

**SCHOOL-BASED FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS'
PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AT KENYA CERTIFICATE
OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN KAPLAMAI DIVISION, TRANS-
NZOIA COUNTY, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

This research project report is my original work and has not been presented for any award of a degree in any other institution of learning.

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This research project report has been submitted for examination with our approval as the appointed university supervisors.

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DEDICATION

This research project report is dedicated to my beloved family members; my wife Joyness Kerubo and our children Cynthia, Obed and Newton.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish the school-based factors influencing students' performance in English language at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Kaplamai division, Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya. Specifically the study sought to establish the influence of teaching and learning methods, students' attitude towards English language, school's learning facilities and professional competence levels of teachers on the performance of students in English language and the challenges that students face while learning English language in school.

The study adopted descriptive survey design of the public secondary schools in Kaplamai division. It employed proportionate sampling technique in selecting the sample size for the students and census for the head teachers and teachers of English giving final sample sizes of 15 head teachers, 54 teachers and 243 students. The data for the study was obtained using interview schedules from the head teachers and questionnaires from both the teachers and students. After the data collection, the researcher coded the data using computer softwares and analyzed it using descriptive and inferential statistics. The output was presented in form of tables and charts for interpretations and discussions.

The study concluded that group discussions is the method that is mainly used in teaching because it is participative and involves all the students specially the weak students who may need extra emphasis on difficult areas. The students have a positive attitude towards English and as such they have consistently improved on their performance since 2008. The study found out that public secondary schools in the division are well equipped with classrooms and libraries. The teachers of English have been adequately trained with the basic requirements to teach English and are receiving regular in-service trainings especially through the NES and Ministry of Education. The major challenges facing students in learning English are, frequent use of mother tongue by students, uncooperative teachers, misunderstanding of concepts like grammar, spelling, pronunciation and poor writing skills.

The study recommends that to improve on the students' performance in English, the schools should regularly organize seminars and workshops for teachers, avail well equipped libraries with relevant books in the schools, provide adequate learning resources and facilities. Students' performance could further be improved by having positive attitude towards English subject by both students and teachers. The study further recommends that language policy should be strengthened in schools and schools heads should ensure that the syllabus is completed on time. The schools should have professionally, qualified and adequate teachers of English as well as good will from the parents and school administration to support the English department.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CD	Compact Disk
D.E.O	District Education Officer
ESL	English as a Second Language
ICT	Information and Computer Technology
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
KIE	Kenya Institute of Education
KNEC	Kenyan National Examinations Council
NCST	National Council of Science and Technology
NES	National Education Service
PTE	Primary Teachers Examination
SPPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TSC	Teachers Service Commission

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

English language has become more dominant around the world. In some countries it is used as the mother tongue and, other countries learn the language as second language in schools. English language is used for communication between people of the world with different cultures. It is also the language of computers that help to communicate with the people around the world through internet technology and e-mail (Zeen, 2012). This makes English widespread in many spheres in our societies. Baker and Westrup (2000) observe that English is one of the most important international languages as it gives access to information in the areas of business, finance, medicine and technology. According to a study carried out by Ogwu in Nigeria, learners' lack of English language skills inhibits both their understanding and expression (Ogwu, 2000). This results to poor academic achievements in English and learners not meeting national standards from grade one throughout all the important academic transitional phases (Ogwu, 2000). The performance of English as a second language is subject to factors like individual variations like attitudes, gender, socio-economic background and discipline (Annita, 2006).

Gillham (1986) asserts that English language is considered to be of great importance within the secondary school curriculum as it can be judged in terms of time tabled allocations, size of department and allocations of scale points. From 1970 – 1985, English language and literature in English were taught and examined as two different subjects in Kenya. However, with the introduction of the 8-4-4 systems of education

in 1985 English language and literature were integrated into one subject. The secondary school syllabus comprises English language and literature in English.

The English language has four components; composition, comprehension, grammar and summary while the literature section is comprised of drama, novel, oral literature, poetry and short stories all together making nine sections (Kenyan National Examinations Council, 2003). These nine parts are examined at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) level at a total of 200 marks where paper one is marked out of 60 percent, paper two is marked out of 80 percent and paper three is marked out of 60 percent. With the introduction of the 8-4-4 and the integration of the English language and literature in English, for a teacher who has trained to teach language has to teach literature too.

A notable setback is that a number of teachers are not confident enough to handle some of subject components because they did not learn how to teach them in college. In such a situation, these teachers teach only areas they find easy (Mwangi, 2009). The competence of the teacher is significant because language learning does not only involve learning facts but learning of communication skills, eloquence codes and the use of language in appropriate context.

Maundu (1986) in his study of three types of Secondary Schools in Kenya found out that inadequate physical resources including library, laboratory, equipments, classrooms and other relevant materials rendered student preparation for national examinations difficult. (Cohn & Rossimiller, 1987) observes that materials and facilities alone will not ensure effective implementation or the curriculum if those

who teach in them are not competent or if their decision making is unduly constrained. The task of preparing competent teachers including those who teach English should therefore be given great attention. In service training for teachers on practice is core to provide the teachers with new concepts, skills and behavior.

Among other factors, availability of facilities, students' attitude, teachers' professional qualifications, and teaching / learning methods greatly influence the implementation of the English curriculum and in essence, performance of English Language in KCSE. Teachers of English face strong criticisms against integration of English syllabus from the Quality Assurance and Standard officers in their routine supervision of curriculum implementation. Teachers, parents, sponsors, laymen and media, have argued that the syllabus is too wide and the time frame too short. According to Onjoro (1990), given other unforeseen factors like poor training of the teachers during training it is difficult to squeeze too much into so little time. This leads to poor coverage of the syllabus and therefore the students also end up with poor performance in final their examinations.

The society right from the school level has contributed immensely to the poor performance of English at KCSE level. Candidates use poor English in examination because they reproduce the kind of English they hear being spoken by the people they interact with and hence they also write poorly (Ongweno, 2010). The English examination results at the national level since the year 2008 – 2011 continue to be dismal. The table below shows the performance trend in the KCSE in the last four years.

Table 1.1: KCSE English results 2008-2011 in Kenya

Year	Mean Score (%)	Mean Grade
2008	33.78	D-
2009	39.21	D+
2010	38.68	D+
2011	36.42	D+

Source: KNEC, 2011

From the table above, it is clear that performance in the English subject is steadily dropping after having improved in the year 2009. Performance dropped minimally by 0.53 points from 39.21 in 2009 to 38.68 in 2010. Performance also declined by 2.26 points from 38.68 to 36.42 in 2011. It therefore follows that there is urgent need to identify reasons that lead to this dismal and deplorable performance in English in the KCSE exams.

In Kaplamai division, of Trans Nzoia County, like the national level the performance of English has not been an impressive one. While the performance index varies from year to year, the mean grade remains at D plain that is below average, hence a fail. Therefore, the trend of students' performance in English subject in Kaplamai division has been an issue even before the year 2008. When compared with the Cherangany division in the same district, performance in English at KCSE in Kaplamai division has been lower since the year 2008 – 2011 as shown in the table.

Table 1.2: Comparison of KCSE English performance indices between Kaplamai and Cherangany Division, 2008 – 2011 In Trans Nzoia East District

Kaplamai Division			Cherangany Division	
Performance Index	Mean grade	Year	Performance index	Mean grade
3.31	D	2008	4.40	D+
3.42	D	2009	4.33	D+
4.23	D+	2010	4.31	D+
3.43	D	2011	4.38	D+

Source: Trans Nzoia East District Education Office (2011)

Table 1.2 is an indicator that there is a problem limiting good performance in English subject in Kaplamai division. Therefore, there is need to establish the underlying factors for such a poor performance.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Students in Kaplamai division have posted an average performance of 3.60 in English language at KCSE for the last four years. English has never attained a mean score 50% for the last four years. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) the students are a prime consideration in the process of curriculum design and development. It is therefore imperative to look into students' factors that affect performance in English language. These factors are availability of facilities, students' attitude, teachers professional qualifications and teaching/ learning methods that may have possible effects on students' performance in the English language in KCSE.

A number of researchers have carried out studies on the performance of English language. For instance, Nyangacha (2009) carried out a study in Nyacheki division, Gucha District that revealed that the type and category of school in a place determines performance in English at KCSE. Also, Mwangi (2009) conducted a similar study in Meru-North District, Kenya in which it was established that the school's catchments influenced the students' performance in English language. In the above studies, it is noted that none of these studies have looked at school-based factors influencing performance in English language.

Auma (2010), in her study done in Kasipul division, Rachuonyo South District in Kenya found out that text books reading, demonstration and homework assignment influenced students' performance in English.

Among the studies above, Nyangacha and Mwangi were focused on similar aspects but aimed at different locations, while the one done by Auma is very close to the current study by addressing the influence of teaching methods on students' achievement in KCSE in English. The researcher therefore, aimed at carrying out a study on school based factors influencing students' performance in English language at KCSE in Kaplamai division, Trans Nzoia County, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate school based factors influencing students' performance in English Language at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Kaplamai division, Trans Nzoia County.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- i) To establish the influence of methods of teaching/learning on students' performance in English language.
- ii) To establish the influence of students' attitude on their performance in English.
- iii) To determine the influence of school learning facilities on the performance of students in English language.
- iv) To establish the influence of teachers professional competence on students performance in English language.
- v) To determine challenges that student's face in learning English in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia division.

1.5 Research Questions

The study intended to answer the following questions;

- i) What is the influence of methods of teaching/learning on students' performance in English language?
- ii) What is the influence of students' attitude on their performance in English language?
- iii) What is the influence of school learning facilities on students' performance in English language?
- iv) What is the influence of teachers' professional competence on the performance of students in English language?
- v) What are challenges do students face in learning English in public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia division?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may be significant in a number of ways. First, the study and recommendations could assist the teachers of English in secondary schools in Kenya to effectively teach using appropriate approaches and methods resulting to improvement in performance of English in KCSE. Second, the Ministry of Education on receiving this report could communicate to the inspectorate, the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers on how to advise the teachers of English on how to improve the performance of English Language.

Third, from the findings it is hoped that it would provide useful information to Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), which prepares the secondary schools English syllabus on good teaching practices for example, classroom practices which might help them in improving the English syllabus.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The researcher depended on the cooperation of the respondents for provisions of the data for the study and therefore some of the responses given may not have been honest and accurate. Because of the limited time for the study, some of the respondents did not get enough time to adequately answer the questions. The researcher overcame this by applying public relations approaches, established a rapport with the target respondents and encouraging the respondents to try as much as possible and respond to all the questions. The public secondary schools in Kaplamai division are just a small proportion of the entire population of secondary schools in Kenya and therefore the findings were recommended with that limitation in mind.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

The study was conducted in Kaplamai division, Trans Nzoia East District. The study covered only one administrative division and therefore the findings should be generalized to other areas with caution. The study was restricted to public secondary schools which sat for KCSE English examination between the year 2008 – 2011, and no private secondary schools was considered. The study used only form four students who were assumed to be more efficient in filling questionnaires. The study was confined to head teachers, teachers of English and form four students in public secondary schools.

1.9 Basic Assumptions of the Study

The study was carried out under the following assumptions;

- i) All the students selected as sample for the study had gone through the same level of tuition in terms of teaching time as stipulated in the syllabus.
- ii) The teachers in the secondary schools were all similarly trained and that students in the sampled secondary schools had common English language problems.
- iii) All the schools are using the syllabus by KIE.

1.10 Definitions of Significant Terms

The key words that were indentified for this study are as follows,

Competence

This term has been used in this study to refer to the ability of the teachers to deliver their services or teaching in a professional and competent manner.

Component

This term has been used in this study to mean a sub-section of the English examination paper which is composed of composition, grammar, comprehension, and summary, for language part. The literature section comprises novel, short story, drama, poetry and oral literature.

Integrated syllabus

Refers to the KCSE syllabus in which English language and Literature in English are combined to form one English subject

Language

Refers to the English examination which tests the aspect of language i.e. comprehension, summary, oral skills, grammar and composition

Performance

This is an achievement or action. In Kenya, the KCSE exam is graded on a twelve-point scale from the lowest, E to the highest which is an A.

8-4-4

This is a system of education which adopts eight years of primary education, four years of secondary education and four years of university education

1.11 Organization of the study

The study has been organized into five chapters. Chapter one contains background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, limitation of the study, delimitation of

the study, basic assumptions of the study, definition of significant terms and organization of the study. Chapter two comprises of literature that is related to the study. It contains the following: introduction, significance of English, students' attitude, availability of facilities, professional qualification of teachers, teaching methods, summary of literature review, theoretical framework and conceptual framework.

Chapter three deals with the study methodology used in carrying out research. It includes the research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, research instruments, instrument validity and reliability and data analysis. Chapter four presents data analysis, presentation, and discussion. Chapter five contains summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the available literature on school-based factors influencing students' performance in English language at KCSE in Kaplamai division, Trans Nzoia district. This literature review is organized in the following areas: concept of performance, significance of English, students' attitude, availability of learning facilities, the professional qualification of teachers, teaching methods, summary of the literature review, theoretical framework and conceptual framework.

2.2 The concept of performance

Performance of students is part of the overall achievements of students in their examinations, be it internal or external including national examination in school. It can be in the form of passing examinations, tests, exercises, what the students can practically do, and how the society perceives the student in terms of the satisfaction they derive from the education obtained by the learners. It is not adequate to discuss the effect of leadership on school performance without examining some indicators of school performance. These indicators help in gaining a better understanding of the relationship there in. Many studies conducted on school performance in schools, try to view it as a process of establishing shared understanding about school outcomes.

The Oxford English Dictionary (2006) defines performance as the accomplishment and execution of tasks. The accomplishment of tasks, in the context of the academic function of schools, refers to academic excellence or efficiency, which is measured in

terms of student performance in class work, and national examinations. Teachers and students or even heads of schools with the intention of transforming the academic culture of the schools positively should aim to execute their tasks effectively. Effective school performance is further conceived as the ability to produce desired education outcomes in relation to the school's goals. In the context of teaching, performance refers to the teacher's ability to teach consistently with diligence, honesty, and regularity.

To the student, performance would mean excelling regularly in the examinations and inter-class tasks. But the school's performance should not only be viewed in terms of the academic rigor, but should also focus on other domains of education such as the affective and the psychomotor domains. A school that has all the three domains should by all means be regarded as an effective school with a very good standard of performance.

All this is only possible if the school's head focuses on the achievement of good results in all domains. Therefore, from this definition, one can deduce that the school's performance is the response of the school to the needs of the stakeholders in terms of the education outcomes. The focus of leadership on academic standards in the school will depend on the school's dedication and commitment to effect academic changes in respect of the demands on the learners and the community at large. Focusing on teacher development initiatives is one of the ways in which academic standards can be maintained. The maintenance of this teacher development involves putting into place a leader who is committed to subordinate development.

An academic performance which is leaders-led is a means of getting the best academic results from the teams that constitute the HODs, the Directorate of Studies, the teachers, learners and the parents. These should conform to the schools goals and objectives. In order to achieve this performance, the focus should be on the teaching process, examinations, tests and exercises, the availability of instructional materials, discipline and respect for the school's culture.

Campbell, Dunnette, Lawler & Weick (1990) believes that performance is something a person regards as an outcome of work, because they provide the strongest link to the strategic goals of the organization, customer satisfaction, economic and social contributions. To sum up, effective performance is concerned with results that impact on societal and organizational needs. The school head's leadership efforts are the cause of increased academic performance outcomes punctuated by the strongest regard for the schools' goals. It is thus apparent that effective school performance cannot be realized without authentic contributions from the school's heads because they are the backbone of the school system. They have the powers to influence the outcome of events.

The nature of academic performance can be based on two models, that is, the holistic and the integrative models. Armstrong's (2001) holistic approach to academic performance is helpful in exploring a comprehensive view of the constituents of academic performance. The holistic theory focuses on what people do (work), how they do it (behavior), and what is achieved (results). In the context of leadership, an effective leader dedicates himself to knowing the academic task, how to accomplish it, and the results expected. Hence, he directs his effort and legitimate power towards

addressing these elements for effective academic performance according to the holistic theory.

2.3 Significance of English

English is seen as the language of the modern era. People use it in various fields of life such as commerce, medicine, aviation, tourism and travel. In the field of education, it is used in scientific research by universities and institutes. On the other hand, English is important requirement in most government and private jobs. Companies welcome those candidates who are fluent in English and have relevant qualifications and skill set. It is quite clear that English has become a necessity today.

Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) (2002), points out that English is the official language of communication in Kenya as well as the medium of instruction in schools, colleges and universities. It is also the pre-eminent language of international communication. Consequently, those who master English reap many academic, social and professional benefits. In the school setting, proficiency in English will make the learning of other subjects much easier.

The importance of English cannot therefore be over-emphasized. English language in a secondary set up ensures learning is acquired. Information is transmitted via language and students use language to ask questions. The answers to their questions serve to increase their knowledge in a number of areas (Mwangi, 2009). Mwangi (2009) adds that students must learn to use English language as a tool of peace so that they say and the way they say it does not lead to hard feelings and conflicts.

2.4 Teaching/Learning Methods and Performance in English

According to the Ministry of Education (2006) teaching methodologies refers to ways and means that can be used to achieve a stated objective. These include approaches to teaching of the subjects, instructional methods and teaching / learning activities and how the required skills are developed. According to Muindi, Kiio, Kithinji, Twoli & Maundu (2004) there is no single best method of teaching. A good teacher uses several methods of teaching a single lesson depending on the teaching/ learning situation of a given lesson.

Nyang'acha (2008) argues that experts attribute dismal performance in English language to poor teaching methods. They point out that the majority of teachers are ill equipped to handle the subject. Added to this is poor reading culture among pupils. 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 downward trend and students' performance in KCSE in all subject areas has been generally poor. The knowledge about instructional methods and student performance would support the value of planning process in teaching.

Gathumbi et al (2005), observes that English Language learning in second or foreign language situations is usually formal. Teachers in schools face the challenge of teaching a new language, which in most cases is also a second language to them. To succeed in this, they need to use language teaching technique that works, its implication in terms language learning and processing, the type of students for whom it is most appropriate and the way in which it is used in the classroom, benefits most from choosing such a technique.

In an academic journal from Nigeria by Aduwa-Ogiegbean & Iyamu (2006), a study done among 3000 senior secondary school students across six geographical zones revealed that English language teachers do not frequently use modern instructional technologies and a variety of teaching techniques in their English language lessons. In the study it was also found that students learn under harsh environment, which are often rowdy, congested and noisy.

While the use of prescribed text books and the use of lecture method in delivering English lessons are prevalent, debate and group methods of teaching are occasionally used. Larry (1999), proposes some not-so commonly-used techniques for adding “new twist” to English or foreign language classes. Giving learners something new does wonders in relieving boredom, spiking interest and lowering the Affective Filter of learners on whom you may have “tried everything”.

Hence, the five creative methods of teaching English to TEFL learners include using an ipad or cellular phones, let Mr. Bean help you, ask Walt Disney for advice, letting learners create lesson materials and join the club. It is evident that the methods of teaching advocated for above calls for use of your (teacher’s) and your learners’ imagination. According to KNEC (2012) report on 2011 KCSE results, teachers are also expected to update themselves, with comments from the examinations by the KNEC in the subjects they teach. The report provides suggestion on better teaching and learning strategic to enhance performance in English.

2.5 Students' Attitude and Performance in English

Callahan and Clark (1983) define the term attitude as a tendency to act in some manner towards a person, structure or idea. Triandis (1971) also defines attitude as an organized predisposition to think, feel, perceive, and behave towards a referent or cognitive object in favorable or unfavorable manner. This means that at one time an individual is able to selectively respond to an object within the environment either positively or negatively.

Most people in Kenya use English as a second language, though a few are native speakers (Carter, 1986). Most students in secondary schools come from different areas of the country where they have different languages as their first language. The accent of English language may differ from one student to another as it is influenced by their mother tongue, (Kisilu and Rinny, 2008).

Expressions of positive or negative attitude towards a language might reflect various impressions (Osakwe, 2006). Osakwe (2006) explains that this might be language ease or difficulty of learning, degree of importance elegance or social status of language and hence the importance of researching into students' attitude towards English language.

Wanja (2012) in her study in the Eastern Region, Kenya found out that student attitude towards English influenced performance in English either negatively or positively. Her study is crucial to the present study in matters related to performance in English but differs because the current study sought to assess the extent to which school based factors influence student performance in English language at KCSE.

2.6 Availability of Learning Facilities in Relation to Performance in English

According to a study by Gikonyo (2009) in Taita Taveta District, it was established that lack of teaching equipment discouraged teachers from doing their best. She concluded that textbooks and instructional materials greatly influenced performance.

This is in agreement with (Mwangi, 2009) that a glance of secondary school syllabuses for any subject will reveal the numerous topics which a reasonably good library could provide comprehensive information by means of reference books, supplementary texts, encyclopedias, good reading books, magazines, journals and local and international newspapers. This will contribute immensely to student's store of knowledge. It is obvious that such an opportunity will stimulate curiosity, comprehensive study and good study habits.

It will also help in developing various individual interests and aspirations, books are informative and they enrich the reader's future dreams. If the importance of the library is understood, it can become the real centre of academic pursuits, the springs of knowledge to nourish symbolically the schools educative purpose. According to the Ministry of Education (2000), the availability and quality of teaching-learning materials is a key in the effective delivery of the curriculum. The materials include textbooks, teachers' guides and libraries, audio and visual materials, among others. All schools are required to have KIE recommended textbooks.

Some of the most important instructional materials that have been shown to have significant influence in the teaching/learning process are text books, chemicals, apparatus and reading supplementary materials. The availability of such materials

have a positive effects on school effectiveness (Psacharapoulous and Woodhall, 1985; Fuller, 1987).

The proper organization of learning resources and the use of appropriate teaching strategies will enhance acquisition of the subject content. Heyneman & Montenegro (1984) found a strong relationship between students' achievement and availability of books. Studies from Philippine and Brazil, also document the important positive effect of books on students learning. There is increase in learning with increasing access to text books (Heyneman, 1984).

In Philippine for example, Heyneman (1984) evaluated text book quantities in a program which was introduced to raise the national level of academic performance among students in three subjects, Philippino, Mathematics and Science in two grades. The progamme reduced the ration of student to text book per subject from an average of 10:1 to 2:1 and there was marked improvement in performance. He concluded that, there was reasonable impact or textbooks availability and achievement of students in the subjects. Maengwe (1985) observes that the use of class readers enabled all the children to read and this contributed to their inspired composition writing and boosted performance.

Common with all the studies in the literature review is that all of them were based on factors influencing students' performance in examination; hence offer an invaluable theoretical base on which the present study is founded.

2.7 The Professional Qualification of Teachers and Performance in English

The quality of teachers of English determines a great deal the performance of their pupils. Eshiwani (2003) asserts that a teacher's qualification correlates with the quality of knowledge imparted in their learners. He argues that untrained Mathematics teachers in both primary and secondary schools should be trained to enable them know and use proper instructional methods. Teachers are among the main orchestrates of the school 'culture' by the kind of conditions they create in classrooms and the school in general. Eshiwani (2003) in his study in Western Province in Kenya is relevant to this study because a teacher's professional qualifications affects students performance, however, the study differs with the current one in that it looks at school performance in general while the present study aims out establishing school-based factors influencing student's performance in English language at KCSE in Kaplamai division, Trans Nzoia County Kenya.

These conditions must create interest and curiosity for students to know and to learn as the teacher, through their disposition support them. Teachers therefore, should be mentors and explainers. As mentors the teachers have the authority to criticize constructively, command and reflect, and also develop a building relationship with the students. Teachers as explainers should create an environment that is not boring but enhancing for the students to learn and think. It can therefore be concluded that, a teacher's role centres on integrity, humour, communication, learning and organization precepts of their creativity (Bett, 1986).

Okumbe (1998) points out that academic qualifications and professional qualifications of a teacher are among the pre-determination factors during the recruitment and selection process of those who are inducted in the teaching profession. Based upon an

examination of thirty two different studies, Husen (1978) concluded that the qualification, experience, knowledge and the level of education of teachers have positive effects upon students' performance in developing countries. A study by Carnay as reported in Simmon's (1980) revealed similar results that teacher's academic qualification and certification at primary and secondary level has a positive influence on student's performance.

2.8 Summary of Literature Review

This section has highlighted on school based factors influencing students' performance in English language. From the preceding highlights it can be deduced that the performance of students in English is influenced by a number of factors. These include, the methods employed by teachers in the teaching-learning processes, the students attitude towards English availability of learning facilities in school and the professional qualification of teachers.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the systems theory of organization advanced by Ludwing Van Bertalanffy in the year (1968). The systems approach focuses on the total work organization and the interrelationships of structure and behavior and the range of variables within the organization.

The idea is that any part of the organization's activities affects all other parts. The theory is appropriate to this study because a school qualifies as a system with components such as inputs, processes and outputs. The inputs of a school include teachers, students, physical facilities and teaching and learning materials used in teaching/ learning processes. The outputs are students and their academic

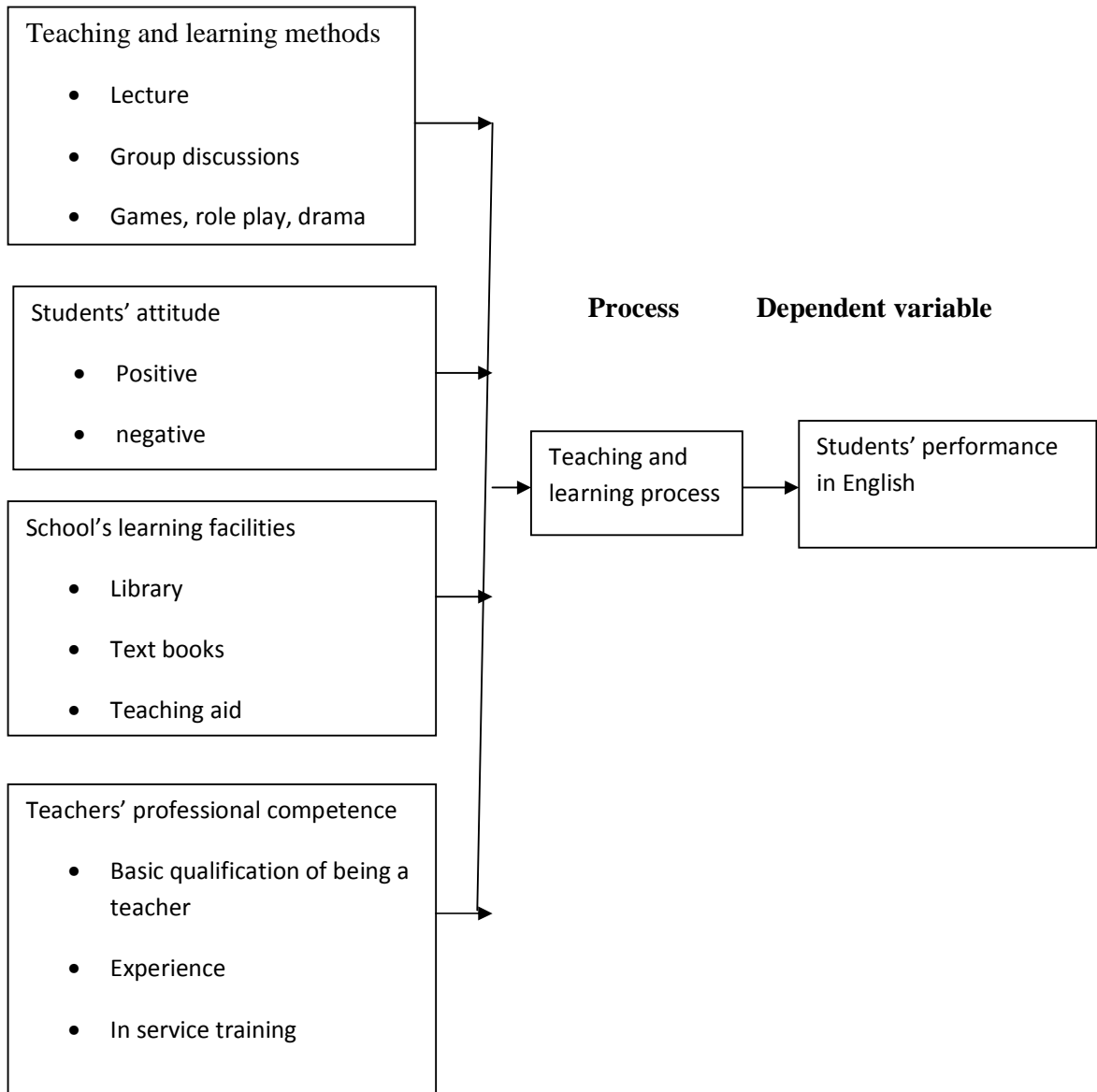
qualifications. The inputs influence the teaching – learning processes which will in turn have significant impact on performance in English at KCSE.

2.10 Conceptual Framework

This section presents the conceptual framework of the variables that have been identified for the study. It displays teaching/learning methods, students' attitude, physical facilities and teacher's professional competence as the independent variables while students' performance in English is the dependent variable.

Figure 2.1: Researcher's Conceptualization of the Variables

Independent variables



The researcher argues performance of students in English in Kaplamai division is affected by the methods that are employed by the teachers during the learning process, the students' attitude towards the subject, inadequate teaching materials and facilities in schools and the incompetence among the teachers of English.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methodology that was used in carrying out the study. It provides the information regarding the research design, target population; sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments reliability, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques.

3.2 Research design

This researcher used descriptive survey design. A descriptive survey is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to sample of individuals (Orodho, 2009). It can be used when collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions habits or any of the variety of education or social issues. Survey research is therefore a self report study which requires collection of quantifiable information from the sample Mugenda (2003).

This research design is appropriate for the study because by identifying a school based factors which influence the performance of students in English language, it will enable the schools and the students to understand the factors that have either led to their improvement or decline in their performance in English language since 2008.

3.3 Target Population

Kombo & Tromp (2006) defined population as a group of individuals, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement. Population also refers to an

entire group of persons or elements that have at least one thing in common. The study targeted public secondary schools in Kaplamai division of Trans Nzoia East District which have presented candidates for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) between 2008 – 2011.

According to the current statistics in the division there are 17 schools public secondary schools which have presented their students for the KCSE exams within the period in consideration (2008 – 2011), (Ministry of Education; Trans-Nzoia East District, 2012). From the schools the study targeted the head teachers, teachers of English and form students (current, 2013) with a total population of 977. This consisted of 17 head teachers, 60 teachers of English and 900 form four students.

3.4 Sample size and Sampling Techniques

A sample is a representation of the population in research study. Sometimes a whole population can be studied depending on the size. Sampling teaching techniques are method used to arrive at the desired size (Kumar, 2005). This study adopted a stratified sampling technique to group the respondents based on their positions in the schools.

All the 17 schools participated in the study where 2 of them (St Mark's Boys and St Mark's Girl's) were used for piloting while 15 were used in the main study. Census sampling technique was used in picking the head teachers giving a sample size of 15 and the teachers of English with a sample size of 54. The sample size of the teachers of English reduced from 60 to 54 because of the piloting sample. The sample size of the teachers of English was distributed among the schools based on their numbers

where 4 teachers were selected from 9 schools and 3 teachers from each of the remaining 6 schools.

According to Best & Khan (2009) recommendations, 30% of the students population was randomly selected from the target population (900) giving a sample size of 270 students from the form four classes in the schools. This also reduced by 27 because the students who participated in the pilot study. Proportionate sampling technique was then applied in selecting the number of students per school. This sampling technique was applied because it gives researchers the chance to apportion the sample size based on population representation in the overall target population. The technique was applied in picking 25 students from 6 schools, 10 students in 6 schools and 11 students in 3 schools because each of the schools have different number of form four students.

Therefore the sample size of the form four students was proportionately divided among the schools based on their representation in the target population of 900. The sample size is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Sampling Table

category	Sample size	Percentage
Head teachers	15	4.8
Teachers of English	54	17.3
Form four students	243	77.9
Total	312	100

3.5 Research Instruments

The research instruments for the study included questionnaires and interview schedule. Kombo & Tromp (2006), states that a questionnaire is an instrument that gathers data over a large sample. It saves time; upholds confidentiality and its presentation in paper format seals opportunity for interviewer bias. The interview guide used to obtain data from the head teachers while questionnaires were use on teachers of English and form four students.

The instruments had two sections where the first section sought information on demographic distribution of the respondents while the second was structured based on the objectives of the study. This section contained information on instructional methods, students' attitude, physical facilities and teacher qualification and in-service-training and suggestions from the respondents on ways of improving performance in English languages of students in schools in the division.

3.6 Validity of instruments

Validity refers to the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study (Mugenda, 2003). It is concerned with soundness and the effectiveness of the measuring instrument. To measure the validity of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted in two schools with two head teachers, 6 teachers of English and 27 students. This represented 10 percent of the sample size as recommended by Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) that the pretest sample can be between 1 percent and 10 percent depending on the sample size.

The schools used in the pilot study did not participate in the final study. The pilot results of study helped to check whether the respondents understood the questions and deal with confusion over any of the phrases. Secondly, it assisted in checking for any ambiguity in the questions and finally they were used to confirm that the items in the research instruments addressed the research objectives.

3.7 Reliability of the instrument

Reliability is the degree to which the instruments consistently measures whatever it is measuring (Amin, 2005). Reliability of the instruments was assessed using test – retest method after the pilot study. Piloting was done at St. Mark’s Boys and St. Mark’s Girls schools in the Kaplamai division that have done KCSE during the period under study. Two headteachers out of seventeen, six teachers of English out of sixty and twenty seven form four students out of two hundred and seventy responded to the interview guides and questionnaires as earlier stated by Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) that 10 percent of the sample size may be sampled.

The test – retest method was used because the instruments contain both closed and open ended items. The research instruments were administered first to the pilot group and then the same instrument administered again to the same group after two weeks.

The two tests were then correlated to determine the internal consistency of the two set of scores using the Pearson's product moment correlation co-efficient (r) formula as shown:

$$r = \frac{N \sum XY - (\sum X) (\sum Y) N}{\sqrt{N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2} \sqrt{N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2}}$$

- Where X = First test
 Y = Second test
 r = Degree of reliability
 N = Number of scores within each distribution

The argument for this formula is that the closer the correlation co-efficient value is to + 1.00, the stronger the correlation (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). After the scores of the first test and the second test were correlated, a correlation co-efficient of 0.8 was established which is above the recommended coefficient of 0.7 by (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003) implying that the research instruments were highly correlated or reliable.

3.8 Data collection procedure

Data collection procedures refer to the protocol followed to ensure that data collection tools are applied correctly and efficiently (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The authority to conduct the study was obtained from the National Council of Science and Technology (NCST) who issued a permit to the researcher. A copy of the permit and an introductory letter was sent to the County Commissioner and County Education Director, Trans-Nzoia County and the D.E.O Trans Nzoia East.

The researcher then visited the participating schools to book appointments accompanied with a copy of introductory letter to establish rapport. Arrangements were made in conjunction with the schools administration to collect the data. The researcher then administered the questionnaires in person and collected them immediately they were filled. After which he booked for appointments with the head teachers and carried out the interviews for a period of 2 weeks. Then all the instruments were collected, checked for response rate and taken back to pave way for analysis.

3.9 Data analysis techniques

Data analysis is the process of examining data with the purpose of drawing conclusion about the information. After the field work, the interview guides and questionnaires were cross – examined to ascertain their accuracy, completeness and uniformity. The data was edited, coded and organized into different categories.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data in form of frequency distribution and percentages while qualitative data was analyzed using content method of analysis. Chi-square was used to establish the relationship between the methods of teaching and learning used in schools and students' performance in English language. The out put was then presented in form of tables, charts and prose form based on the research questions and objectives of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study on the factors influencing students' performance in English in Kaplamai division of Trans Nzoia East District. The chapter has been presented in four sections. These are the demographic information of the respondents, teaching and learning methods used to teach English in public secondary schools, students' attitude towards English, school's learning facilities used to enhance teaching of English in Kaplamai division, the influence of teachers' professional competence on students' performance in English and the challenges facing students in learning in school and effectively applying English in their lives.

To capture the effect of the above factors on performance of students in English, the researcher obtained a multiple-informant data from the head teachers, teachers of English and form four students from the public secondary schools in Kaplamai division using interview guides and questionnaires.

4.2 Response rate

The study samples were drawn from the schools which comprised of 15 head teachers, 54 teachers of English and 243 form four students. After the study it was established that all the sampled head teachers participated in the study while 49 teachers and 240 students also fully participated in the study. Table 4.1 shows interview schedules and questionnaire return rate for head teachers, teachers and students.

Table 4.1: Response rate

Group	Frequency	Percentage
Head Teachers	15	100
Teachers of English	49	90
Form four students	240	98.9

Table 4.1 shows that out of the sampled respondents, all the head teachers participated in the study, out of the 54 teachers of English sampled out, 49 teachers participated in the study while 240 students participated in the study giving a response rate of 98.9 percent. This according to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) is an excellent response rate realized because of the researchers own initiative to persuade and encourage the respondents to accept and participate in the study.

4.3 Demographic information of the teachers and students

This section gives information on the teachers and students gender distribution, their ages, teachers' professional qualifications and experience in teaching so as to enable the researcher assess gender parity between students and teachers in the schools, the teachers' level of experience in teaching and whether they are qualified to teach English in secondary schools. The responses in this section were presented as follows.

4.3.1 Gender distribution of the respondents

The researcher sought information on the teachers' and students' gender distribution within the schools. The gender distribution of the teachers was presented in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Gender distribution of the teachers among the schools

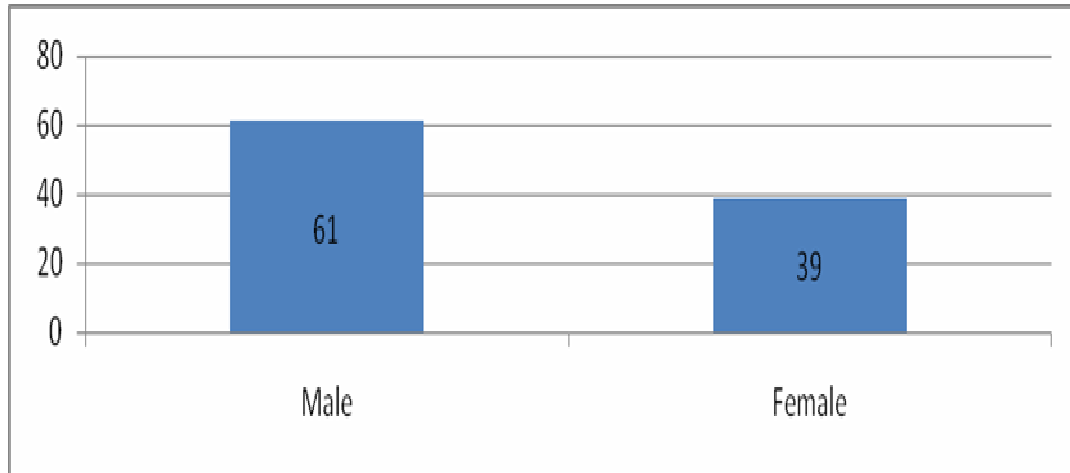
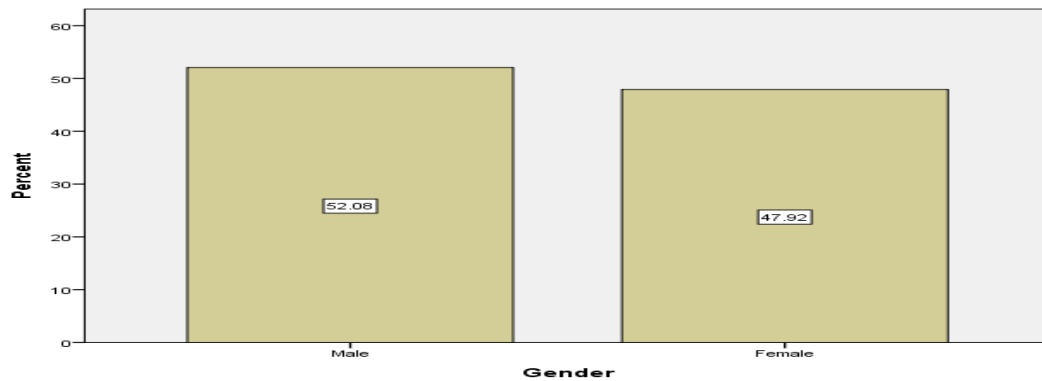


Figure 4.1 indicates that there are more male teachers of English in Kaplamai division than female teachers. This implies that most of the schools in the division have more male teachers creating a big gap in the gender balancing aspect of ensuring equal representation of both sexes in teaching.

The students' gender distribution among the schools in Kaplamai division is presented in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2: Distribution of students by gender



The gender parity of the form four students in the public secondary schools in Kaplamai division is relatively small with the male students being the most while the girls followed. This means that the district is almost achieving the recommended gender parity of 50 – 50 for both boys and girls as a result of the government’s effort in providing partial payments of schools for secondary school students through the free secondary school programme. The results are also reflective of the latest statistics at the KNEC where during the release of last KCSE results for 2012 – 2013, the overall gender representation of both girls and boys was 53 percent and 47 percent respectively.

4.3.2 Ages of the respondents

The respondents were further asked to indicate their ages. The age distribution of the teachers is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Age distribution of teachers

No. of years	Frequency	Percentage
21 -30 years	21	42
31- 40 years	20	40
41-50 years	8	18
Total	49	100

The results shows that teachers of English in Kaplamai division are still very young mostly at 21 – 40 years where most of the teachers are aged between 21-30 years and between 31– 40 years, while 18 percent are aged between 41 – 50 years. This implies

that most of the teachers have just joined the teaching practice although some have been in practice for a reasonable time to gather adequate experience.

The age distribution of the form four students in the public secondary schools in Kaplamai division is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Age distribution of the students

Years	Frequency	Percentage
less than 18	52	21.7
18 years	187	77.9
Above 18	1	.4
Total	240	100.0

Table 4.3 shows that most of the students from Kaplamai division are 18 years old. Those who are less than 18 years were the most while only 1 student indicated that he is above 18 years (20 years). This implies that the students have acquired the right age to graduate from O levels and therefore could effectively participate in the study without any difficulty.

4.3.3 Teachers' professional qualifications

The study sought information on the teachers' level of professional qualifications. The response is presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Teachers' level of qualification

Level of Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelors	44	89.8
Diploma	4	8.1
P1	1	2.0
Total	49	100.0

Teachers of English in Kaplamai division have acquired the most important qualification as teachers of English. This is because they have gone through the university and acquired relevant degrees in Education. They are followed from a distance by the diploma holders with only one P1 teacher. This result implies that the teachers' of English in this division are adequately trained to handle and take students through English lessons effectively.

4.3.4 Teachers' level of experience

The researcher sought information on the teachers' level of experience in teaching being important in ensuring that the teachers are well informed in their subject area.

The responses are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Teachers' level of experience

Experience	Frequency	Percentage
less than one year	3	6
1 - 5 years	21	43
5 - 10 years	17	35
11 - 15 years	4	8
over 15 years	4	8
Total	49	100.0

Out of the teachers who were sampled out, a relatively high number are experienced in teaching with up to five years experience. They are followed by the teachers with up to 10 years experience. The other group of teachers, are the ones with the highest level of experience of between 11 – 15 years and over 15 years while those who have less than 1 years experience are ranked last at percent. Having taught for over two years indicates that the teachers have gathered enough experience in dealing with students at this level and therefore can adequately discharge their duties. Husen (1978), asserts that successful teaching experience is a valuable asset that has a positive effect upon students' performance.

4.4 Teaching and learning methods and students' performance in English

This section presents information on the methods of teaching and learning that are used in public secondary schools in Kaplamai division. Teaching and learning

methods enable learners to actively participate in learning instead of being passive recipient of knowledge.

The information has been presented as follows.

4.4.1 Teaching methods used in Kaplamai schools

The study sought information on the methods of teaching applied by the teachers of English. The head teachers' and teachers' responses on the teaching methods applied in their schools are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Head teachers and teachers' response on teaching methods used by teachers of English

Methods	Head teachers	Teachers
Lecture	67	73
Group Discussions	93	90
Question and Answer	33	0
Role play, drama and games	27	57
Use of Realia	7	24
Participation/demonstration	13	41

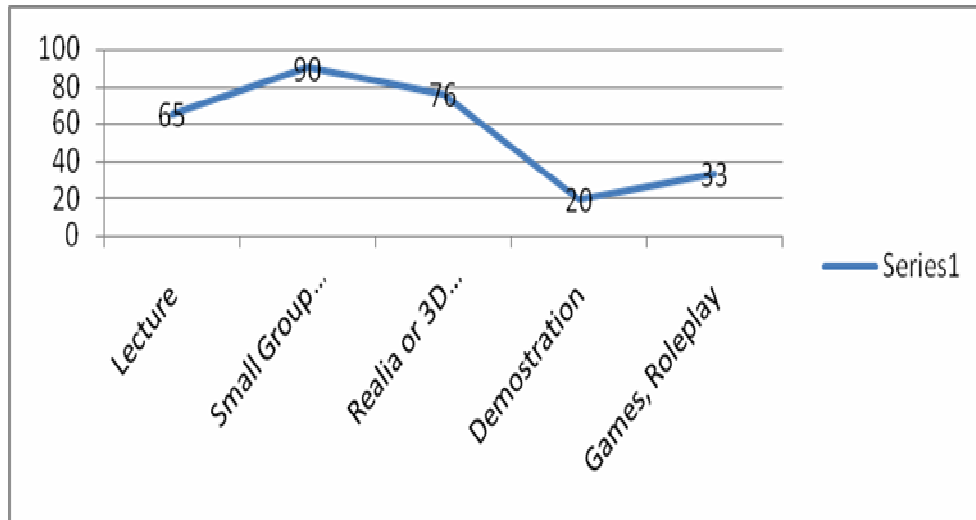
According to the head teachers group discussions are the common methods of teaching applied in their schools while for the teachers the application is highest. Lecture method of teaching is used at a response with the teachers rating it at 73 percent. According to Muindi et al (2004) there is no single best method of teaching. A good teacher uses several methods of teaching a single lesson depending on the teaching/ learning situation of a given lesson.

Role play, dramatization and games were rated higher by the teachers than the head teachers. Participation and demonstration of students during lessons was rated at 41 percent by the teachers and 13 percent for the head teachers. The use of questions where students participate by answering questions from their teachers and asking questions too, was rated at 33 percent by the head teachers. The implication is that most of the head teachers are in touch with what goes on in their schools and understands the methods used by their teachers when teaching students.

4.4.2 Learning methods

The students' responses on the methods that are applied by the teachers' of English in class are presented in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: Students' response on methods of learning applied by their teachers



Discussion in groups is the preferred method of teaching English in the secondary schools in Kaplamai division according to the students, lecture methods were rated second with demonstrations ranking third while the use of real objects and games

where students take on roles as characters are the most uncommon methods. This is in agreement with the head teachers' and teachers' responses and therefore a confirmation that these are the methods are used in teaching English in Kaplamai division.

4.4.3 Rating of the teaching methods

Based on the head teachers' response, the study sought their opinion on the methods that enhances students' performance in English in order to establish the effective teaching methods that promote learners' performance in English.

The response is presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 The head teachers' opinion on the best methods of teaching

Rating of methods of teaching	Frequency	Percentage
Group discussions	12	80
Dramatization	5	33
Role play	3	20
Presentation and Participation	3	20
Lecture	1	7

The head teachers prefer group discussions for teaching in their schools, dramatization was the second preference, participation and presentation and role play were ranked third while lecture method was ranked least. This is in contrast with the finding on the methods that actually used in the schools in a study by (Auma, 2010) where group discussions and lecture methods were most common.

The head teachers prefer group discussions because they are student centered, dramatization is preferred in teaching literature when it is well supervised, while participation and presentations are seen as helping the students in developing self confidence.

The teachers were then asked to rate the frequency of the use of the teaching methods.

The response is presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Frequency of use of the methods of teaching

Methods	Very often		Rarely		Very rarely	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Group discussions	33	67	16	33	0	0
Dramatization	7	14	36	73	6	12
Role play	29	59	5	10	15	31
Presentation and Participation	30	61	8	16	11	22
Lecture	27	55	12	24	10	20

Freq. – Frequency

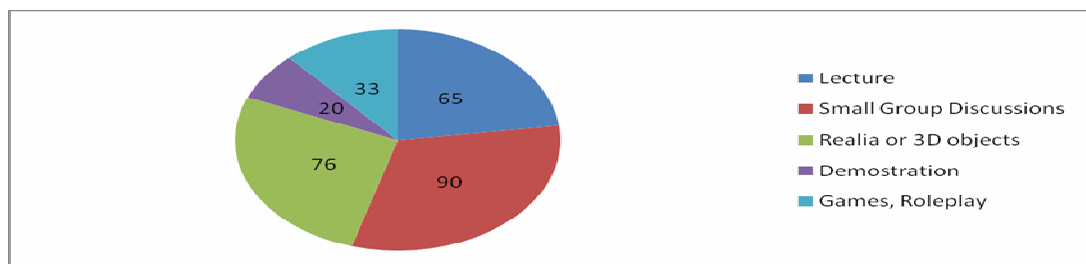
Small group discussions is the most oftenly used method in teaching English in public secondary schools in Kaplamai division, followed by presentations and participation. Role play comes third, lecture methods is also used oftenly with dramatization being used rarely. This is so despite that fact that teachers felt that lecture method is more important than presentations and participation, role play and dramatization in the previous section.

According to the teachers the use of group discussions and presentation and participation are convenient when delivering the contents, introducing new conceptions and expounding on difficult areas. The methods are also effective and efficient than other methods which take a lot of time and lot of resources. Presentations and participation enables students to participate in the learning process and understand the contents easily and better.

The methods also motivates the students and makes learning more interesting as they are based on the students' background which make learning more interesting and involves the use of the five senses. Through the applications of these methods, students participate by asking questions and are able to tackle the questions by themselves. It also helps in assisting weak students and are effective when teaching many students and finally they help in identifying individual learning problems and correct them in time.

The students were asked to rate the methods of teaching that makes learning of English more interesting and give the reasons as to why they thought so. The response is presented in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4: Rating of teaching methods by students



According to the students, group discussions is the method that makes learning of English more interesting, this is followed by the use of real objects, game, role play and dramatization were ranked third while lecturing and demonstrations were ranked lowest. The response indicates that the students prefer methods that engage them during lesson like discussions, seeing the real meanings like objects, participating in games and taking on different roles and dramatization.

The students observed that group discussions helps the students to attain total concept, enhances good listening skills, helps weak students to improve, students share knowledge, poor students learn from their colleagues, helps every person to participate fully and the students have the chance to express themselves fully. The use of real objects and drama gives the students the chance to see and apply knowledge and the use of humor to catch the attention of other students.

4.4.4 Relationship between teaching methods and student's performance in English

The teachers were asked to indicate whether there exists any relationship between the methods of teaching used and students' performance. The relationship was tested using chi-square and the out put presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Teachers' opinion on the relationship between methods of teaching and students' performance

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.512 ^a	1	.474		
Continuity Correction ^b	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.823	1	.364		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.500	1	.480		
N of Valid Cases	42				

a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .33.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The p – value was 0.000 which is less than 0.05 implying a significant relationship between the methods of teaching and learning used by the teachers and the students' performance in English. This indicates that when students are taught in groups, the teachers constitute presentations; the students' take part in role play, dramatization their performance in English improves a great deal.

4.4.5 Methods which improve performance in English

The teachers were further asked to indicate the methods which promote good performance among the students in English. They said that, group work promoted good performance of students, drama was ranked second with role play taking the third place. The use of real objects was said to improve performance of students, lecture method improves performance of students while the use of audio visual was ranked least. This was presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Teachers’ opinion on teaching methods that promotes good performance

Rating of methods of teaching	Frequency	Percentage
Group discussions	49	100
Dramatization	17	35
Role play	14	29
Use of real objects	7	14
Lecture and class presentation	5	10
Audio Visual	2	4

The teachers said that the use of lecture method helps the teacher to illustrate more than other methods, teachers apply real life example like trickster narratives to explain how the students should tackle the problems in English during dramatization while discussions helps those who do not know how to speak English to learn and practice speaking and helps the students to develop confidence in addressing people in public places.

4.4.6 The influence of teaching methods on performance in English

The study sought the teachers’ opinion on the influence of inappropriate teaching methods on students’ performance in English. The teachers indicated that if learners are taught inappropriately they fail to grasp the required skills, become passive and unable to internalize the skills and fail to get enough materials where they can practice since they over rely on the teachers. The use of inappropriate methods on teaching renders learning boring, monotonous hence discouraging students. This is in

agreement with Heyneman & Montenegro's (1984) conclusion, that proper organization of learning resources and the use of appropriate teaching strategies will enhance acquisition of the subject content by the students.

Further the use of lecture may not assist the students to acquire the required knowledge / concepts as expected and makes students not to participate in class and hence lose interest. Methods like lecturing do not aid the students in coping with the students' differences in abilities and leads to partial teaching hence not achieving set objectives. Unlike other subjects where students can read, English is a skill that requires spontaneous understanding. Therefore if teachers use poor methods, the students will not be able to answer questions properly even during exams and they will fail to express themselves hence poor performance.

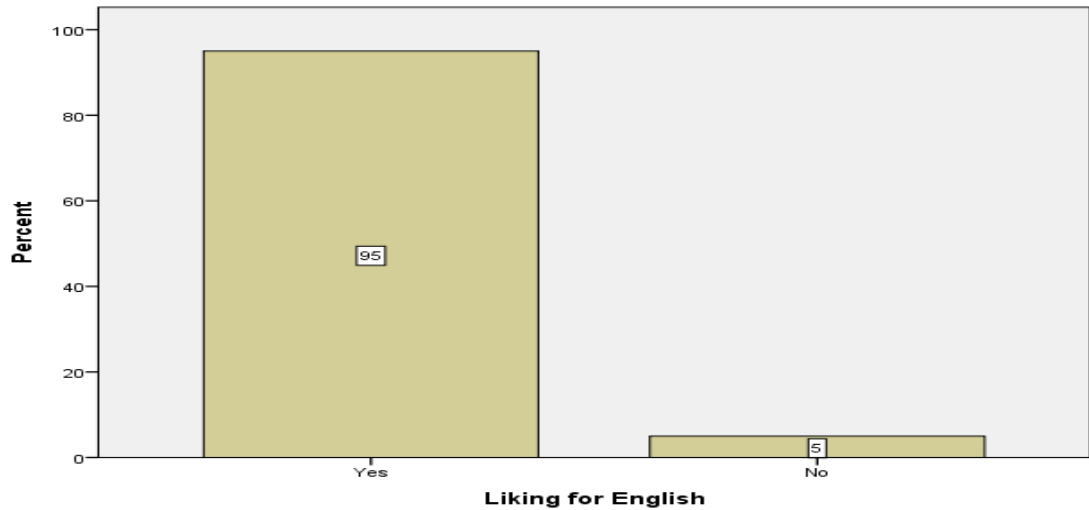
4.5 Students attitude and performance in English

This section presents information on the teachers' and students' opinion on the students' attitude and its effect on their performance in English. Students attitude has been measured on the either the positive or the negative perspective.

4.5.1 Students attitude towards English

The study sought to establish whether the students liked or disliked English. The response is presented in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5: Students attitude towards English

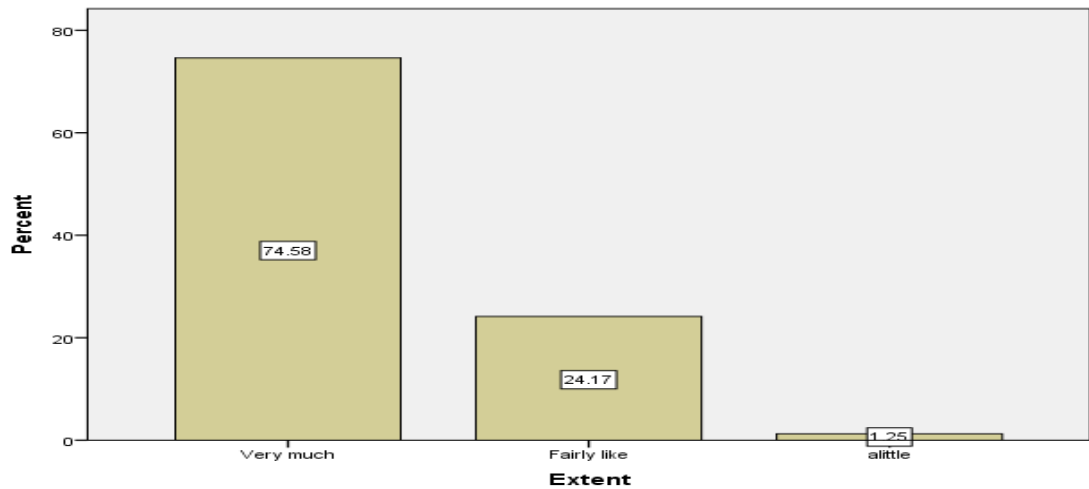


The study found out that the students had a positive attitude towards English while only a handful indicated that they did not like English implying that they had a negative attitude towards English. The finding implies that most of the students in Kaplamai division have a positive attitude towards English and have interest in learning, hence the performance is expected to be good.

4.5.2 Students rating on English.

Based on the response in figure 4.5, the students were asked to indicate the extent to which they liked English subject. The response is presented in Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6: The extent to which students like English



The study established that the students liked English very much, followed by those who liked it to a fair extent while only a few liked it to a little extend. This implies that most of the students have a lot of interest in learning English.

4.5.3 Students explanation for liking English

The study sought the students' explanation on why they liked or disliked English. The students who indicated that they liked English, argued that English is used in teaching all subjects and setting all examinations except Kiswahili. KIE (2002) notes that in a school setting proficiency in English will make the learning of other subjects much easier. They added that they have passion and like speaking English all the time. They indicated that they have a positive attitude towards English as it gives them the chance to express themselves both verbally and in writing.

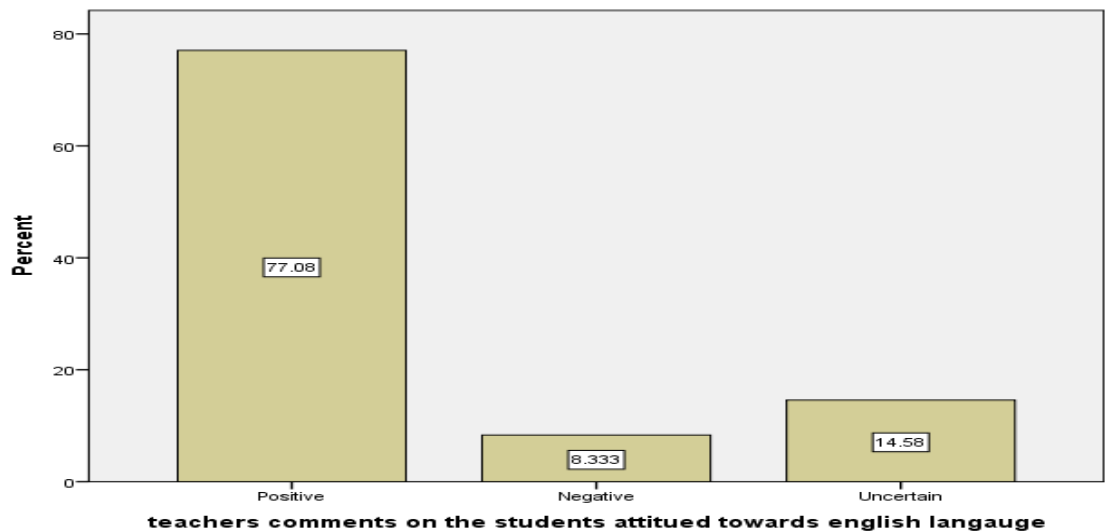
The students further said that more people use English for communication all over the world and that English is the formal language in Kenya. This is in agreement with Zeen, (2012) that English language has become more dominant around the world. In

some countries it is used as the mother tongue and while other countries learn English as a second language in schools. It also improves language and assists them when choosing careers.

4.5.4 Teachers opinion on students' attitude towards English

The teachers were asked to give their opinion on the students' attitude towards English. The response was presented in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7: Teachers' opinion on students' attitude towards English



Most the teachers indicated that their students had a positive attitude towards English. The students displayed a negative attitude towards English at according to the teachers while the rest of teachers were uncertain about their students' attitude towards English. This means that the teachers had a clear understanding of their students more so because of their experience in dealing with students over the years as indicated earlier.

4.5.5: Teachers explanation on students' attitude

For the students who had a positive attitude towards English, the teachers said that they had shown consistency in their class performance and improved in their examinations tremendously and that although they experienced difficulty they believe that they can make it. Further the teachers commented that, there is a tremendous improvement in class means score as the students like participating and perform well during class time. The teachers added that English is a language they comprehend during conversation, it does not require formulae and calculations and therefore they are ready to exercise in speaking and writing in English. They are always ready to learn and give positive response during lessons.

Others observed that all examinations are set in English except Kiswahili and so they have no alternative but to work hard and get to understand the language well, the student shows interest in learning English and are always looking forward to the next lesson. This argument has been supported by KIE (2002) which says that people use English in various fields of life such as commerce, medicine, aviation, tourism and travel.

While others said that students answer questions correctly and participate fully, they always ask questions in areas where they have not understood well, they also find English language a pride when they apply it theoretically and practically and speak in front of their colleagues. Others said that most of their prep times are spent revising in groups, they love reading novels and therefore have improved a lot in their language.

For those who displayed a negative attitude, the teachers added that the students are not sure of the role of English in their life or how they are going to apply it in life after school and so do not take it seriously. Other teachers argued that the students had the notion that they cannot do well in English and even the ethnic backgrounds of most of the learners (Kalenjin) has affected most of the students because most students normally communicate in their mother tongue while others felt that the students had a poor foundation from primary level. The teachers who were uncertain indicated that they are not sure because they have a mixed group of students with ranging abilities and so they are unpredictable. The students keep on fluctuating in performance hence becomes hard to predict their attitude.

4.6 Learning facilities and students' performance in English

This section presents information on the learning facilities that are available for students in Kaplamai Division and their effect on the students' performance in English.

4.6.1: Learning facilities in schools

The head teachers were asked to indicate the learning facilities that are present in their schools. The response is presented in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: The head teachers' response on the learning facilities in schools

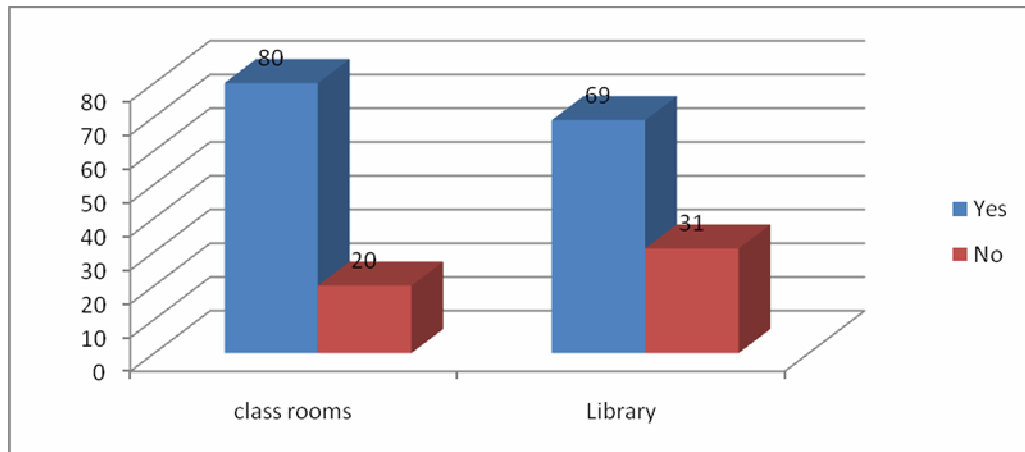
Learning facilities	Frequency	Percentage
Radio Broadcasting	4	27
Course (text) books	14	93
Supplementary books	4	27
Library	4	27
Audio Visual CD	6	40
Classrooms	15	100
News papers	2	13
ICT	1	7

From the head teachers' assessment all the schools have adequate class rooms for teaching English. Text books are provided among the schools at a very impressive rate. This is followed by the provision of audio visual CDs at response while library, supplementary books and radio broadcasting were ranked fourth. The use of newspapers in the libraries and ICT in teaching were ranked lowest. This means that the schools are well served with classroom and text books but not very well equipped with extra reading materials and libraries.

According to Psacharapoulous & Woodhall, (1985); Fuller, (1987) some of the most important instructional materials that have been shown to have significant influence in the teaching/learning process are text books, chemicals, apparatus and reading supplementary materials. The availability of such materials has a positive effect on school effectiveness and therefore yields a good performance from the students.

The study sought from the teachers whether they had enough class rooms to cater for all the enrolled students and libraries within their schools. The responses are presented in Figure 4.8.

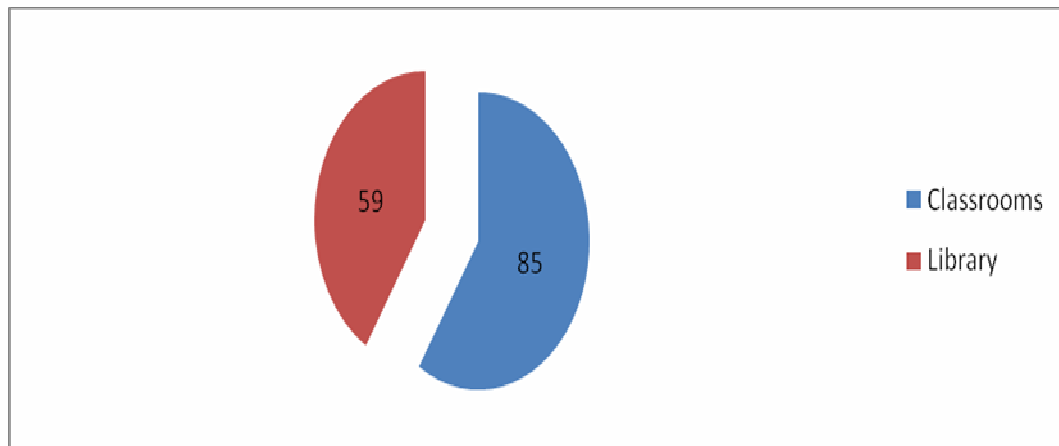
Figure 4.8: School learning facilities



The figure shows that most of the teachers were satisfied with the provision of class rooms for teaching in their schools and they also observed that they had functional libraries in their schools. This is an indication that the teachers do not face problems with housing the students during lessons.

The students were asked whether their schools have spacious classrooms and libraries in their schools. The response is presented in Figure 4.9.

Figure 4.9: Students' response on adequacy of classrooms and library



According to the students, the schools have spacious classrooms and functional libraries at a response. This implies that the students are satisfied with the class rooms that have been provided for them which accommodate all the students adequately without any problems as well as libraries.

4.6.2 Effect of inadequate learning materials on students' performance

The study sought the teachers' opinion on the influence of inadequate teaching and learning materials on students' performance. The teachers indicated that when students lack learning materials they tend to lose hope in school and in most cases may even drop out of school, lack of learning facilities interferes with the students' ability to develop good study and writing skills, students are unable to apply what they have learned practically and they become unstable even in school.

This is in agreement with Mwangi (2009), that a glance of secondary school syllabuses for any subject will reveal the numerous topics which a reasonably good library could provide comprehensive information by means of reference books, supplementary texts, encyclopedias, good reading books, magazines, journals and local and international newspapers. This will contribute immensely to student's sore

of knowledge. It is obvious that such an opportunity will stimulate curiosity, comprehensive study and good study habits.

4.7 Teachers qualification and in-service training and students' performance in English

This section presents information on teachers' qualifications and its effect on students' performance in English in Kaplamai division.

4.7.1 Relationship between teachers' qualifications and students' performance

The head teachers were asked to give their opinions on the relationship between the teacher's qualification and teaching of English. They responded as follows; some of the head teachers were uncertain about the relationships indicating that it is dependent on the teachers' ability and hard work. One of them said that "teachers who are qualified find it easy to deliver the syllabus contents". They said that qualified teachers make teaching fun for the students leading to high performance in the subject.

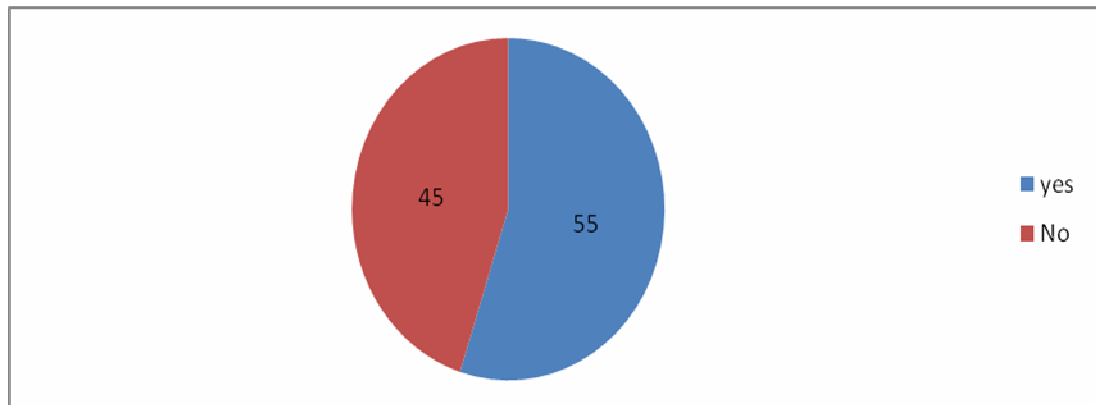
They added that untrained teachers can inadequately contribute to effective coverage of the syllabus and professionally trained teachers deliver the contents better. The head teacher from Kongoli secondary school indicated that a trained teacher is well equipped with skills to teach the subject. Eshiwani (2003) asserts that a teacher's qualification correlates with the quality of knowledge imparted in their learners. He argues that untrained Mathematics teachers in both primary and secondary schools should be trained to enable them know and use proper instructional methods.

Teachers are among the main orchestrates of the school ‘culture’ by the kind of conditions they create in classrooms and the school in general. Others were of the opinion trained teachers have the knowledge to deliver the contents of the syllabus adequately since they are equipped with the right skills and knowledge of teaching of the English language, (Nyangacha, 2008).

4.7.2 Training of teachers for teaching English

For the teachers, the study sought to establish whether they were trained to teach English and literature as their basic subject while in college. The response is presented in Table 4.10.

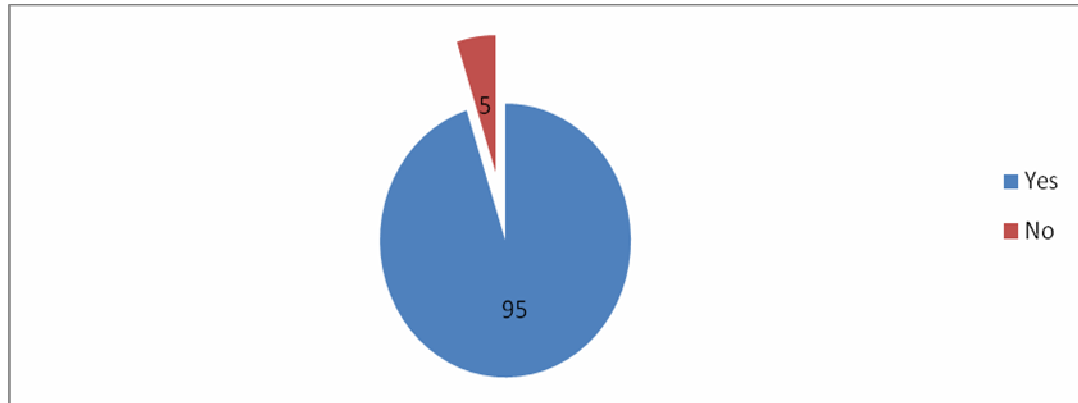
Figure 4.10: Training as teachers of English



The study found out that majority of the teachers have been adequately trained to teach English in their current positions, while the rest have not been trained to teach English. Auma (2010) points out that academics qualifications and professional qualifications of a teacher are among the pre-determinations factors during the recruitment and selection process of those who are inducted in the teaching profession

At the same time 95 percent of teachers have been trained internally while 5 % have not received any further in-service training as presented in Figure 4.11.

Figure 4.11: In-service training programmes for teachers

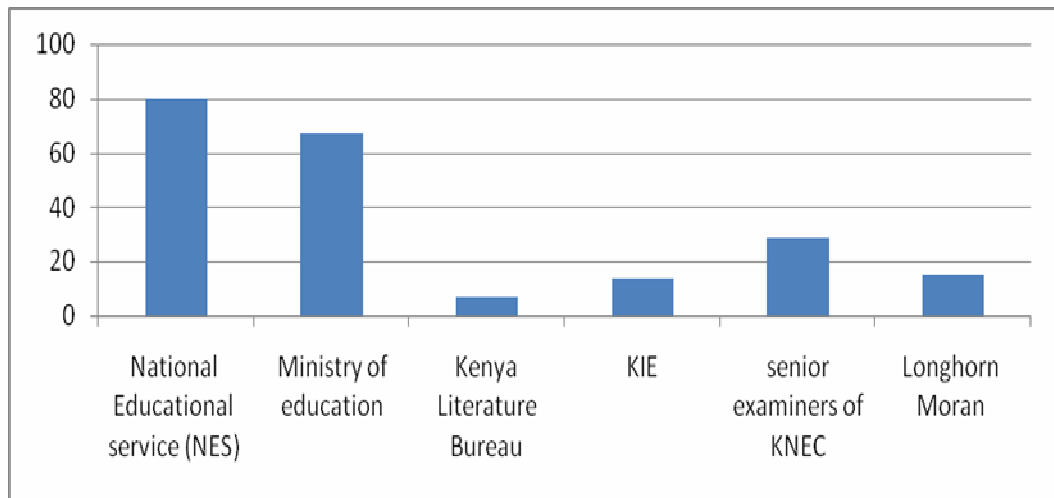


For the teachers who are trained to teach English, they are teaching through experience and because of the big shortage of teachers in Kaplamai and Kenya generally. As such they have acquired a lot of experience in teaching English and therefore have the ability to deliver its contents effectively.

4.7.3 In-service trainings programmes for teachers

The head teachers were then asked to indicate whether the teachers of English in their schools have attended any in-service training where all the head teachers indicated that they had organized for various forms of training opportunities for their teachers of English facilitated by various bodies as indicated in Figure 4.12.

Figure 4.12: Facilitators of training for teachers



The National Education Service (NES) of the greatest facilitator of in-service training programmes for teachers of English in Kaplamai Division. The Ministry of Education of was ranked second. Senior examiners of KNEC came third with Longhorn Moran being ranked. The Kenya Literature Bureau and KIE were ranked least among the facilitators of in-service trainings for teachers.

4.8 Challenges facing students while learning English in school

Then the students were asked to indicate the difficulties they experienced with English and the response was as follows. According to the students, the areas of difficulties are literature especially poetry and course contents, pronunciations, vocabularies and, lack of materials to practice more so the set books. There is also lack of library facilities where the students can read more and develop a stronger command of English which can help them in expressions like during drama.

The students are greatly affected by their mother tongues, peer associations, mastering of spellings, grammar and interpretation of hard terms and words. They have difficulty putting words into action, experience disturbance from fellow students and misunderstanding of concepts. Finally the students are lacking enough teachers, some teachers are harsh and hence unapproachable and do not correct students in a polite language where as some teachers are not understandable because of their posture,

4.9 Suggestions for improving performance in English language

The researcher sought the respondents' suggestions on the steps that can be taken to improve the students' performance in English.

4.9.1 Head teachers' and teachers' suggestions

The respondents suggested that since English is subject to constant changes, training of teachers should be continuous stretching even to individual schools. There should be regular workshops and seminars taking into consideration the emerging aspects. Further more teachers should be trained on how to demystify English as a hard subject and particularly poetry, skilled teachers to be used in in-service course and insets in order to update the handling of the subject.

The teachers observed that promotions of teachers be given to those who proof competent while at the same time ensuring that trainings are held regularly. In-service trainings should be taken to equip the teachers with the right methods of teaching; they should be trained on integration of English and literature and poetic aspects which have been largely ignored. Others said that training should involve the use of realia because most teachers tend to forget about the 3D objects, they should be

trained on the use of ICT to enhance teaching methods and supplemented with modern guides especially in teaching literature.

At the same time training should include even teachers who are not employed by the government, they need to be exposed to a variety of methods and resources in order to promote variety and embrace English language policy. They indicated that the introduction of new concepts should be timely especially when set books are introduced. Teachers should be focused on difficult areas in the syllabus and be allowed to specialize in specific areas like phonetics and writing skills. They should focus on improvement of grammar and communication skills.

4.9.2 Students suggestions on how to improve on their performance in English

Finally, the students were asked to give suggestions on what they thought would improve their performance in English. They said that the teachers should improve in techniques of teaching and that the students should discuss and consult teachers. The schools should have separate teachers for language and literature, they should be allowed to attend symposiums in other schools and holding talks with students from other schools to expose students and encourage poor students.

More books should be provided from different publications and the teachers should be trained to use simple language, group discussions, past papers, employ strict English speaking measures. The schools should improve their libraries to encourage reading of story books and encourage live performances in literature (video shows) for the schools. Maengwe (1985) observes that the use class readers enabled all the children

to read and this contributed to their inspired composition writing and boosted performance.

4.10 Summary of chapter

This chapter has presented the findings of the study based of the response rate, demographic information and the effect of teaching and learning methods, students attitude, learning facilities, teachers qualification on students performance, the challenges facing students while learning English and suggestion on how students an improve on their performance in English.

Under demographic information, the chapter has presented information on the teachers and students gender and age distribution, the teachers' qualifications and their level of experience in teaching. The teaching and learning methods section contains information on the methods of teaching and learning that are commonly used in schools in Kaplamai division, the rating of the methods by the respondents and their effect on students' performance in English. Under the learning facilities section, the study has established the facilities that are available for teaching and learning in the schools and how they have affected performance of students in the area. For teachers' qualification and students' performance, the study has established the level of teachers' qualification for teaching English, provision of training opportunities for the teachers and their effect of the performance of students in English.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the finding on the school based factors influencing students' performance in English in secondary schools in Kaplamai division of Trans Nzoia East District. The summary has been presented on the influence of teaching and learning methods on students' performance in English, establish the influence of students' attitude towards English Language and their performance in English, determine the influence of the school's learning facilities on students' performance in English language, establish the influence of teachers professional competence on students' performance in English language and determine challenges that student's face in learning English in secondary schools.

5.2 Summary of the study

The purpose of this study was to establish the school-based factors influencing students' performance in English language at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Kaplamai division, Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya. Specifically the study sought to establish the influence of teaching and learning methods, students' attitude towards English language, school's learning facilities and professional competence levels of teachers on the performance of students in English language and the challenges that students face while learning English language in school.

The study adopted descriptive survey design of the public secondary schools in Kaplamai division. It employed proportionate sampling technique in selecting the sample size for the students and census for the head teachers and teachers of English giving final sample sizes of 15 head teachers, 54 teachers and 243 students. The data for the study was obtained using interview schedules from the head teachers and questionnaires from both the teachers and students. After the data collection, the researcher coded the data using computer softwares and analyzed it using descriptive and inferential statistics. The output was presented in form of tables and charts for interpretations and discussions.

The study found that among the methods that are recommended for teaching English in schools especially secondary schools, groups discussions is the most commonly used method in Kaplamai division as indicated by the respondents. Lecturing follows closely as another suitable method that is used widely in the schools with other methods being through class participations and presentation, role play and dramatization.

These methods are used because for instance discussions are student focused and help in developing students' confidence, helps students in learning and practicing how to speak and helps the students to develop confidence in addressing people in public places. Lecture method is student centered and assists in ensuring that all students are fully involved during lessons. The use of role plays and drama aids in developing creativity among students and self esteem. The teachers also have the chance to apply real life example like trickster narratives to explain how the students should tackle the problems in English during dramatization.

The students have a positive attitude towards English language. The students indicated that they like learning English because nearly all the subjects that are taught in school are in English except Kiswahili and therefore the students have no option but to learn English. English language is also common because it is the main medium of communication right from their schools, to the villages, formal institutions and organizations and world over. Some of the students have a passion towards English because they feel proud to speak in English. This also improves their self esteem.

From the head teachers' opinion, the public secondary schools in Kaplamai division are well equipped in terms of having enough and spacious class rooms, text books, the use of audio visuals CDs, supplementary books and radio sets for airing radio based programmes. The use of computers is quite minimal with newspapers being the least among teaching facilities that are provided in the schools. This is supported by the teachers and students where most of them indicated that they have been provided with adequate class rooms and functional libraries to aid them in teaching and learning English.

These facilities according to the respondents motivate the students to stay in school and controls on school drops outs. The students are able to develop good studying and writing skills, and the students developed a sense of security for being in the right schools with all the basic requirements to aid them in excelling their final examinations. Hence they are able to apply what they have learnt without difficulties.

The head teachers indicated that the professional competence of teachers is paramount to the students' performance in English. This is because teachers who are trained well and qualified understand concepts well and are able to handle the subject with the students well. Trained teachers have the ability to assess the different abilities of their students and therefore effectively deal with their strengths and weaknesses. According to the head teachers, teachers who are qualified have the creativity to make learning more interesting by introducing fun and hence be able to catch the attention of the students.

The study found out that the challenges facing students in learning English range from the fact that most students have the notion that they cannot do well in English and therefore do not make effort to perform well in it. Others are not sure of the purpose of English in their lives and how they will apply it and therefore do not take keen interest in it. Others have been largely affected by the backgrounds especially mother tongue which does not embrace speaking of English as an every day activity. Secondary schools in Kaplamai division are mainly composed of people from the Kalenjin community and therefore most of the students have difficulties in pronouncing certain words correctly. Therefore they get discouraged to practice the language. The other challenge that is facing the students is having a weak background in English right from primary level which has been a challenge to deal with.

5.3 Conclusions

The study examined the influence of the school-based factors on students' performance in English at KCSE. It was established that group discussion is the main method of teaching/learning used. It improves students' performance because it is

participative and involves all the students specially the weak students who may need extra emphasis on difficult areas. It is also convenient when delivering the subject content and introducing new concepts.

The study also established that there is a significant relationship between student attitude and performance posted in English. When students have a positive attitude towards English, they always want to learn and speak more even during lessons. They are also very active during lessons and are asking questions in areas they may not understand, hence this greatly improve their performance in English.

The study found out that adequacy of learning facilities has enabled the students to develop a sense of security with the schools hence reduced on absenteeism, transfers and drop outs which has led to better performance of the students in English. Through the qualification and training, teachers have acquired the basic skills that enable them to understand the content of English subject well and therefore are able to teach the students as recommended. The challenges facing the students in their effort to learn English are that the students have the notion that they cannot do well in English and therefore do not make effort to perform well in it. Others are not sure of the purpose of English in their lives and how they will apply it. It was established too that others have been largely affected by the background, especially mother tongue which does not embrace speaking of English as an every day activity. The students have a very weak background in English right from primary level which has been a challenge to deal with.

5.4 Recommendations

The study recommends that all teachers of English should embrace the use of methods of teaching/learning which involve activity and promote discovery among students in order to improve on their performance in English language. Such methods include group discussion and dramatization that are learner centered and result better performance in English language at KCSE.

Based on the findings the study recommends that language policy should be strengthened in schools by all the teachers to curb the practice by students communicating in mother tongue in school. The TSC should recruit adequate professionally qualified and trained teachers of English to ensure that the syllabus is completed on time so as to guarantee impressive performance in English.

Further the study recommends that the head teachers should ensure that libraries are equipped with relevant books including class readers to promote students reading culture.

The head teachers should at all times monitor the teaching and learning process during lessons to make sure that the teachers apply the appropriate methods of teaching. There should be regular organization of seminars and workshops for teachers of English organized by the stakeholders like publishers, Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards of Ministry of Education to equip the teachers with the current teaching methodologies. Teachers of English should also be encouraged to embrace the use of ICT in their teaching to make certain concepts in English easy for the students to understand.

Finally, the Ministry of Education should consider the separation of English language from literature so as to be taught as independent subjects by different teachers. This can enhance teachers' performance when handling a subject they are knowledgeable in.

5.5 Suggestion for further studies

The researcher recommends further studies in the following areas;

- i) The effect of local languages on the performance of students in English in Kaplamai division.
- ii) To effect of teachers attitude on the performance of students in English from a general view.
- iii) How students' attitude towards English can be improved to enhance their performance in English.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KAPLAMAI DIVISION

No	SCHOOLS
1	Kongoli
2	Sinoko
3	St. Charles Lwanga-Botwa
4	St. Peters Nyakinywa
5	Sitatunga
6	St Augustin Munyaka
7	Kesogon
8	Wiyeta Girls
9	Makutano
10	Yuya S.A
11	Chisare
12	St Teresa's Sinyereri
13	Sibanga
14	Kimson
15	Kaplamai
16	St Mark's Boys
17	St Mark's Girls

APPENDIX 11: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

University of Nairobi
Department of Educational
Administration and Planning,
P.o Box 30197,
Nairobi.

The Principal,

Dear Sir/ Madam

Re: Request for Research Data

I am a post graduate student at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting a research on School based factors influencing student's performance in English Language at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Kaplamai Division, Trans- Nzoia county, Kenya. You have been selected to participate in this study. Kindly assist by responding to all items attached in the questionnaire. You are assured that the information you give will be for research purpose only and your identity will be treated with confidentiality.

Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

Abiri N. Donald

APPENDIX III: HEAD TEACHERS INTERVIEW GUIDE

This interview schedule is for the purpose of investigating school based factors influencing students' performance in English language in KCSE in public secondary schools in Kaplamai division. You are kindly requested to complete it indicating your honest responses.

1. a) What teaching methods do teachers of English use in teaching?

b). Which methods in your opinion promotes student's performance in English Language?

2. What are the learning facilities available in your school for teaching of English?

3 a) In your view, is there any relationship between a teachers' qualification and Teaching of English language? Explain

b) Have teachers of English in your school attended any in – service training for English language in the year 2008 – 2011?

c) If yes, who facilitated the programme (s)?

4. What factors contribute on improvement of performance of English language?

APPENDIX IV: TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please indicate the correct option as honest as possible by ticking one of the options

In the questions below.

PART I: Demographic information

1. Please indicate your gender

Male Female

2. In which of the following age bracket do you fall?

21 – 30 years 31 – 40 years 41 – 50 years

51 – 60 years Over 60 years

3. What is your highest level of professional qualification?

a) P1 c) Bachelors

b) Diploma d) Masters

4. How long have you been a teacher? _____

PART II

This section requires you to answer the questions provided in relation to issues related to the school based factors influencing students' performance in English language in KCSE examinations.

SECTION A: Teaching and Learning methods

5. The following are some of the methods used by teachers of English in teaching.

Please indicate those methods that you use.

i) Lecture method

ii) Small group discussions.

Positive [] Negative [] Uncertain []

Explain your response in '10' above.

SECTION C: School Learning Facilities

11. Does your school have enough classes to cater for all the enrolled students?

Yes [] No []

12. Do you have a library in the school?

Yes [] No []

SECTION D: Teachers Qualification and in-Service Training.

13. Are you trained to teach English language and literature in English?

Yes [] No []

14. Have you attended any in-service-training in English Language between 2008 – 2011?

Yes [] No []

15. Based on your experience over the years, give a suggestion in the training of teachers of English Language.

SECTION E: School based factors affecting performance of English.

Please explain in brief how the following factors hinder performance of English Language.

Inappropriate teaching method(s)

Inadequate learning materials

SECTION F: Suggestions on Improving Performance of English Language.

16. Suggest ways through which the following items can be utilized to improve performance of English language.

School library

Teaching/ Learning materials

Thank You for Cooperation

APPENDIX V: STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Student,

Thanks for accepting to be my respondent. Please indicate the correct option as honest as possible by ticking one of the options. Kindly respond to all questions. Do not indicate your name or the name of your school.

PART I: Demographic information

1. Please indicate your gender.

Male Female

2. Age (years)

15 and below Above 15

3. Form: _____

PART II

SECTION A. Attitude towards English

4. Do you like English?

Yes No

If yes, to what extent do you like English?

Very much Fairly like Like a little

5. What are your reasons for liking or disliking English?

6. What difficulties do you experience in learning English?

SECTION B: Teaching and Learning methods

7. The following are some of the methods used by teachers of English.

Tick those methods you see your teacher use.

i) Lecture method. []

ii) Small group discussions. []

iii) Use of Realia or 3-d objects. []

iv) Games, role play, drama. []

8. Which teaching method(s) used by your teacher makes learning of English language more interesting?

Explain

SECTION C: School Learning facilities

9. Are the classrooms spaciously enough to provide conducive learning environment?

Yes [] No []

10. Do you have a school library?

Yes [] No []

SECTION D: Suggestions of Improving Performance of English language.

11. What do you suggest should be done so as to improve the performance of English language?

APPENDIX VI: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Telephone: 254-020-2213471, 2241349, 254-020-2673550
Mobile: 0713 788 787 , 0735 404 245
Fax: 254-020-2213215
When replying please quote
secretary@ncst.go.ke

P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA
Website: www.ncst.go.ke

Our Ref: **NCST/RCD/14/013/901**

Date: **30th May 2013**

Donald Nyaswabu Abiri
University of Nairobi
P.O Box 92-0902
Kikuyu.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application dated **23rd May 2013** for authority to carry out research on "*School-based factors influencing students' performance in English language at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Kaplamai Division, Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya.*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Trans-Nzoia District** for a period ending **30th June, 2013**.

You are advised to report to **the District Commissioner and District Education Officer, Trans-Nzoia District** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. K. Rugutt'.

DR. M. K. RUGUTT, PhD, HSC.
DEPUTY COUNCIL SECRETARY

Copy to:
The District Commissioner
The District Education Officer
Trans-Nzoia District

"The National Council for Science and Technology is Committed to the Promotion of Science and Technology for National Development"

APPENDIX VII: RESEARCH PERMIT

PAGE 2

PAGE 3

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss/Institution
Donald Nyaswabu Abiri
of (Address) University of Nairobi
P.O Box 92-0902, Kikuyu

has been permitted to conduct research in



Location
Trans-Nzoia
Rift Valley

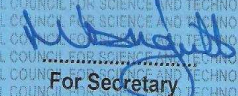
District
Province

on the topic: School-based factors influencing
students' performance in English language
at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
in Kaplamai Division, Trans-Nzoia County,
Kenya.

for a period ending: 30th June, 2013.

Research Permit No. NCST/RCD/14/013/901
Date of issue 30th May, 2013
Fee received KSH. 1000



Applicant's
Signature


For Secretary
National Council for
Science & Technology