their schools.

4.4.2 Improvement of school in KCSE

The study asked the respondents to state whether the school they schooled in for students and the schools where their children schooled for parents, had improved in performance in the past 2 years.

Table 4.4 Improvement of school in the past 2 years

The improvement of schools in the last two years were analyzed and cross tabulated as shown below.

Improved	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	277	88
No	38	12
Total	315	100

The findings showed that (88%) said that the performance had improved in the last 2 years, while only (12%) felt that the school had not improved in the past 2 years.

4.4.3 Academic performance of students in the past term

The study wanted to investigate the academic performance of students subject to this study in the past term in school. The findings are shown by the Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Academic performance of students in the past term

N	Min	Max	Mean	Std dev
315	17	79	45.13	14.08

The findings in Table 4.5 shows the minimum average marks is 17% and the maximum average marks is 79%.This translates to a range of 62% which reflects a high disparity of academic performance. Further, the mean was 45.13 which is below 50%.

4.4.4 Cross-tabulation of improvement of school and category of respondents

The study wanted to find out the frequency of responses on improvement of school and the category of the respondents. The main aim was to find out whether there was a relationship between the responses and the type of respondent. This is to identify whether there was a bias of response due to the type of respondent.

Table 4.6 Cross tabulation of school improvement and category of respondents

The school improvement and category of respondents were analyzed and cross tabulated as shown below.

	Yes	No	Total
Students	121	38	159
Parents	156	0	156
Total	277	38	315

The findings showed that 121 students said that there was an improvement while no parent (0) felt that there was no improvement. This shows that parents had a more positive outlook as compared to the students.

4.4.5 Trend of performance of child in the past 2 years

The study sought to investigate the trend of performance of the student in the past 2 years. The findings are shown in Table 4.7

Table 4.7 Trend of student performance in the past 2 years

Trend	Frequency	Percentage %
Increasing	203	64
Constant	9	3
Decreasing	52	17
Irregular	51	16
Total	315	100

The findings showed that 64% of the respondents felt that the performance was increasing while only 3% felt that the performance was constant. 17% felt that the students performance was decreasing while 16% felt that the performance was irregular.

4.4.6 Cross tabulation of trend of student’s performance and category of respondents

The study examined the opinions on the trend of student performance and the type of respondents, as shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Cross tabulation of trend of student performance in the last 2 years and category of respondents

	Increasing Irregular	Constant	Decreasing	
Student	94	9	28	28
Parent	104	0	24	23
Total	203	9	52	51

The findings showed that no parent (0) felt that the trend was constant.

4.5.1 Parents marital status and academic performance

The study focused on parents' marital status as one of the independent variables of the study. This section investigated the marital status of parents, the type of family and the opinion of the respondents on the effect of parents' marital status on students' academic performance.

4.5.2 Parents marital status

The study investigated the marital status of the parents of the respondents. When probed further, the respondents who said that they were from divorced families, said that when the parents divorced, the children were between 6 years and 12 years.

Table 4.9 Parents marital status

Status	Frequency	Percentage %
Single	27	8.6
Married	246	78.1
Divorced	33	10.5
Widowed	9	2.9
Total	315	100

The findings showed that 78.1% of the respondents were from married parents' families while 8.6% were from single parent families.

4.5.3 Type of family

The study wanted to find out how the respondents rated their families. The findings were presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 Type of family

Type of family	Frequency	Percentage %
Cohesive	231	73
Conflictive	84	27
Total	315	100

The finding showed that (73%) of the respondents said that they came from cohesive families while (27%) of them said that they came from conflictive families.

4.5.4 Effect of family structure on academic performance

The study asked the respondents to indicate whether they felt that their family structure had an effect on the students' academic performance as shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11 Family structure affects family performance

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	279	89
No	36	11
Total	315	100

The findings showed that (89%) felt that there was an effect while (11%) felt that it did not affect the academic performance at all.

4.5.5 Relationship between marital status and academic performance of students

The study wanted to find out the relationship between marital status of parents and academic performance of students. The study conducted a cross tabulation of marital status and academic performance of students.

Table 4.12 Cross tabulation of academic performance and parental marital status

Performance	Marital status				Total
	Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed	
38% and less	10 (3.2%)	85 (27.0%)	12 (3.8%)	0 (0%)	107 (34.0%)
39%-58%	16 (5.1%)	118 (37.5%)	12 (3.8%)	0 (0%)	146 (46.3%)
59% and above	1 (0.3%)	43 (13.7%)	9 (2.9%)	9 (2.9%)	62 (19.7%)
Total	27 (8.6%)	246 (78.1%)	33 (10.5%)	9 (2.9%)	315 (100%)

The findings showed that 3.2% of students who performed 38% and less were from single parent families while only 0.3% of the students from single parent families scored 59% and above in the past term exam.

4.13 Regression analysis of academic performance

The study carried out a regression analysis to find out whether the of the students academic performance could be explained by the parents' marital status.

Table 4.13 Regression analysis of academic performance and parents' marital status

Model	R	R ²	Significance
	0.478	0.228	0.000

The results showed that marital status of parents was significant in explaining the academic performance of students since the p-value was 0.000 which is less than the alpha-value of the study (0.05).

Table 4.14 Correlation analysis of marital status and academic performance

	Academic performance	marital status	Type of family
Academic performance	1	0.105(p= 0.063)	0.450(p= 0.000)
Marital Status	0.105(p= 0.063)	1	0.165(p= 0.003)
Type of family	0.450(p= 0.000)	0.165(p= 0.003)	1

The findings showed that the type of family from which the student grows in was significant in explaining the academic performance of the student (p=0.000) while the marital status was not significant (p = 0.063) at alpha level of 0.05. However, the marital status had a positive correlation with thee type of family (r=0.165) and was therefore significant in determining the type of family, whether conflictive of cohesive, at p= 0.003.

4.6.1 Family financial situation and academic performance

This section presents the findings of the independent variable; family financial status of the family. The section focuses on the source of parents' income, trend of parents' income in the last 2 years and the financing of the children's school fees.

4.6.2 Family's main source of income

The study sought to find out the main source of income for the families that the students came from. The findings are shown in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15 Main Sources of income

Source	Frequency	Percentage %
Monthly salary	147	46.7
Selling farm inputs	53	16.8
Small business	79	25.1
Total	315	100

The findings showed that (46.7%) of the respondents said that the main source of income was monthly salary while (25.1%) relied more on small businesses. A further probe, showed that majority of the families had an aggregate of between ksh.6, 000 and ksh.10, 000 per month.

4.6.3 Trend of monthly income

The study wanted to find out the income of the families in the past two years. The findings are shown in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16 Trend of income in the past two years

Trend	Frequency	Percentage %
Increasing	129	41.0
Reducing	53	16.8
Irregular	115	36.5
Constant	18	5.7
Total	315	100

The results showed that (41%) of the respondents said that the income has been increasing in the last two years, while (36.5%) of the respondents said that the income has been irregular. 17% of the respondent felt that the trend was reducing while 6% felt that the trend was constant.

4.6.4 Children’s school fees financing

The study investigated how the students’ school fees were financed in the various families as shown in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17 Financing of students school fees

Source	Frequency	Percentage %
Financed fully by parents	286	91
Financed partly by parents and Partly well wishers	29	9
Total	315	100

The findings showed that (90.8%) of the respondents said that the parents financed the fees fully while (3.2%) said that the parents financed partly and sponsors/ well wishers financed partly.

4.6.5 Relationship between family financial status and academic performance

The researcher carried out a regression analysis to estimate the relationship between family financial status and the academic performance of students. The findings showed that 22.2% of the students’ academic performance can be explained by the family financial status. Further, it showed that family financial status is significant in explaining the academic performance of students at $p=0.000$ which is less than the alpha level 0.05. The findings are summarized in table 4.18.

Table 4.18 Regression analysis of family financial status and academic performance

R	R ²	Significance
0.471	0.222	0.000

The study further carried out a correlation analysis of the same to find out the degree of relationship between family financial status and academic performance of students. The findings are illustrated in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19 Correlation analysis of family financial status and academic performance

	Academic performance
Main Source of income	0.287 (p= 0.000)
Trend of income	0.285 (p= 0.000)
Financing of school fees	0.041 (p= 0.464)

The findings showed that there is a very weak relationship between the academic performance of the students and the method of funding school fees ($r = 0.041$) and since the p-value $= 0.464$ is more than the alpha value 0.05, then we can conclude that the method of financing school fees is not statistically significant in explaining the academic performance of the students.

4.7.1 Parents' education level and academic performance of students.

The study investigated the effect that parents' education level has on academic performance of students. This section focused on; the level of mother's education, the level of father's education and the opinion of the respondent on the effect of parents' education level on academic performance of students.

4.7.2 Mother's level of education

The study investigated the education level of the mothers among the respondents.

Table 4.20 Mother education level

Education level	Frequency	Percentage %
Primary	77	24.4
Secondary	188	59.7
Tertiary	50	15.9
Total	315	100

The findings showed that 188 (59.7%) of the respondents said that their mothers had secondary level education while only 50 (15.9%) had tertiary level education. These findings are shown in Table 4.20.

4.7.3 Fathers education level

The study investigated the education level of the fathers among the respondents.

Table 4.21 Education level of the father

Education level	Frequency	Percentage %
Primary	67	21.3
Secondary	147	46.7
Tertiary	101	32.1
Total	315	100

The findings revealed that 147 (46.7%) of the respondents said that their fathers had secondary level education while 101 (32.1%) had tertiary level education. These findings are shown in Table 4.21.

4.7.4 Effect of parents education level on academic performance

The study sought the opinion of the respondents, as to whether they felt that the education level of parents had an effect on the academic performance of students.

Table 4.22 Parents education level effect on academic performance of students

	Yes	No	Total
Student	141	18	159
Parents	156	0	156
Total	297	18	315

The findings showed that 141 students said that education level of parents did affect the academic performance of students while all the parents responding to the study (156) were in agreement as illustrated in Table 4.22.

4.7.5 Relationship between parents' education level and academic performance of students

The study conducted a regression analysis to estimate the relationship between the parents' education level and academic performance of students.

Table 4.23 Regression analysis of parents' education level and academic performance

R	R ²	Significance
0.264	0.070	0.000

The finding summarized in Table 4.23 showed that there was a positive relationship at ($R = 0.264$) this also implied that only 7% of the students academic performance can be explained by the parents education level.

The study further conducted a correlation analysis to find out the degree of relationship between parents' education level and academic performance of the students. The findings summarized in Table 4.24 showed that the mother's education level has a stronger positive correlation ($r = 0.252$) to academic performance of the student as compared to the fathers education level ($r = 0.196$).

Table 4.24 Correlation between education level of parents and academic performance

	Academic performance
Average education level of mother	0.252 ($p = 0.000$)
Average education level of father	0.196 ($p = 0.000$)
Parents' education level affect academic performance	0.135 ($p = 0.017$)

4.8.1 Family size and students' academic performance

The study wanted to find out the effect of the family size on students academic performance. This section examined the number of children in the respondents' families, the family structure and the opinion of the respondents as to whether the family size affected the students' academic performance.

4.8.2 Number of children in the family

In this section, the researcher asked the respondents to indicate the number of children in their families.

Table 4.25 Number of children

Children	Frequency	Percentage %
1-2	108	34.3
3-5	189	60.0
6-10	18	5.7
Total	315	100

The findings summarized in table 4.25 showed that 189 (60%) had 3-5 children while 108 (34.3%) had 1-2 children.

4.8.3 Effect of number of children on academic performance

The study wanted to find out from what the respondents, their opinion on whether the size of the family had an effect on the academic performance of the students.

Table 4.26 Effect of number of children on academic performance

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	241	76.5
No	74	23.5
Total	315	100.0

The findings are summarized in table 4.26. The findings showed that 241 (76.5%) of the respondents said that the family size affected academic performance of students while 74 (23.5%) said that it had no effect.

4.8.4 Effect of birth position on students academic performance

The study investigated the opinion of respondents as to whether the birth position of a student had an effect on their academic performance.

Table 4.27 Effect of birth position on academic performance

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	185	58.7
No	130	41.3
Total	315	100

The findings showed that 185 (58.7%) of the respondents said that the birth position had an effect on academic performance while 130 (41.3%) said that it did not. After further probing, the respondents who said that there was an effect, the majority explained that first born children performed better than last born children (Table 4.27)

4.8.5 Relationship between family size and academic performance of students

The study carried out a regression analysis to estimate the relationship between the family size and academic performance of students.

Table 4.28 Regression analysis between family size and academic performance of students

R	R²	Significance
0.378	0.143	0.000

The findings showed in table 4.28 showed that 14.3% of the students' academic performance could be explained by the size of their family.

Further the study conducted a correlation analysis, to determine the degree of relationship between family size and academic performance. at alpha = 0.05.

Table 4.29 Correlation analysis between family size and academic performance

	Academic performance
Number of children	0.263 (p = 0.000)
Effect of birth position	-0.042 (p = 0.459)
Effect of family size	-0.266 (p = 0.000)

The findings are summarized in table 4.29 and showed that; there is a negative relationship between the family size and academic performance and the birth position and academic performance. However from the study, it is evident that the birth position of the students is not significant in explaining the students' academic performance.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction of the summary

This chapter outlines the summary of findings and the discussions of the research findings. The chapter also presents the conclusions of the study based on the findings and recommendations. The study's objectives were; to establish relationship between; parental marital status, family financial status, parents education level and family size and academic performance.

5.2 Summary of the findings

This section outlines the review of the findings of the study. The section centers on the research objectives which were on the relationship of parental marital status, family financial status, parents' education level and family size and academic performance.

5.2.1 Relationship between Parental marital status and academic performance

The study was investigating the relationship between parental marital status and the academic performance of students. The findings showed that majority of students (78.1%) came from married parents' families. These findings therefore supports the observation made by Mc Leod, Kruttschnitt and Donfeld (2004) that children from two parent homes do better than children from single parents homes.

The study also showed that majority of this families (73.3%) were cohesive families, which explains the reason why 64.4% of the students pointed out that their performance had been increasing in the past 2 years. The correlation analysis if the study showed that the type of family that students came from had a positive although weak ($r = 0.450$) correlation to the academic performance of the students. However, although the correlation of the marital status of the parents was very weak ($r = 0.105$) and is not statistically significant in explaining the academic performance of students ($p = 0.063$), the correlation analysis showed that marital status of the parents was significant in estimating the type of family ($p = 0.003$). This is in context with the

observation made by Vollmar (2006) that children perform better in a cohesive family than a conflictive family. Actually he claimed that children were better-off in a single parent cohesive family than a two parent conflictive family. These explain the findings of this study that the type of family has a stronger relationship to academic performance of students than the marital status of the parent.

5.2.2 Relationship between family financial status and academic performance of students

The study observed that majority of families from which students come from (46.7%) has a monthly salary as the main source income with a monthly salary of between Ksh. 6,000 and Kshs. 10,000. The study further showed that at least 41% of the families have the income level increasing in the past 2 years while a close 36.5% have had irregular monthly incomes. A further analysis showed that 90.8% of students' school fees are financed solely by the parents.

An analysis of the relationship revealed that 22.2% of the students' academic performance could be explained by the family's financial status. However while the source of income and the trend of income were found to be significant in explain the academic performance of students ($p = 0.000$), it was observed the how the school fees of the students is financed, is not significant in explaining the academic performance of the students ($p = 0.464$).

These findings supports the claim made by Kim (2002) when he pointed out that there was a direct relationship between parents financial status and academic performance of the students. He however pointed out that this factor is an important determinant of academic success of the child but there is a substantial proportion of variation which accounted by other factors (77.8%).

5.2.3 Relationship between parents' education level and academic performance of students

The findings of this study revealed that 59.7% of the students' mothers have secondary level education while 46.7% of the fathers have secondary education level. This confutes the observation made by Pamela and Kean (2010) that students whose parents have a tertiary level of education perform on average significantly better than the rest.

A regression analysis of the study revealed that only 7% of the students' academic performance can be explained by the level of the parents' education. A further analysis showed that the education level of the mother had a stronger relationship with the student's academic performance ($r = 0.252$) as compared to the education level of the father ($r = 0.196$). This supports the observation made by Gottfried *et. al* (2004) that mothers education was an important predictor of parental warmth which trickled down to the children's academic success.

5.2.4 Relationship between family size and academic performance of students

The findings of the study revealed that 60% of the students come from families with at least 3-5 children. The study also revealed that 76.5% of the respondents felt that the family size has an effect on the academic performance of the students. In addition, 58.7% felt that the birth position of the child had an effect on the academic performance of the student. The findings showed that most of the respondents who said that birth position had an effect on the academic performance of the student; felt that first born children performed better than the last born children. This is because as explained by Seigal (2007) parental attention by parents declines as the number of siblings increases.

A regression analysis, revealed that 14.3% of the academic performance of the students can be explained by the family sizes, in that the family size from which students come from have a negative correlation to the academic performance of the children, which implies that the more the children are in the family the less the performance of the student gets. These findings supports the findings by Lacovou (2001) who felt that children from larger families perform worse than children from smaller families.

The study also showed a negative correlation between the birth position of the child and the academic performance. However the findings revealed that birth position of a student was not statistically significant in explaining the academic performance of the student at alpha level =0.05 ($p = 0.459$). This is in line with the claim by Adler (1989) that children down the birth order do worse than those higher up the birth order since the first birth or oldest child is usually advantaged by a good deal of attention and warmth during the early age of life.

5.3 Discussion of findings

5.3.1 Parental Marital Status

It was concluded that children living with one parents were less likely to be in school at age 17 than their two parents counterpart (Cooley, 2008).

According to Amato and Keith (2001) the divorce rate has also increased automatically and hence a creation of single parenthood which impacts negatively on academic performance.

The research on the effect of family functioning quality on African Child has generally been very supportive on family functioning theory (Heiss 2006).

A further study conducted Turker (2003) reported that those who grew in fatherless families performed poorly on measures of scholastic achievement, educational attainment and other healthy related issues.

5.3.2 Parental Education Level

The relationship between the level of education of parents had an impact on their children academic performance (Pamela and Kean 2010).

Further it was found that the level of education of parents had a direct and positive relationship on the academic achievement of their children (Ryan and Deci 2000). The education level of parents according to Murray and Fairchil (2009) had a consistence direct relationship on the children's cognitive and behavioural outcomes.

On the same line, Iverson and Walberg (2002) concurred that school aged students on a systematic research on educational, psychological and sociological aspects had the ability and achievement more closely linked to the social – psychological environment and intellectual stimulation in the home.

5.3.3 Family Financial Status

The research concluded that with the respect to children's educational achievement, Kim (2002) maintained that there is direct relationship between parental financial and human capital and the successful learning experience of their children and the academic success.

A research conducted using a sample of low income the achievement of their children's academic performance were lower in terms of their expectations (Wilson 2009).

5.3.4 Family Size

The research findings concluded that in most big families the size of the family had no relationship with the academic performance of their children (Gottfried et al 2004). On the other hand Lacovou (2001) had revealed that children from large families were families were found to do worse in schools than children from small families.

Smith et al (2007) observed that there was more significantly outstanding academic performance among the first born children in large families.

5.4 Conclusion

The study found out that a single parenthood had a negative relationship with academic performance and families quality functions had a very supportive achievement on the children's academic performance both scholastic educational attainment and other healthy related issues.

On the issue of parental educational level it was concluded that the level of education of parents had an impact on their children's academic performance. It was also concluded that the educational level of parent had a consistent direct relationship on the children's cognitive and behavioural outcomes.

On family financial situation it was concluded that there is a direct relationship between parental financial and human capital on the successful learning experience of their children and their academic success and equally low income of parents had a negative academic performance expectations on their children.

On matters of family size it was concluded that in most big families the size of the family had no relationship with the academic performance of their children but on the other hand it was revealed that children from large families were found to perform poorly in schools than children from small families.

5.5 Recommendations

In view of the findings discussed in this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. The researcher recommended that the families should be structured on a functionality level to avoid single parenthood if academic performance has to be achieved.
2. The researcher also recommended that for children to attain academic achievement the family should have stable income from whatever source.
3. The researcher recommended that parents should endeavour to be also academically sound if they have to influence their children's academic performance.
4. The researcher also recommended that a family size should also be average size if the parent have to meet all the basics of their children if the children have to achieve academically.

5.6 Recommendations for further studies

1. The researcher suggested that a related study on the relationship between the school background and academic performance of the students, in order to complete the circle of academic performance determinants.
2. Further, this study was conducted among secondary school students, therefore the researcher suggests a similar study on primary school pupils, to find out whether the results of this study can be replicated among primary school pupils.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: AUTHORITY LETTER

Lydia M. Kamau,

P.O Box 196,

Siakago.

Dear respondent,

RE: ASSISTANCE IN FILLING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Am a student in the School of Distance and Continuing Studies in the Department of Extra-Mural Studies of University of Nairobi Reg. No. L50/65461/2011. I intend to conduct a research study on relationship between the family background and academic performance of secondary school students.

I kindly seek your approval and authority to collect data from the respondent in their aforesaid schools and parents. I together with Research Assistant intend to administer questionnaires to the parents and the students.

Yours faithfully,

Kamau Lydia Muthoni.

APPENDIX II:

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

MATTERS TO NOTE;

- i) The Information given on this questionnaire will be held in strict confidence and will be used only for the purpose of the study.
- ii) If any of the questions may not be appropriate to your circumstance, you are under no obligation to answer.
- iii) The word parent can be substituted with guardian

SECTION A: PERSONAL PROFILE

1. What is your gender?

Male [] Female []

2. What is your age?

Below 30 [] 30-40 [] 41-50 [] 51-60 [] Above 60 []

SECTION B: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

1. What grade did your child's school get in KCSE last year?

2. Do you think that the school had improved?

Yes [] No []

3. How has your child's academic performance trend in the last 2 years?

Increasing [] Constant [] Decreasing [] Irregular [] No idea []

4. What was the class position of your child in the last end of term examinations?

5. Was this an improvement from the previous term?

Yes [] No [] No idea []

SECTION C: FAMILY BACKGROUND

1: PARENT MARITAL STATUS

1. What is your marital status?

Single []

Married []

Divorced []

Separated []

Widowed []

2. If divorced, separated or widowed, what age group was the child?

Below 5 years [] 6-12 [] 13-19 [] over 20 years [] N/A []

3. How would you rate your family?

Cohesive family [] Conflictive family []

4. Do you think family structure (whether single parent or two parent family) affects the students' academic performance?

Yes []

No []

5. Give opinion to the following statements in relation to students' performance at school and the parent marital status. Use a scale of 1 to 5 where (1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= undecided, 4= disagree, 5= strongly disagree).

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
High number of school dropout are from single parent home					
High number of school dropout are from two parent home					
Father present in a family increases son morale to study because they have a role model hence they perform better.					
Low income family is as a results of father absence and affect student performance					
Low income family is as a results of mother absence and affect student performance					
Boys perform better than girls because fathers are strict to them than girls.					

6. Give the opinion to the following ways in which parent marital status may affects students' Performance in school. Use a scale of 1 to 5 where (1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= undecided, 4= disagree, 5= strongly disagree).

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Two parenthood increases quantity of parent time with children hence better performance in school					
Single parenthood lead to less socialization of the child which leads to better performance in school					
Single parenthood leads to less academic supervision to the child which leads to better performance in school					
Two parenthood increases parent monitoring of student performance hence leads to better performance in school					
Single parenthood reduces parent support to the student whence leads to better performance in school					

2. FAMILY FINANCIAL SITUATIONS

7. What is your main source of income?
 Monthly salary [] Loan [] Selling farm outputs [] Small business []
 other []
8. If other, please specify _____
9. What is the aggregate monthly income level of both parents?
 0 -5,000 [] 6,000 -10,000 [] more than 10,000 [] none []
10. How has the trend of your income been in the last 5 years?
 Increasing [] Reducing [] Irregular [] Stagnant []
11. How is your child's school fees financed?
 Parents finance full fee of children []
 Some of the fee is financed by sponsors/ well wishers []
 All the fee is financed by well wishers/ sponsors []
 Others (specify)

12. Do you think your parents financial status affect your academic performance?

Yes []

No []

13. If yes, please state how?

.....
.....
.....

3. PARENT EDUCATION LEVEL

14. What the average education level of mother?

Primary level []

Secondary level []

Tertiary level []

None []

15. What the average education level of father?

Primary level []

Secondary level []

Tertiary level []

None []

16. Do you think that parents' education level have any influence on performance of children at school?

Yes []

No []

17. Give opinion to the following criteria which motivate students choice of the subjects. Use a scale of 1 to 5 where (1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= undecided, 4= disagree, 5= strongly disagree).

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Based on my parents career					
Based on my capability					
Based on my area of their interest					
As guided by my teachers					

3. FAMILY SIZE

20. How many children do you have?

0 to 2 []

2 to 5 []

5 to 10 []

Above 10 []

21. How many live-in relatives do you have?

0 to 2 []

2 to 5 []

5 to 10 []

Above 10 []

22. Give the type of your family?

Polygamous []

Monogamous []

23. Are all children treated equally at your home?

Yes [] No []

24. In your own opinion do you think birth position of the child affect his/ her performance in school?

Yes []

No []

25. Does your family size affect your children motivation to study hence better academic results?

Yes []

No []

26. If yes, please state how your family size affect your motivation to study

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your assistance.

APPENDIX III

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Which is your gender? Female Male

2. Category of your school.

Boys Boarding

Girls Boarding

Mixed Boarding

Day school

3. In what class are you in?

Form 1 Form 2 Form 3 Form 4

SECTION 2. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

4. What grade did your child's school get in KCSE last year?

5. Do you think that the school had improved?

Yes No

6. How has your school performance trend in KCSE been like in the last 5 years?

Increasing Constant Decreasing Irregular No idea

7. What was the position of your school in the district in KCSE last year?

8. Was this an improvement from the previous year?

Yes No

SECTION C: INFORMATION ON FAMILY BACKGROUND

1. PARENT MARITAL STATUS

9. What is the marital status of your parent (students' parents)?

Single parent []

Both parents []

Others (specify)

10. Do you think family structure (whether single parent or two parent family) affects the students' motivation to study

Yes []

No []

2. FAMILY FINANCIAL STATUS

11. What is your parents' main source of income?

Monthly salary [] Loan [] Selling farm outputs [] Small business []
other []

12. If other, please specify _____--

13. How is your school fees financed?

Parents finance full fee of children []

Some of the fee is financed by sponsors/ well wishers []

All the fee is financed by well wishers/ sponsors []

Others (specify)

14. What mode of learning do you undertake?

Boarders []

Day scholars []

15. If day scholars, what has contributed to the status?

Lack of finances []

My own choice []

Others reasons (specify)

16. Do you think your parents financial status affect your academic performance?

Yes []

No []

17. If yes, please state how?

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. PARENT'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

18. What the average education level of your mother?

Primary schools []

Secondary schools []

Tertiary level []

None []

19. What the average education level of your father?

Primary schools []

Secondary schools []

Tertiary level []

None []

4. FAMILY SIZE

20. How many siblings do you have?

0 to 2 []

2 to 5 []

5 to 10 []

Above 10 []

21. How many relatives live at your home?

0 to 2 []

2 to 5 []

5 to 10 []

Above 10 []

22. Are you all treated equally at home?

Yes [] No []

23. Explain your answer

24. In your own opinion do you think that your birth position affects your performance in school?

Yes []

No []

25. Between your first born and your last born siblings, who among them have better academic performance?

.....

.....

26. What kind of inputs does your parent use to motivate you to study?

Money []

Time []

Attention []

Resources []

Others (specify)

27. Would you say the kind of inputs used in the first borns are the same as those used in other siblings?

Yes []

No []

Thank you for your assistance.

