

**An Analysis on Factors Influencing Academic Performance among  
Secondary Schools in Embakasi Division of Nairobi Province.**

**By  
Eunice W. Waweru**


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**A Research Project Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement of  
Post Graduate Diploma in Education of  
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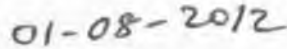
## DECLARATION

This research project report is my original work and has not been presented for an academic award in any other university.



Eunice W. Waweru

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Date

This research project report has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

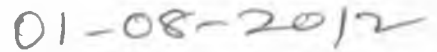


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## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this project report to my father Mr. Peter Waweru Ngata, my mother Mrs. Keziah Wairimu Waweru, my husband Mr. Joel Karanja and my brother Mr. Joseph Mburu for guiding me and motivating me into achieving my dream and helping me in the accomplishment of this work.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

- UNICEF** - United Nations Children’s Fund.
- GOK** - Government of Kenya
- UNESCO** - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- K.C.S.E** - Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education.

## ABSTRACT

Performance in secondary schools has been of great concern to administrators, parents, teachers and the students over the years. This is because it determines who will proceed to colleges and universities which are higher levels of learning.

Poor performance has been an issue in the division. Though several research studies have been done in other areas, factors that affect academic performance in one area may be different from ones that affect performance in another area.

This study will analyze the factor affecting academic performance in Embakasi Division. It will also investigate factors that contribute to poor performance besides the ones already mentioned.

The research will be undertaken in Embakasi Division of Nairobi Province. The purpose of carrying out the study will be to find solutions to the academic performance in the division which has continued to be poor year in, year out.

Five private schools and five public schools will be selected through random sampling. The students will be selected through stratified sampling. Teachers and parents will be picked through random sampling.

The study will be descriptive in nature. Pre-mock examination results and KCSE results for the last three years will be used to measure academic performance. Questionnaires will be used to get information on availability of physical facilities, teaching and learning materials, assessment of achievement (evaluation), completion of syllabus, teacher – students ratio, teachers’ qualification, teachers’ working conditions, inspection and supervision of teachers, parents’ attitudes, availability of basic needs, students attitude and motivation and students’ discipline. Descriptive statistics will be used to analyze data collected. From the research findings, discussion and conclusion will be made and a final report written, which will include recommendations of the researcher.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Problem.

Education is recognized around the world as a basic prerequisite for development (GOK/UNICEF, 1992). For any nation to achieve economic, socio-cultural, technological and political development, the education of its citizens should be of great concern to the development planners of that nation. Millennium Development Goal number two seeks to ensure that all nations achieve Universal Free Primary Education by 2015(internet sources).This is because leaders from around the world realized that provision of education was one of the benchmarks for tackling extreme poverty.

In the year 2003, Kenya introduced Free Primary Education which is in line with the Millennium Development goals. The government also started providing subsidies to all public secondary school students. However, efforts should be made to improve the current status of education in Kenya, by attempting to solve the problems that exist in schools which affect academic performance negatively.

In Embakasi Division of Nairobi Province, performance in KCSE has been very low over the years. Therefore, the researcher would like to carry out a study on factors affecting academic performance among secondary schools in the division. According to Anderson et al (2001), a student's background has a bearing on his/her achievement in secondary school. They assert that home environment may enhance a positive self esteem which leads to improved academic performance. On the other hand, Keith and Lewin (1992) found out that school based factors influence academic performance. Research on the effects of schooling indicates quite consistently that the school a student attends makes a difference I the student's educational attainments. Schools with initially similar student populations vary greatly in the extent to which their students demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge and skills following attendance for a period of time (Rutter et al, 1979). Therefore it appears that there are school characteristics that account for differences in student accomplishments.

Studies by Lee and Smith (1997) indicated that teacher performance is influenced by motivation. They found out that lack of motivation and professional commitment

produce poor attendance and unprofessional attitude which affects the performance of students. Anderson et al (2001) found out that students' attitude towards learning and students discipline has a bearing on academic performance. Student motivation and attitude have direct relation with academic performance. Studies on learning found out that academic performance is a function of student expectations of obtaining valued outcomes (Pintrich and Scharauben, 1994). More motivated students are those who believe that they are capable of performing well on tasks they consider valuable and are also likely to use appropriate learning strategies and efficient study methods (Pintrich and Garcia, 1991).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem.**

The researcher is interested in finding out the cause of poor performance among secondary schools in Embakasi Division. There has been poor performance for a long time in the division with most schools scoring a mean grade of below 5.0 points. This shows that there are problems that exist in the division which have caused poor performance for many years. There must be factors that contribute to this poor academic performance. A research in this area will help to reveal which factors may be affecting academic achievements. Studies in other areas have confirmed the presence of several factors that contributed to poor performance in those areas. For example Eshiwani (1983) conducted a study in western province of Kenya on factors influencing performance among primary and secondary school pupils and noted that school facilities such as text books, visual aids and libraries are vital to performance in national exams.

According to Wamai (1991), a study carried out in Kenya schools indicated that academic qualification of teachers is one of the most important factors that determine academic achievements by learners. In a study on effects of motivation UNESCO (1998) noted that there is need to identify what motivates learners so that they attend to educational programs. If pupils are bored and fail to see the connection between their personal lives and what they are taught in schools, they become candidates of academic failure, which leads to poor performance in examinations. Orodho (1996) noted that parent's economic status contribute a lot to the children's academic success. Students who come from homes

of upper income bracket tend to do better in school, tend to learn language skills and other behaviors rewarded by schools.

Another study on western aboriginal children shows that higher levels of carer education were a protective factor in terms of academic performance. Students in primary care of a person who has completed 13 or more years of schooling were over two times less likely to have low performance than students whose primary carer had 1-9 years of education. Students whose primary carer was not in the labour force were 40% more likely to have low academic performance compared with those whose primary carer was employed.

### **1.3 The Purpose of the Study.**

The aim of this study was to analyze factors which affect students' academic performance and find out what needs to be done to improve academic achievement in the division.

### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

- i.** To establish how school environment influence students' academic performance.  
.i.e. physical facilities, teaching and learning materials, assessment of achievement, completion of the syllabus and teacher- student ratio.
- ii.** To find out how teacher-related factors affect performance of students. i.e. teacher qualification, teachers' working conditions, inspection and supervision and teachers' attitude towards the students.
- iii.** To establish how home environmental factors influence academic performance. I.e. parents attitude towards education, parents' level of education and parents' economic status.
- iv.** To find out how students' characteristics influence their academic performance .i.e. student attitude towards learning and students discipline.

### **1.5 Research Questions.**

- i. To what extent does school environment influence academic performance in Embakasi division?
- ii. How do teacher - related factors affect performance of students in Embakasi division?
- iii. To what extent do home environmental factors influence academic performance in Embakasi division?
- iv. How do students' characteristics influence academic performance in Embakasi division?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study.**

The study will help the Ministry of Education, the education officers and the school administrators in policy formation and implementation if adopted. It will also assist teachers and students to understand their role in influencing the performance of the students.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study.**

- The researcher was aware that form four students in Embakasi Division came from different socio-cultural backgrounds. Therefore, there was likely to be some influence of age, tribe, religion and family organization. Random sampling would help mitigate the effects of these factors.
- The attitudes of the respondents may influence results negatively.
- Administrators, teachers and students might fear disclosing true information about themselves and their schools. This fear could be eliminated by assuring the respondents that the information would be treated with utmost confidentiality.
- Some questionnaires might not be returned while others might not be completed. This problem could be solved by assigning the questionnaires to responsible people e.g. the questionnaires for students were given to the class teachers while the ones for teachers were given to Head of Departments. The questionnaires for parents were given to the deputy principal or the chairman of the Board of Governors. Extra questionnaires were issued to replace lost ones.

## **1.8 Delimitations of the study**

The geographical area of study was Embakasi Division of Nairobi province in Kenya. It is located in the eastern part of the province. It has an area of 208km<sup>2</sup>. It has eight wards which are Kayole, Njiru, Ruai, Dandora A, Dandora B, Mihang'o, Komarock and Umoja. It has a population of 434,157 by 2009 population census. The division is occupied by people from almost all tribes of Kenya. The economic activities are small businesses like shops, small hotels, green groceries, matatu business and businesses like wholesales, hardwares, big restaurants, and boutiques. Others sell items in the markets. In general there are many economic activities

The study targeted students, teachers and parents in secondary schools in the division. Form four students from selected schools, their teachers and parents were the subjects of study. The reason for using form four students is that it is easier to assess academic performance by using the pre-mock exams which are done by all schools in the division.

## **1.9 Assumptions of the Study.**

The following assumptions were made during the study period:-

It was assumed that most of the students are of the average intelligence level. It was also assumed that the pre-mock exams are a standard measure of students' performance. Another assumption was that the respondents would be honest in answering questions. Lastly, it was assumed that the instruments used (Exams, interviews and questionnaires) were valid and reliable.

## **1.10 Definition of significant Terms.**

Instrumentality – Importance

Esprit – feelings of pride, care and support for each other that are shared by the members of a group

Prevalence – happening often or being very common.

Students' characteristics – In this study, students' characteristics refers to students' attitude towards learning and students' discipline.



### **1.11 Organization of the study**

This study was organized in five chapters. The first part contains the preliminary which includes the title page, declaration, dedication, acknowledgements, list of tables, list of figures, abbreviations and acronyms and the abstract. The second part contains Chapter one which includes the background to the study, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, assumptions of the study, definition of significant terms and organization of the study. The third part is Chapter two which deals with literature review, which includes introduction, empirical review, theoretical framework and conceptual framework.

The fourth part is chapter three which contains research methodology which includes introduction, research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments, validity and reliability of the instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations. The fifth part is chapter four which deals with research findings. The sixth part is Chapter five which consists of the summary of the study, conclusion and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Several studies have been conducted to determine factors that influence academic achievement. Various factors have been investigated and found to have either direct or indirect effects on the students' performance. Students come from different socio-cultural backgrounds, different geographical localities and have different experiences as they interact with the environment around them. Thus, factors that affect academic performance in one area may be different from the one that influence performance in another area.

#### **2.2. Empirical Review– Factors Affecting Academic achievement**

##### **2.2.1 School Environmental Factors**

###### **a) Availability of Physical Facilities**

Physical facilities include classrooms, halls, desks, chairs, tables, laboratories and libraries. Facilities that help students meet their basic needs enhance students' performance, for example, pupils cannot concentrate on their studies when classes have no window panes or when the roofs are leaking. In Kenya, lack of facilities has been aggravated by rapid and enrolment together with high social demand in education. (Rono, 1990) observes that majority of schools lack facilities. Small class size is associated with high students' achievements (Howley, 1989, Lee & Smith 1997). Lack of enough classrooms leads to overcrowding which leads to poor performance.

###### **b) Availability of Teaching and Learning Materials**

According to Brown and Brown (1999), the creative use of variety of media increases the probability that students will learn more, retain better what they learn and improve their performance on the skills that they have learnt. The quality of education the learners receive bears direct relevance to the availability or lack of instructional materials (Anderson, 1999). Eshiwani (1983) conducted a study in Western Province of Kenya on factors influencing performance among primary and secondary school pupils and noted

that school facilities such as text books, visual aids, and libraries are vital to performance in national exams.

### **c) Assessment of Achievement**

Academic achievement is often used as an indicator of school qualities because it is often used as an indicator of school's quality because it is easily measurable using standard tests. This has most often been used in a summative rather than formative way. Testing information tends to be used primarily as a screening device to decide who can continue to the next grade rather than as a tool to help improve education quality for individuals and systems. A well integrated instruction and evaluation program can contribute to improve teaching and learning (silver, 1983). Frequent assessment helps in motivating students to learn by providing feedback thus improving their performance.

### **d) Completion of Syllabi**

Schools which complete syllabi on time have been doing better than those which are not able to do so. Lack of enough teachers causes a delay in the completion of syllabi, which leads to poor performance.

### **e) Teacher – Students Ratio**

Teacher student ratio seems to have a bearing on academic performance. The national policy of education (1981) recommends that teacher – students ratio should be 1:35. Schools with high teachers – students' ratio recorded poor performance (Idieunuman, 1987). Fabunni and Okore (2000) also noted that there is relationship between average class size and secondary school academic performance.

## **2.2.2 Teacher Related Factors.**

### **a. Teacher Qualification.**

According to Madinjila (1989), quality education requires quality teaching force. Highly qualified teachers are most capable of helping their students learn, have deep mastery of both subject matter and pedagogy (Darling-Hammud, 1997). Preparation that teachers receive before beginning their work varies significantly especially within the least

developed countries (Postlewaithe, 1998). Makau and Sommerset(1980) noted that academic and professional qualification of teachers were crucial factors in influencing performance, the differences in teaching affects performance and those schools with the best qualified teachers tended to be the most successful in examinations. However, many teachers typically lack the expertise to prepare effective pedagogical material, effective teaching methods and to develop valid and reliable tests; hence the students' scores on teacher made tests often do not accurately reflect the mastery of the content. Adeyemi (1998) reported that a teacher who does not have both academic and professional teacher qualification would undoubtedly have negative influence on teaching and learning of his or her subject. He further stated that a teacher who is academically and professionally qualified but works under unfavorable conditions of service would be less dedicated to his or her work.

#### **b) Teachers' Working Conditions.**

Low status and morale among Kenyan teachers is a normal phenomenon. This leads to reduced productivity. Teachers attitude towards their work, the student, their classroom management and their interaction with student have a great impact on the academic achievement of the students. Okumbe (1992) notes that if teachers feel they are working much harder than others with similar qualification in other sectors of the economy but are receiving fewer rewards, they will most likely feel dissatisfied with their job. Studies by Lockheed (1991) indicated that lack of motivation and professional commitment produce poor attendance and unprofessional attitude which affects the performance of the student.

Obstacles such as transportation and housing hinder teachers from getting to school on time and staying until school hours are over. Sometimes teachers are forced to do other jobs to get extra money which may detract them from the time and energy they spend in the classroom. When teachers are present, learning occur when they engage students in instructional activities rather than attending to administrative or other non-instructional processes (Fuller, 1999).

### **c. Inspection and Supervision.**

These are done to assist the teachers to improve their pedagogic effectiveness and productivity. Instructional supervision is concerned with the pupil or the student learning in the classroom and to improve the teachers' classroom performance. According to Okumbe (1999), newer and better supervisory techniques must be developed through research effort and applied in order to release the maximum potentials of the teachers. Goldhammer et al(1980) have defined clinical supervision as that phase of instructional supervision which draws its data from first-hand observation of actual teaching events and involves face to face interaction between the supervisor and the teacher in the analysis of the teaching behaviors and activities for instructional improvement. However, many teachers are not observed regularly and those who are observed periodically often report that they do not receive useful or credible analyses of their performance Goldsberry (1997).

## **2.2.3 Home Environmental Factors.**

### **a. Parents Attitudes Towards Education.**

Parents' interests and aspirations of their children's education determine performance. A positive attitude of the parent and moral support build a psychological stability in the children. It is evident that psychological valuables create an impact on a student's performance in academics. Children who are encouraged in their work by their parents seem to be at an advantage both in relatively high scores between 8-11yrs compared to those that are not encouraged. This interest is related to the parents' social economic and cultural status and to a large extent educational level (Morrison and Mclutyre, 1971).

### **b. Availability of Basic Needs.**

Poverty affects performance negatively. A pupil who cannot afford basic needs such as food, clean water; clothes, proper housing, and sanitation cannot concentrate on their studies due to these problems. Poor parents send their children to school at a later age or not at all. A study conducted by Todaro (1992) revealed that though the family material benefits to be derived from education are sufficiently greater than costs in the long run, the parents of low economic status are hardly able to sustain their children in school full

time due to school fees problems. On the other hand, better educated parents send their children to private schools and create a conducive environment at home.

## **2.2.4 Students' Characteristics**

### **a) Students Attitude and Motivation**

Pupil's attitudes, languages used and motivation play a role in how pupils perform academically. Lateness and absenteeism affect performance negatively. Deketele (2000) says that the degree to which students are able to work co-operatively and demonstrate curiosity and autonomy depends on the teacher's use of participation pedagogy. The degree to which students demonstrate responsibility to each other and the community depends on the outcomes they anticipate as a result. Extensive research on achievement motivation was done by McClelland of Harvard University (1961). His studies showed that people's motivation patterns reflect their cultural environment including family and school.

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### **b) Students' Discipline**

Order and positive behavior communicate seriousness of purpose (Craig and Duplessis, 1998). The association between indiscipline and underachievement becomes more apparent by adolescence. Improved academic functioning co-occurs with a reduction in the prevalence of conduct difficulties (Grottfreson and Skroban, 1996). In order to achieve the objectives of a school, all members of the educational organization are required to adhere to various behavior patterns necessary for maximum performance.

## **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.3.1 Systems Theory**

According to Silver (1983), useful starting point for the analysis of schools as systems is the specification of the purposes of schools. A school's purposes include advancing students' knowledge skills (instruction), shaping student's attitude and behavior (control) and satisfying staff members' needs. All complex systems require maintenance (support service) and co-ordination (administrative service). These are subsystems in the school

system. All these subsystems must be functional for the learning process to go smoothly, thereby improving performance.

### **2.3.2 Abraham Maslov's Theory of Motivation.**

This theory is a typology of needs. The five types of needs identified by Abraham Maslov (1954) are physiological, security, affiliation, esteem and self-actualization. This theory interprets needs as states of deficiency and motivation as striving towards gratification of the behavior. Affiliative needs may affect academic performance. Students will work hard at school to please and therefore obtain commendation from parents and teachers. The level of achievement that students will aspire to is largely determined by the standards set by teachers and parents. The prestige motive underlie the general competitive desire to excel in academic performance and all effort made to succeed in school so that one may climb the social ladder and become important in the society.

### **2.3.3 Expectancy Theory.**

The unique and fascinating feature of motivation destination between people's expectation regarding the results of their own actions and the perceived utility of those results for attaining or avoiding other outcomes motivation can be conceptualized as the combination of two major elements: one's expectancy that an action will have a particular outcome in relation to other valued outcomes. Motivation to perform an act is a combination of one's expectation that the action will have a particular outcome and the perceived utility of that outcome in relation to other outcomes. The core of expectancy theory relates to how a person perceives the relationship between effort, performance and rewards.

### **2.3.4 Climate Description Framework**

In school characterized by high esprit, the teachers are cheerful and committed to education; they work energetically and are loyal to the school (Halpin, 1966). Several reviews of the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) research have been undertaken in efforts to arrive at some generalization about antecedents or effects of

social climate. Some affects of climate openness seem to be less student alienation, higher student morale and fewer school drop outs (Mullins, 1976); greater innovativeness (Thomas, 1978); and greater job satisfaction on the part of teachers(Schwandt, 1978). They concluded that climate openness was associated with higher student achievement. At the opposite extreme, disengagement refers to disinterest, dissociation and disconnectedness of staff. Teachers in such situation do not seek advice from colleagues or welcome it when offered and do not work together to solve problems. Thus, there is relatively little learning.

MCDill Meyers and Rigsby (1967) found school climate as perceived by students as well as teachers in 20 schools, to be a significant predictor of students' academic achievement. However, in a study of 40 schools, Hamaty (1967) found out that community socio-economic status was the predominant prediction of students' outcome rather than teachers' needs and their perception on climate. After controlling for student scholastic ability and community socio-economic status, they found that climate retained significant predictive power suggesting that school climate is related to student achievement (MCDill, Rigsby and Meyers, 1969)



## 2.4 Conceptual framework

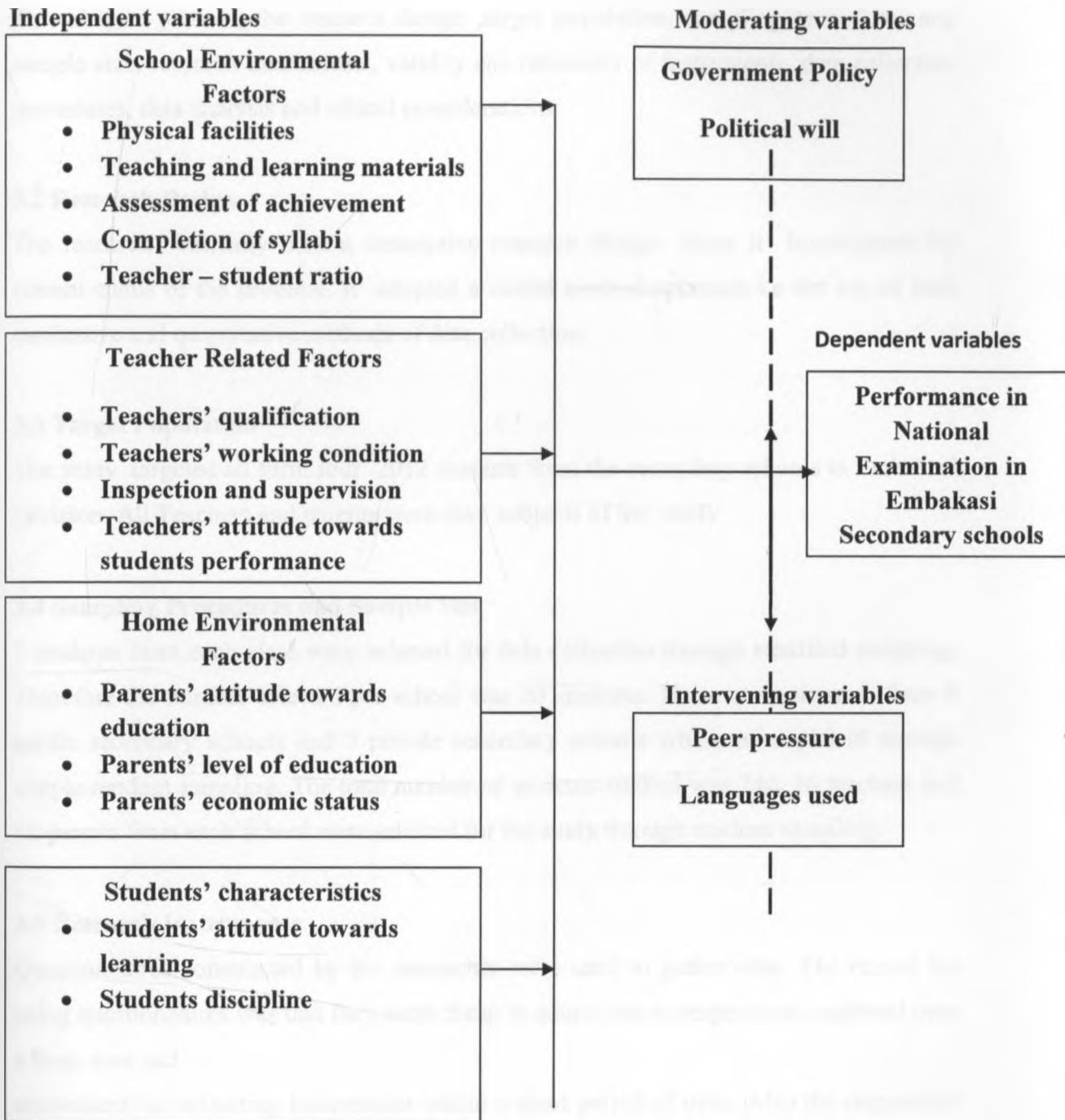


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework on Factors Influencing Academic Performance

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research design ,target population, sampling procedures and sample size, research instruments, validity and reliability of instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The research basically used a descriptive research design since it investigated the current status of the problem. It adopted a mixed method approach i.e the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection.

#### **3.3 Target Population**

The study targeted all form four -2012 students from the secondary schools in Embakasi Division. All Teachers and parents were also subjects of the study

#### **3.4 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size**

5 students from each class were selected for data collection through stratified sampling. Therefore the number selected per school was 20 students. These students were from 5 public secondary schools and 7 private secondary schools which were picked through simple random sampling. The total number of students studied was 240. 10 teachers and 10 parents from each school were selected for the study through random sampling.

#### **3.5 Research Instruments**

Questionnaires constructed by the researcher were used to gather data. The reason for using questionnaires was that they were cheap to administer to respondents scattered over a large area and

convenient for collecting information within a short period of time. Also the respondent felt free to give frank answers to sensitive questions since they were not required to disclose their identity. The respondents also had enough time to ponder on the questions.

Marks from the pre-mock exams and KCSE results were used to measure academic performance. These were considered to be a standard measure of performance since they were done by all schools in the division. Interviews were used to obtain data from principals.

### **3.6 Validity and Reliability of Instruments**

#### **3.6.1 Validity of Instruments**

Validity shows whether items measure what they are designed to measure. Pretesting will be conducted to assist in determining accuracy, clarity and suitability of research instruments. The pretest helped the researcher to identify the items which were inadequate so as to make necessary corrections, examine responses to determine the level of ambiguity of the questions and to determine the percentage of responses. Based on the analysis of the pretest, the researcher was able to make corrections, adjustments and additions to the research instruments. Consultation and discussion with the supervisor were done to establish content validity.

#### **3.6.2 Reliability of Instruments**

To enhance reliability, a pilot study was conducted in 2 schools in the division. This pretesting helped in checking problems of comprehension and other sources of confusion by assessing the clarity of questionnaire items. The clearer the instructions, the higher the reliability. This entails separating the questionnaire into two sets using the odd numbered questions for one set and even numbers for the other half. Each of the two sets was treated separately and scored accordingly. The two sets were then correlated and the correlation coefficient obtained by Spearman Brown prophecy formula. The length of the questionnaires was also considered since the longer the instrument, the greater the reliability. To further increase reliability, the subjects for the study were heterogeneous due to random sampling.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher basically used a descriptive study design. The study adopted a mixed – method approach i.e. the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods in data collection. Questionnaires were administered to the selected students, teachers and parents and then scored. Pre-mock and KCSE results were used to measure academic performance. The researcher collected data in the help of teachers. In order to have successful data collection, permission was sought from the district education office and from the targeted school principals.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

This study generated both qualitative and quantitative data. Because of its nature, the data was analyzed using descriptive techniques of data analysis. Data was first coded and transferred from the questioners into data summary forms. Document analysis was carried out. Results from the pre - mock exam - 2012 and KCSE results for the last three years were analyzed. Means, frequencies and percentages obtained were used to answers the research questions.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

To ensure that the study does not involve psychological damage to the people being investigated, they were assured of utmost confidentiality concerning the information that they would provide. Embarrassing questions were avoided throughout the study. Permission to conduct the study was sought from targeted principals, teachers, parents and students.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter contains the results of the study. It presents response rate from questionnaires. It also analyses, presents and interprets data collected in order to answer research questions. It presents detailed analysis of factors influencing academic performance in Embakasi Division namely; School environmental factors, teacher related factors, home environmental factors (Socio – economics and socio – cultural) and students characteristics.

#### **4.2. Response rate**

Questionnaires were administered to 12 schools. Each school was issued with 20 questionnaires for students, 10 questionnaires for the teachers and 10 questionnaires for the parents. 96% of the students questionnaires were returned, having been filled satisfactorily, 98% of the teachers' questionnaires were completed and returned while 93% of the parents' questionnaires were fully filled and returned. There were also interviews for the principals. In cases where the principal was not available, the Deputy Principal was interviewed. Interviews were conducted satisfactorily in all the 12 sampled schools.

#### **4.3. School Environmental factors influencing academic performance.**

This sub – section discusses various school environmental factors which have a bearing on academic performance. These include: Previous national examinations results, Availability of physical facilities, availability of teaching and learning materials, assessment of achievement (evaluation), completion of syllabus and teacher students ratio.

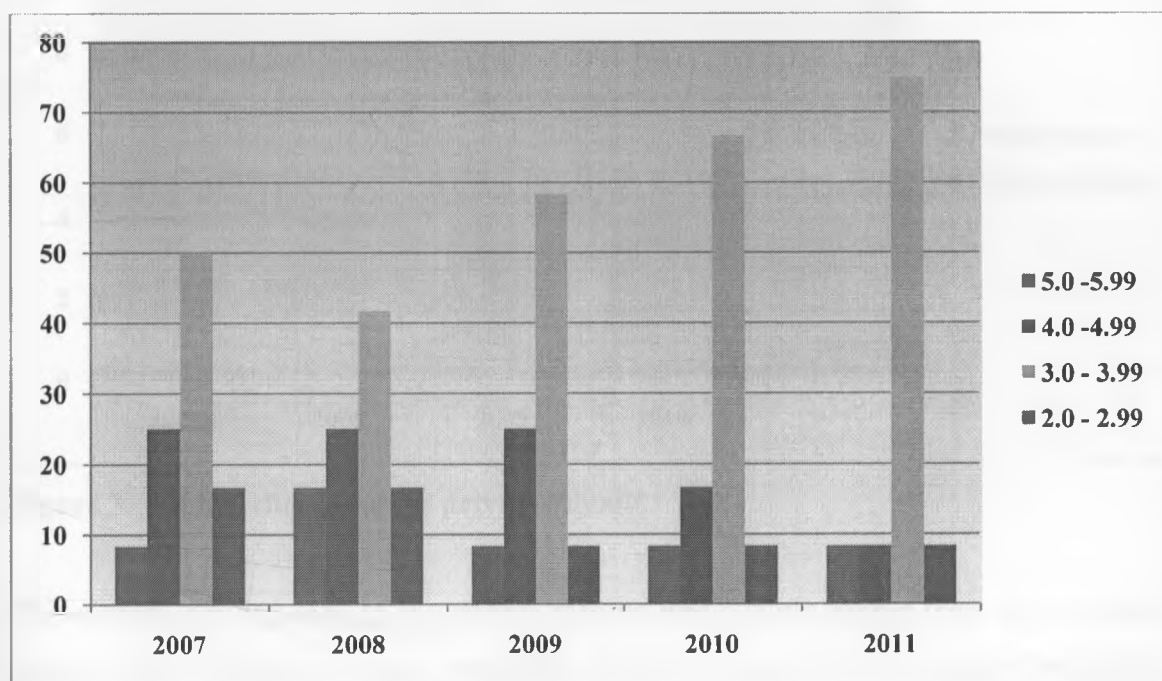
##### **4.3.1. Previous National Examination Results**

Performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) since 2007 was analyzed as follows:

**Table 4.1: KCSE Results of the sampled schools since 2009 (N = 12)**

M.S.S	2007(%)	2008 (%)	2009 (%)	2010 (%)	2011 (%)
5.0 – 5.99	8.33	16.67	8.33	8.33	8.33
4.0 – 4.99	25.00	25.00	25.00	16.67	8.33
3.0 – 3.99	50.00	41.67	58.33	66.67	75.00
2.0 – 2.99	16.67	16.67	8.33	8.33	8.33
1.0 – 1.99	–	–	–	–	–

The study established that none of the schools attained a mean score of 6.0 and above or below 2.0 in the five years. By calculating the average mean score for each school for the last five years, the study found out that 1(8.33%) school attained a mean score of between 5.0 – 5.99; 2(16.67%) schools were within the range of 4.0 – 4.99 and 9(75%) schools got 3.0 – 3.99. Considering that a mean score of 6.0 is the average mark, it was hence logically argued that all the sampled schools attained below average mark.



**Figure 2. KCSE Analysis since 2007 – 2011.**

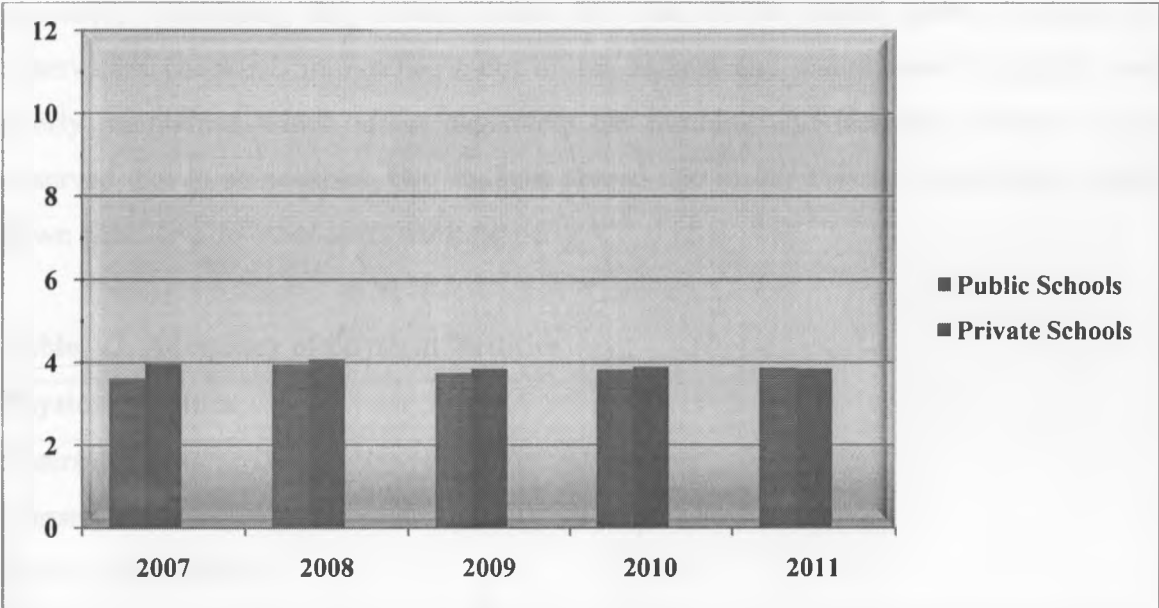
By scrutinizing the results of individual schools, the researcher observed that in the year 2010, 11 schools recorded a remarkable rise while 1 recorded a drop. In the year 2011, 9 schools improved on their mean score, 1 maintained while 2 recorded a drop. This was

attributed to the introduction of the allocation of government subsidies to secondary schools in the year 2003 which led to many schools being able to acquire relevant teaching / learning resources as years went by, hence improving performance.

Private schools were also compared to public schools as follows;

**Table 4.2: Mean scores of public schools versus private schools**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Average
Public schools	3.61	3.95	3.74	3.83	3.87	3.80
Private schools	3.97	4.07	3.84	3.89	3.85	3.92



**Figure 3. Public schools versus private schools**

The average performance of the private schools was slightly higher than that of public schools. The difference is quite negligible hence no conclusion was made that private schools are better than public schools in the division. This was attributed to the fact that both private and public schools in the division face similar challenges, namely lack of sufficient physical facilities and learning materials, student’s discipline and parents’ attitude towards education as is evidenced by the questionnaires findings.

Through interviews with principals from the sampled schools the study found out that majority of the Principals rated the performance of their schools as fair 6 (50%), 4 (33%) as poor and 2 (17%) as very poor. However, as evidenced by table 4.2, the academic performance in the division has been constantly dismal.

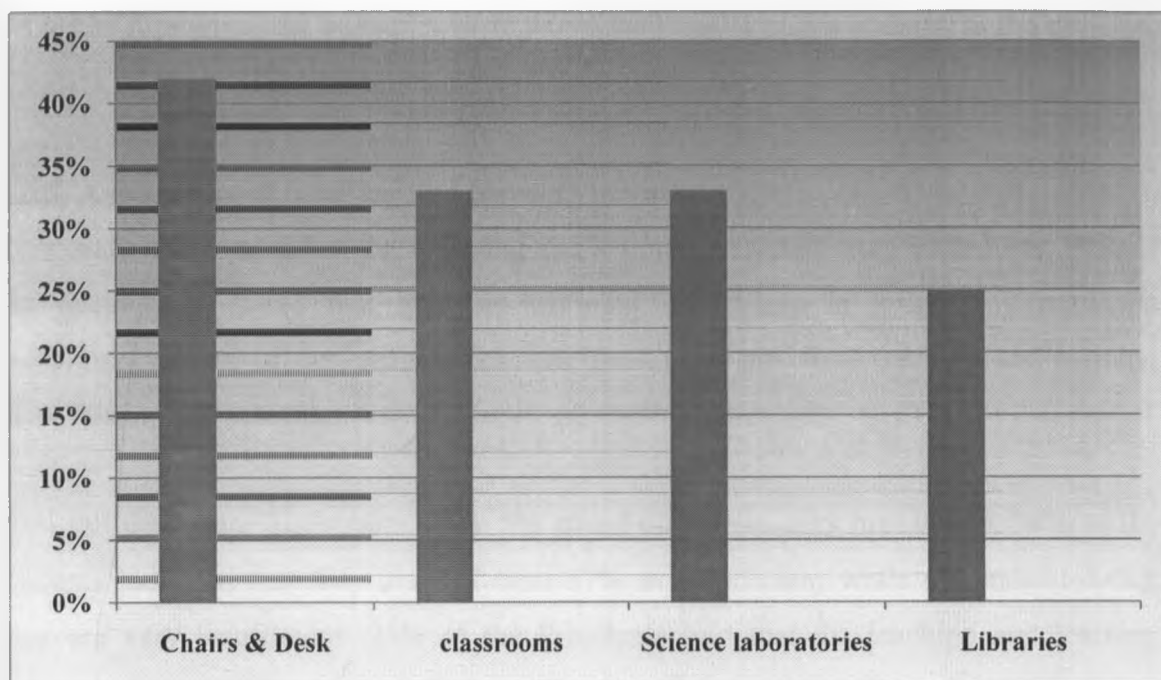
#### 4.3.2. Availability of Physical facilities

The study found out that the availability of physical facilities in the division was not up to the standard. These included classrooms, desks, science laboratories and libraries as shown in Table 4.3. In 8 (67%) of the schools studied, classrooms are inadequate which leads to overcrowding. There is lack of space for such activities as group work. Students are uncomfortable and are therefore not able to concentrate in class since they are squeezed, considering they remain seated for most of the school hours. Through the observation checklist, in 7 schools out of 12, lockers and chairs were inadequate and poorly maintained which affect negatively the teaching and learning process. It was observed that in some cases, two students shared one locker making it difficult to write down notes and do other class work properly.

**Table 4.3. Adequacy of physical facilities**

<b>Physical facilities</b>	<b>%</b>
Chairs & Desks	42
Classrooms	33
Science laboratories	33
Libraries	25





**Figure 4. Adequacy of physical facilities**

Science laboratories and libraries are a pre requisite for good performance since they promote practical experience and private research respectively. However, 83% of the teachers, 75% of the students and 9 out of 12 Principals said that the physical facilities in their schools were inadequate. Through the questionnaires, it was established that 8 out of 12 schools studied do not have science laboratories while 9 out of 12 schools have no library. In some of the schools, it was observed that though the science laboratories was absent, some equipment and chemicals for science practical are provided. These are done in the classroom which is overcrowded which poses a great risk since the chemicals may explode causing accidents. Again not all students participate in the experiment since the resources are limited. During interviews with the – principals, one of them confided, “ A girl accidentally sat on Sulphuric acid which had been spilt on her seat, which was a traumatic experience.”

Libraries are suitable since they provide a chance for the students to have private study and to have different books to refer to. They store reference books, text books and novels which enhance students study skills and language skills.

From the foregoing, the adequacy of physical facilities is below average in the division. The lack of physical facilities negatively affects performance.

#### 4.3.3. Availability of teaching and learning materials

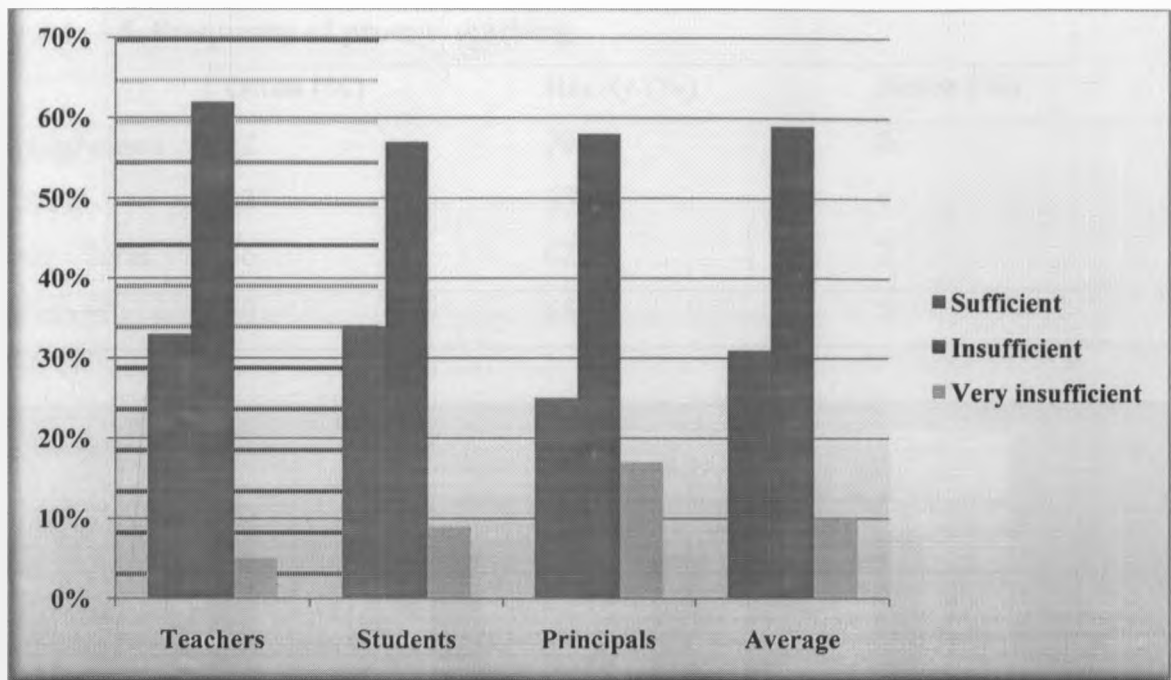
This study also established that teaching and learning materials were inadequate. 99% of the respondents stated that they are of great importance in influencing academic performance. 33% of the teachers felt that there were sufficient teaching and learning materials in their schools.

62% felt they were inadequate while 5% stated they were very inadequate. 34% of the students indicated that they are sufficient 57% as insufficient while 9% indicated that they are very insufficient. 25% of the Principals said that the teaching and learning materials in their schools are sufficient, 58% insufficient while 17% indicated that they were very insufficient. On average, the sufficiency is 31%, insufficiency 59% while very insufficiency is 10% as indicated in table 4.4. Although the government has endeavored to provide text books and exercise books to secondary school through its subsidies, they are not enough for effective pedagogy. In an interview with some of the school

Principals, they lamented that the funds are usually received late, causing the problems of delays in procurement of these materials. This prohibits effective learning. The Principals are usually in a dilemma whether to send the students home or to keep them at school without learning. In private schools, parents are not able to buy all the required materials.

**Table 4.4. Sufficiency of teaching / learning resources**

	Sufficient (%)	Insufficient (%)	Very insufficient (%)
Teachers	33	62	5
Students	34	57	9
Principals	25	58	17
Average	31	59	10



**Figure 5. Sufficiency of teaching / learning resources**

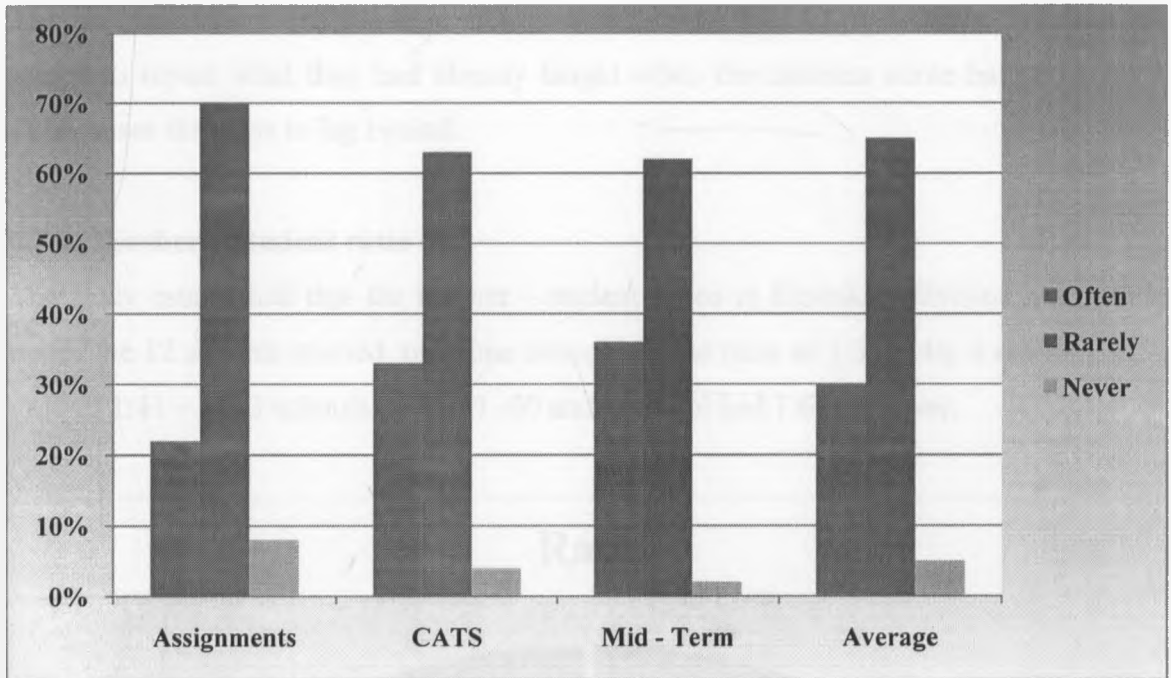
From the observation checklist, the researcher established that, only 3 out of 12 schools studied had visual aids displayed on classroom walls and on corridors. There seemed to be a problem in development and use of teaching and learning resources, for instant charts, maps, diagrams, posters, photographs and pictures for the learners to review. This culminates to poor performance in examinations.

#### **4.3.4. Assessment of achievement (Evaluation)**

From the study, 89% of the respondents agreed that evaluation is of great importance to academic performance. 96% of the teachers indicated that evaluation is done often in their schools compared to 87% of the students. All Principals interviewed, said evaluation is done often in their schools. However, the study established that assignments, CATs and Mid Term exams are not marked promptly. 65% of the students indicated that their work is rarely marked promptly, 5% stated it is never marked promptly while 30% indicated that it is often marked on time as shown in Table 4.5

**Table 4.5. Frequency of prompt marking**

	Often (%)	Rarely (%)	Never (%)
Assignments	22	70	8
CATS	33	63	4
Mid - Term	36	62	2
Average	30	65	5



**Figure 6. Frequency of prompt marking**

The delay in marking students' work causes delay in feedback. The essence of testing students is to provide reinforcement through feedback. Delayed feedback is ineffective according to behavioral Psychologists.

During interviews with school Principals, the main reason given for lack of prompt marking of students work was the teacher student ratio. The number of students is too high compared to the number of teachers as shown in figure 4.this causes the teachers to be overwhelmed with work and not having enough free lesson to mark it. This leads to poor performance as the students are not motivated by the evaluation.

#### 4.3.5. Completion of syllabi

This study established that completion of syllabi is of essence in academic performance. This was through the questionnaires whereby 96% of the respondents said it is of great importance, while 4% indicated it is of some importance. None of the respondents said it is of no importance. 46% of the students indicated that they often complete the syllabus on time while 54% said they rarely complete it on time. Lack of enough teaching staff and absenteeism due to lack of school fees were given as the main causes of this problem. The first three weeks of the term are characterized by half empty classes. Teachers are forced to repeat what they had already taught when the students come back to school. This causes the class to lag behind.

#### 4.3.6. Teacher – student ratio

The study established that the teacher – student ratios in Embakasi division are too big out of the 12 schools studied, only one school had the ratio of 1:31 – 40, 4 schools had a ratio of 1:41 – 50, 3 schools had 1:51 -60 and 4 school had 1:61 and over.

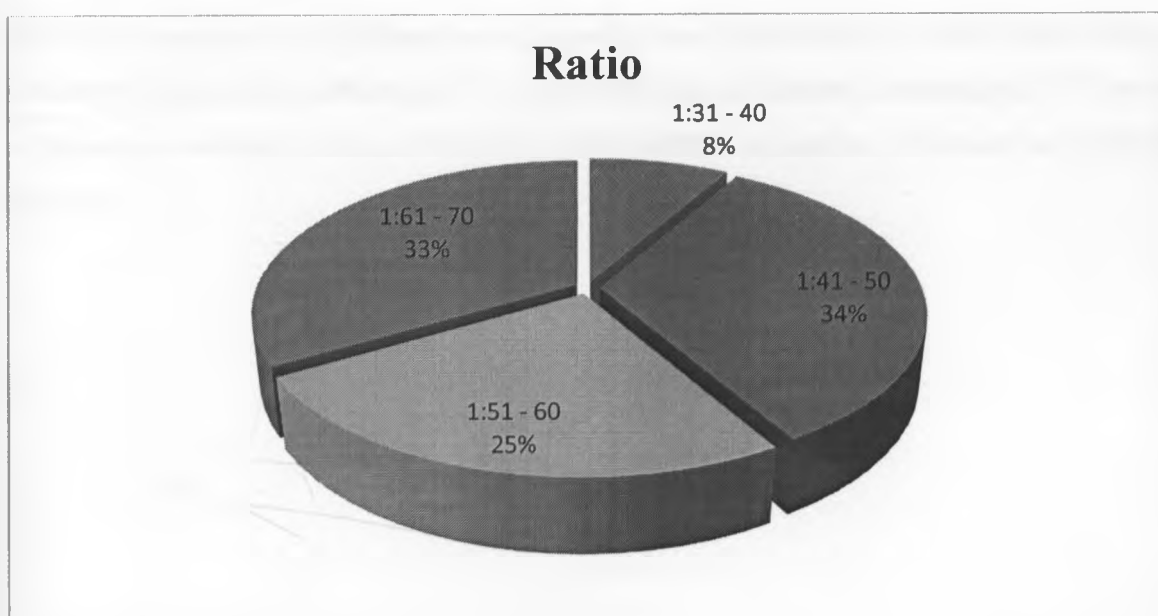


Figure 7. Teacher Student ratios in the division

From interviews with Principals, the researcher established that, there is lack of enough teachers to handle the large student population. The more students a teacher handles, the lower the mean grade. This happens because the teacher is overwhelmed with work such as marking and correcting the students' exercise books. Moreover, teachers are not able to effectively cater for individual differences.

#### **4.4. Teachers Related Factors**

In this sub –section, factors related to teachers that influence academic performance are discussed. These include, teachers' qualification, teachers working conditions, inspection and supervision of teachers and teachers' attitude towards students' performance.

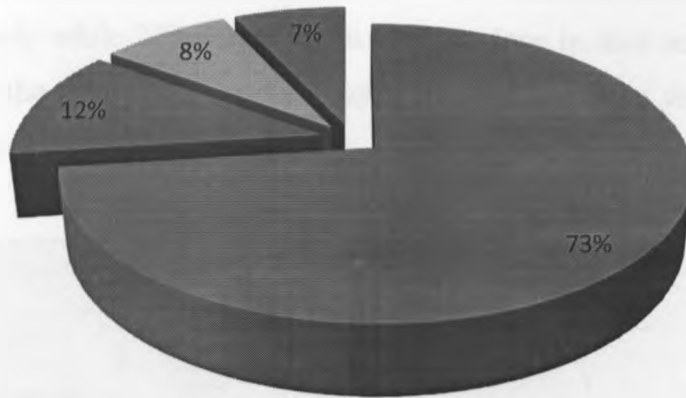
##### **4.4.1. Teachers' qualification**

The study found out that teachers' qualification has a bearing on academic performance. 90% of the respondents stated that teachers' qualification is of great importance. The rest 10% said it is of some importance. None of the respondents said it is of no importance.

93% of the teachers' studied had the right professional qualification, most of them being University graduates in education. 73% have a Bachelors' Degree in education, 17% have a Diploma in education while 8% have a Post graduate education. 7 % have not studied education.

## Teachers' Qualification

■ B.E.D   ■ Diplomatic in Education   ■ P.G.D.E   ■ Never Studied Education



**Figure 8. Teachers' qualification**

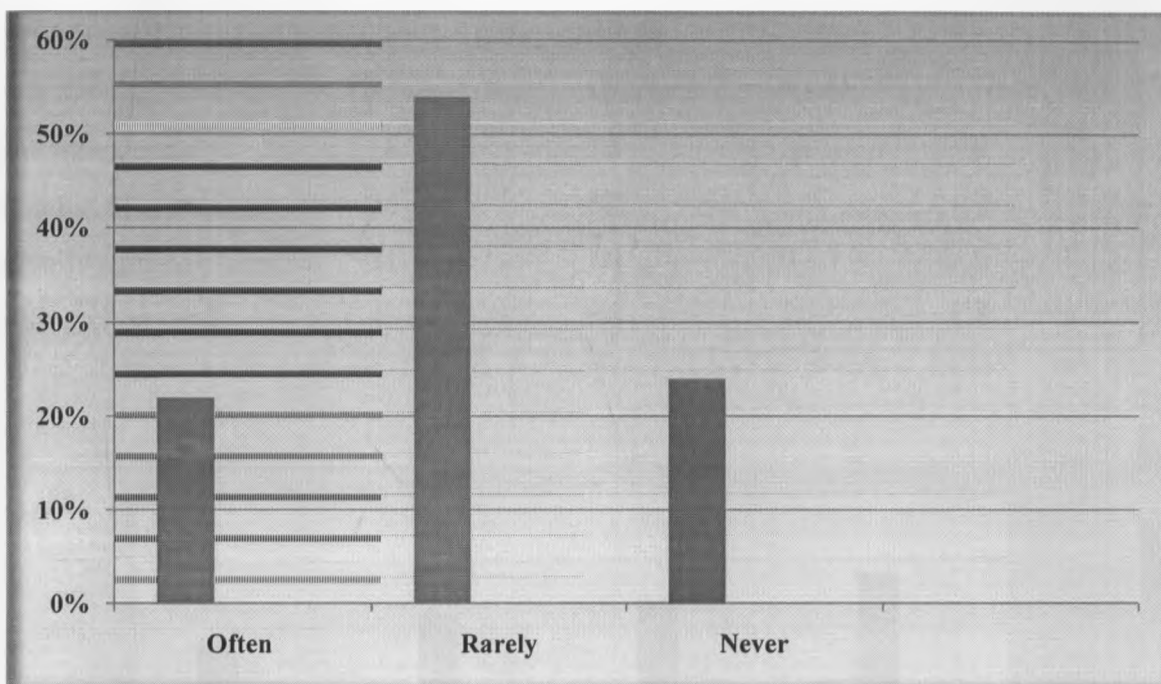
The researcher therefore concluded that teacher qualification is not an issue in the division.

### 4.4.2. Teachers Working Conditions

Through the questionnaires, the study established that teacher working condition have an influence on performance. 43% of some importance. None of the respondents said it is of no importance. 99% of the teachers of the respondents stated teachers working conditions are of –great importance while 57% stated they are studied indicated that their working conditions are good while 1% stated they are poor. The researcher therefore concluded that working conditions are generally good in the division. The school Principals confided that most teachers are well housed. Though they may be living a bit far from the school, the availability of transport helps them make it to school on time. In most schools teachers are provided with tea and lunches, making them focus their effort on teaching. Hence teachers working conditions could not be the cause of poor performance in the division.

#### 4.4.3. Inspection and supervision of teachers

This study established that inspection and supervision of teachers by principals which assists them to improve on their curriculum delivery is not done often enough. This was evidenced by 22% of the teachers stating it is done often, 54% of the teachers claiming that, it is done rarely while 24% stated that it is never done in their schools as shown in figure 9. 99% of the teachers stated that supervision assists them to improve on their teaching effectiveness.



**Figure 9. Inspection and supervision by principals**

This infrequent supervision was attributed to principals being busy with administrative activities most of which keep them away from school. They end up neglecting supervision of teachers.

It was further established that the quality assurance and standards officers inspect and supervise the schools only once per year and they rarely give feedback to teachers. This is inadequate since teachers need to be inspected regularly in order to keep them on track. However, the inspection and supervision should be aimed at improving pedagogy and not victimization of teachers.

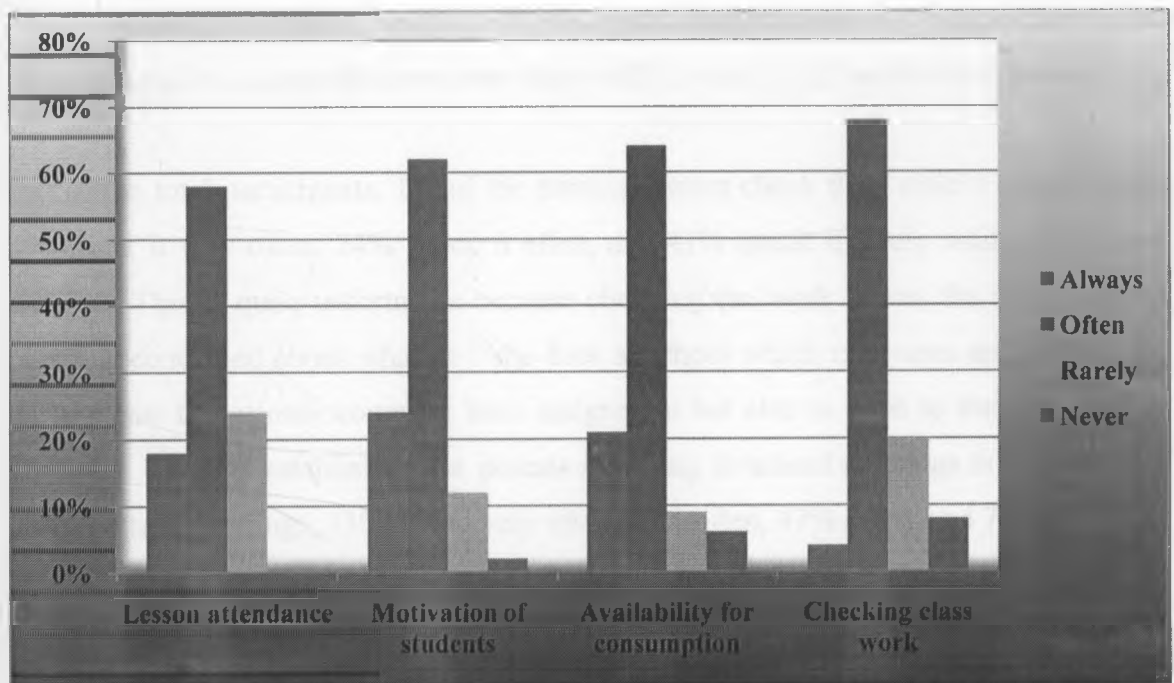


#### 4.4.4. Teachers attitude towards students' performance

The study found out that teachers' attitude towards the students and towards performance has direct bearing on students' academic achievement. This was evidenced by 96% of the respondents who stated it is of great importance. It further found out that 66% of the teachers have positive attitude. This was measured using questionnaires for teachers section C. Through students' questionnaires, it was established that 24% of the teachers attend lessons always 25% very often 22% often and 29% rarely.

**Table 4.6. Teachers' behavior depicting attitude**

	Always (%)	Often (%)	Rarely (%)	Never (%)
Lesson attendance	18	58	24	0
Motivation of students	24	62	12	2
Availability for consultation	21	64	9	6
Checking class work	4	68	20	8



**Figure 10. Teachers' behavior depicting attitude**

Moreover 9 out of 12 Principals interviewed claimed that majority of teachers have a positive attitude. Nevertheless, the 34% of the teachers who have a negative attitude is a major concern. Teachers' attitude determines the amount of time and energy they devote to their work. Negative attitude is counterproductive; hence it results in low grades.

#### **4.5. Home environmental factors influencing academic performance.**

The sub – section presents home environmental factors which influence performance.

These are socio – economic and socio – cultural factors which have bearing on academic achievement. These include parents' attitude towards education, parents' level of education and parents' economic status.

##### **4.5.1. Parents / Guardian attitude towards education**

Parents attitude have a great impact on the academic achievement of the student. This study found out that most parents / guardian have questionable attitude towards education. This was evidenced by their concern over the students school work, their attendance to school functions, their relationship with their child's teachers and their child's motivation through rewards. It was established through the questionnaires that most parents do not show concern over their child's school work as shown in table 4.7.

Out of the total participants, 1% of the parents always check their child's school work, 4% check it very often, 24% check it often, and 47% check it rarely while 24% never check it. This is quite unfortunate because checking the work shows the child that the parent is concerned about what he / she does at school which motivates and encourages the students to not only complete their assignment but also to do it to the best of their ability. It was also established that parents attending to school meetings is wanting. 4% always attend meetings, 13% attend very often, 29% often, 47% rarely and 7% never.

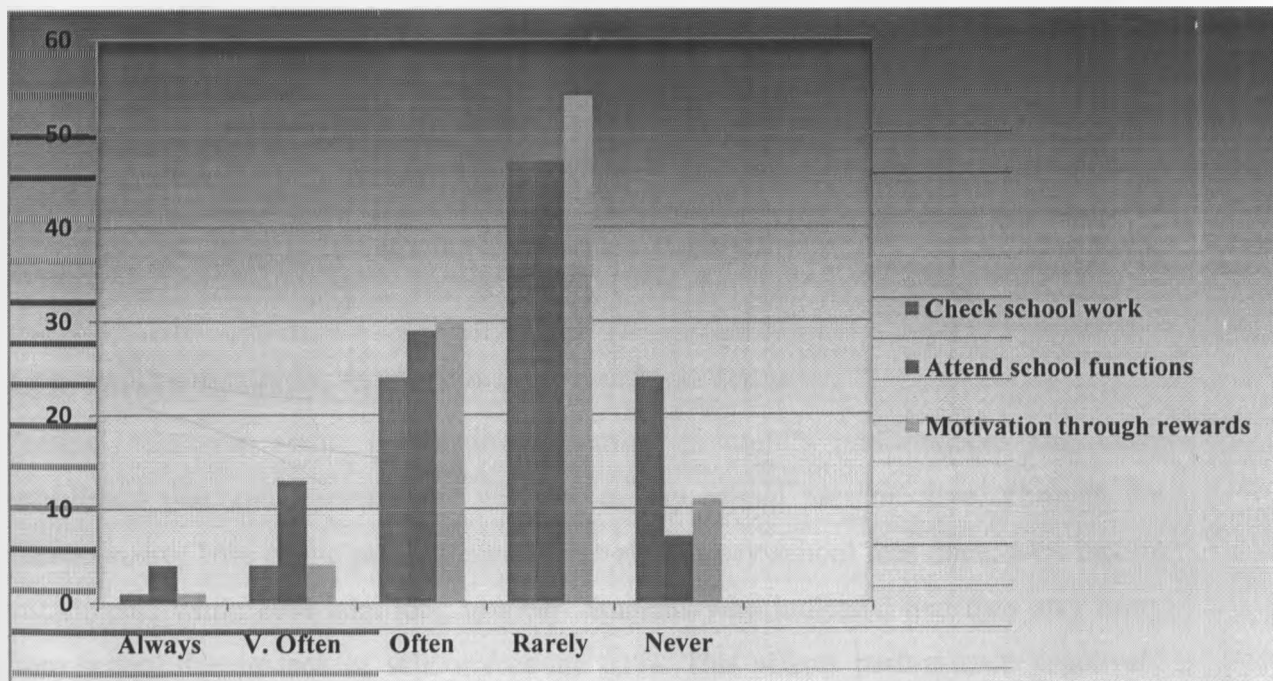
These results indicate that attendance is poor, therefore the parents are not available to give moral support to the teaching staff and to ensure there is smooth running of the system. This results in poor performance. The study also found out that the relationship between parents and their child's teachers leaves a lot to be desired 24% have good

relationship, 58% have fair relationship while 18% have poor relationship. Parents' relationship with the teachers is vital. Parents with good relationship with the teachers will consult more of their students' progress than those who have poor relationship or those who have indifferent attitude towards the teachers.

Motivation of students by parents through encouragement and regards was found out to be very low. 38% of the parents motivate their children through encouragement while 62% do not. 19% reward their children always, 4% very often, 30% often, 54% rarely while 11% never reward them for doing well in their school work. Rewards are very effective in reinforcement of learned behavior. The absence of parental encouragement and rewards motivates learners which lead to poor performance.

**Table 4.7 Parental participation towards students' progress**

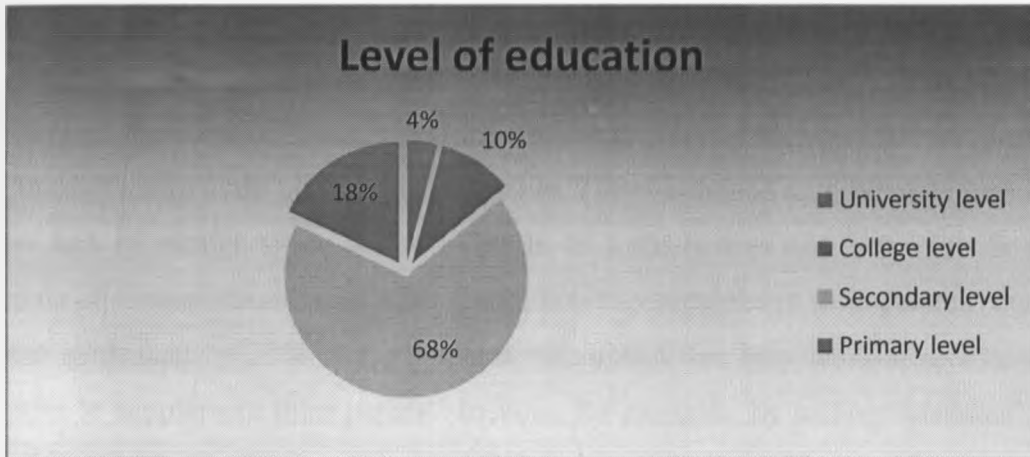
	Always	Very often	Often	Rarely	Never
Check school work	1	4	24	47	24
Attend school functions	4	13	29	47	7
Motivate through rewards	1	4	30	54	11



**Figure 11. Parental participation towards students' progress.**

#### 4.5.2. Parents' / Guardians' level of education

Parents education is an important variable in this study since it influences their attitude towards education. It was found out that some of the parents have a very low level of education. This was evidenced by 7% of the parents having reached university level, 25% college level, 43% Secondary while 25% have attained Primary School level as shown in figure 12.



**Figure 12. Parents' level of education**

It is evident that a quarter of the parents never got secondary education while most of those who reached secondary level did poorly in their exams. This has a negative impact on their children's education because their attitude towards education is likely to be negative. The low regard to education leads to lack of assistance and encouragement at home. This implies that learners lack role models who impact in them the desire to achieve high scores in order to be eligible for prestigious courses.

#### 4.5.3. Parents Economic Status

Parents' economic status has a direct bearing on child's performance. The study established that, most parents are not able to pay school fees on time. Through the questionnaire, 16% of the parents' studied are able to pay school fees once, 64% pay by installments while 20% take long to clear. Students who indicated that they stay away from school due to lack of school fees are 61%. This affects performance negatively since a lot of learning time is wasted when they remain away from school due to lack of school fees.

Parents with low income are not able to provide the recommended text books and supplementary books for private study at home. 3% of the parents indicated that they buy text books for all recommended subjects, 22% buy more than three books, 48% less than three books while 27% do not buy any text books for their child. These results lead to the conclusion that text books are not available for reading and reference while doing assignments, leading to poor performance. The study also established that students are not provided with space and time for private study at home due to parents' poverty.

Through the questionnaires, 50% of the students claimed that they are not provided with time and space to do private study at home. They explained that the main reasons for this are lack of enough space due to living in crowded houses and lack of study time since some of these students work after school hours to supplement their parents' income. This was evidenced by 25% of the students who stated that they work after school hours in order to supplement their parents' income, for example, by selling 'Mandazi', 'Sukuma wiki', 'Githeri' and other petty jobs. This results in poor academic performance by these students.

#### **4.6. Students' characteristics**

In this subsection, students' characteristics that have a bearing on student academic achievement are discussed. This includes students' attitude towards learning and students discipline.

##### **4.6.1. Students' attitude towards learning and performance**

Students' attitude towards learning influences their motivation to learn. Students with positive attitude towards learning will always be eager to ask questions in class, consult teachers outside classroom and complete the assignments. The study established that most students' attitude is negative as evidenced by the questionnaire responses. 3% indicated that they always ask questions in class, 20% often, 62% rarely and 15% never. In addition 2% consult teachers outside classroom, 29% often 41% do it rarely while 27% never do it. The percentage of those students who always complete their assignments is 23%, those who often complete their assignment are 44% while 3% rarely and 2% never

complete their assignment. It is evident from the behavior of most of the students that their attitude is not positive. This culminates to poor achievement in exams.

#### 4.6.2. Student Discipline and performance

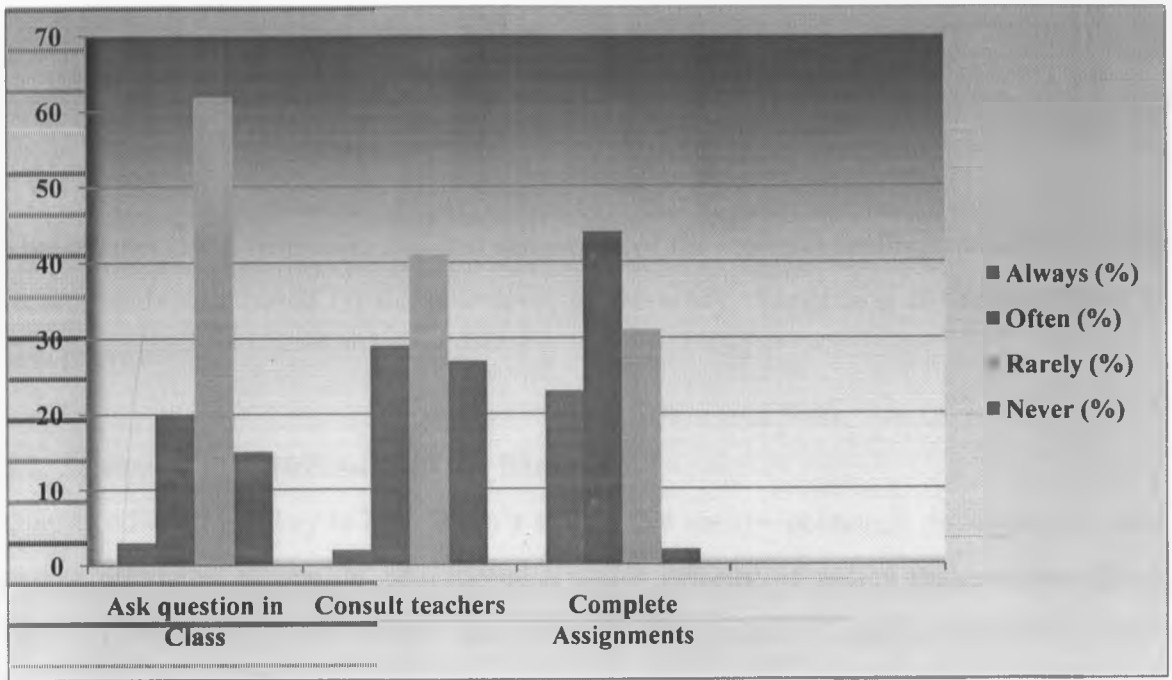
There is a relationship between indiscipline and underachievement. The study established that discipline in the division is not up to the standard. Through the questionnaire, 79% of the teachers claimed that discipline is low in their schools 19% stated that it is very low while 2% said it is high.

Interviews with the Principals revealed that discipline wanting. Negative behavior cited by the principals was lateness to school, lack of respect to teachers, demonstrated by being rude, not completing assignments, involvement in sexual relationships, use of 'sheng' instead of English, not obeying the bells and unexplained absenteeism. There are some cases of drug abuse and involvement in gangs such as 'Gaza'. These behaviors communicate lack of seriousness of purpose. The end result is failure in exams.

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**Table 4.8. Behavior of students which depict their attitude**

	Always (%)	Often (%)	Rarely (%)	Never (%)
Asked question in class	3	20	62	15
Consult teachers	2	29	41	27
Complete assignment	23	44	31	2



**Figure 13. Behavior of students which depict attitude**

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter deals with summary and discussion of the research findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the objectives of the study. Suggestion for further study is also provided.

#### **5.2. Summary and discussion of the findings**

Quality education is key to any nation's sustainable socio – economic development. This makes provision of quality educational a major priority of policy makers around the world. The government of Kenya recognizes the importance of quality secondary school education evidenced by the fact that in the year 2003, along with free primary education it started providing subsidies to all Public Secondary Students. However, performance in national examination (KCSE) has been dismal in Embakasi Division of Nairobi County. This causes concern since performance in KCSE is the basis of selection for courses in higher institutions of education. The researcher therefore, sought to establish the factors which influence the academic performance of secondary schools in the division.

It was guided by the following research questions:

- i) How does school environment influence academic performance of secondary schools in Embakasi Division?
- ii) To what extent do teacher related factors influence performance of students in Embakasi Division?
- iii) To what extent does home environment influence academic performance in Embakasi Division?
- iv) How do student characteristics influence academic performance in Embakasi Division?

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Hence the study used questionnaires for students, questionnaire for teachers, questionnaires for parents, interviews for the Principals to collect data and observation.



Data collection was done on May and June, 2012. The summary of the findings will be presented according to the four major variables namely, school environmental factors, teachers – related factors, school environmental factors and students’ characteristics which influence academic performance.

### **5.2.1. School environmental factors which influence academic performance**

The research data gathered and analyzed has established the effect of school based factors on performance. The adequacy of physical facilities which is vital for good performance was found out to be wanting. In most schools, classrooms were inadequate leading to overcrowding. In some schools, classrooms had no window panes and doors were unlock able while others had uneven floors. Most schools had no library and no science laboratory and where present they were not adequately equipped. These findings therefore concurred with Rono (1990) who observed that, majority of schools lack facilities. It also concurred with Lee and Smith (1997) who observed that, lack of enough classrooms leads to overcrowding which results in poor performance.

The importance of teaching and learning materials cannot be over emphasized. They are the media for the delivery of curriculum objectives. Teaching and learning materials were inadequate in most schools. In Public schools text books provided by the government are not enough for every student to get a copy. In private schools most parents are not able to buy text books as they struggle to pay school fees first. In most schools there was the absence of visual aids such as wall charts, maps, posters, photographs and pictures which implied lack of teachers’ commitment to effective teaching methods. These findings concurred with Republic of Kenya (1991) which stated that quality and adequacy of teaching and learning materials have a direct impact on performance as they determine how effectively the curriculum objectives are implemented. The study also concurred with Anderson (1991) who argued that the quality of education the learners receive bears direct relevance to the availability or lack of instructional materials. It also concurred with Eshiwani (1983) who noted that school facilities such as textbooks, visual aids and libraries are vital to performance in national exams.

Formative evaluation which plays crucial role is not effectively implemented. The marking and providing of feedback is not done promptly especially marking of exercise books and CATS. This denotes that assessment of teaching / learning strategies, teaching / learning aids and student achievement is not up to the standard. These findings concurred with Silver (1983) who argued that a well integrated instruction and evaluation programme contributes to improved teaching and learning hence improving performance.

Completion of syllabi was established to be an issue in the division. Lack of enough teaching staff and waste of time due to school fees problem were cited as the main causes. This implies that some parts of the syllabus are not well taught while other are never taught at all. The findings concurred with Eshiwani (1983) who argued that to attain good grades, the syllabus must be completed in time to allow enough time for revision.

The teacher – student ratio in most schools in the division is too big. There is lack of enough teachers to handle the large student population. In most cases, the mean is an enemy of numbers. The more students a teacher handles, the lower the mean grade. A large class makes it difficult for the teachers to effectively cater for individual differences. The findings concurred with Idieunuman (1987) who noted that schools with high teacher – student ratio recorded poor performance. This was evidenced by the fact that the only school with the teacher – student ratio recommended by the National Policy of Education (1981), that is, 1:31 -40 had the best performance among the sampled schools.

### **5.2.2. Teacher – related Factors Influencing Academic Performance**

Teacher qualification is not a problem in the division since most of the teachers have the right professional qualification, most of them being College and University graduates. The government, through Teachers Service Commission has employed most of the teachers in Public schools while some are employed by the Board of Governors. Private schools have the greatest number of untrained teachers. This is in contrast with the current performance of the schools in the division. Darling Hammud (1997) argued that highly qualified teachers are most capable of both subject matter and pedagogy.

However, other factors could influence teachers' performance such as teaching conditions, teachers' attitude towards the students and whether they are inspected and supervised.

Teachers work in reasonable conditions in the division. Most of them commute to schools and transport is easy. They are able to afford proper housing and they are usually provided with meals at school. Most schools had staff room with lockable cabinets and enough tables and chairs. It was therefore concluded that this factor has not contributed to the low performance.

Inspection and supervision of teachers, which assist them to improve on their methods of delivery is not done often enough. The school principals do not monitor what happens in the classroom often and in most cases they are frequently away from school. The infrequent or absence of supervision during the instructional as shown using process 4.5 denotes that the head teachers have neglected their role as frontline inspectors of their schools which can help improve the effectiveness as argued by Olembo et al (1992). It was logically argued that head teachers do not provide instructional leadership through discussion of instructional issues observing classroom teaching and giving feedback, practices which can improve performance. This concurs with Eshiwani (1983) who attributes poor results to armchair Head teachers, who hardly know what happens in the classroom. These findings also concurred with Goldsberry (1997) who noted that many teachers are not observed regularly and those who are observed regularly report that they do not receive useful or credible analysis of their performance.

The quality assurance officers do not perform frequent supervision as required. This has a negative impact on performance since teachers are not evaluated and appraised on their teaching strategies.

Teachers' indifferent attitude hinders effective communication in class. Though the proportion of teachers found out having negative attitude was small than those with positive attitude, it affects performance negatively. This is because their negative attitude may be imparted on the students. The attitude of the teachers' influences greatly their

attendance to students' needs. This concurs with study by Lockhead (1991) who indicated that lack of motivation and professional commitment produce poor attendance and unprofessional attitude which affects the performance of the students.

### **5.2.3. Home Environmental Factors influencing academic performance**

Parents' attitude towards education leaves a lot to be desired. This questionable attitude is depicted by most parents 'lack of concern over the students' schools work, their low attendance to school functions, their imperfect relationship with teachers and their failure to motivate their children through verbal encouragement and maternal rewards. This is confirmed by UNESCO's (2009:19) observation that the students would work hard and perform well if they realize that their parents are interested in their school work. In most cases, parents just send their children to school and rarely do any follow up to the student's progress. This is demotivating to both students and the teaching personnel.

These findings also concur with Muthoka (2005) who stated that it is evident psychological valuables creates an input on students' performance. It also concurs with Frenzier (1999) who agreed that a positive attitude of the parent towards his / her child's performance in academics has an impact on the child's persistence in academics.

It is apparent that most parents received low quality education. This factor makes it difficult for them to understand the subject matter, hence their failure to assist their children in their academic work. Low level of education influences parents attitude negatively, thus the reluctance in attending school function, and failure to motivate students can logically be attributed to low level of parental education. These parents do not act as good role models for their children to emulate. This concurs with Morison and McLutye (1971) who argued that, parents' interests and aspirations of their child's education is related to a large extent to the parents' educational level.

Parental economic status in the division is generally low. Some parents work as casual laborers in Industrial area and at the airport. Others are hawkers in the streets while others own small Kiosks where they sell vegetables, 'Mandazi', 'Chapati', 'Githeri' and other food stuffs. This poor income makes them live in overcrowded or poorly lit rooms.

Furthermore, they are not able to pay school fees on time and cannot afford to buy essential text books. Staying away from school and lack of space, time and text books for private study at home demoralizes the students since it causes them to lag behind. These findings concurs with Basil (2007) who argued that gross deprivation of social and economic needs of a child usually yield poor academic performance of the child.

#### **5.2.4. Students' characteristics**

Majority of the students showed a negative attitude towards learning. Most of them do not regularly ask questions during the lessons, do not consult teachers outside classroom and do not usually complete their assignments. Hence it was logically concluded that most students do not find interest in the learning process. This concurs with Deketele (2000) who stated that students' attitude and motivation play a role in how they perform academically. He further argued that the extent to which students are motivated to engage in learning activities depend on the outcomes they anticipate as a result. Moreover students by McClelland (1981) showed that people's attitude and motivation patterns reflect their cultural environment including family and school.

It was discovered that students discipline is a thorn in the neck of teachers. Cases of indiscipline included lateness in school, being rude to teachers, use of 'Sheng' language in school instead of using English, not obeying the bells and unexplained absenteeism. There are also some cases of drug abuse involvement in sexual relationship and involvement in antisocial gangs such as 'Gaza'. All these behaviors cause loss of instructional time, emotional imbalance and poor relationship with teachers and parents which have a negative impact on academic performance. Through these results, it was logically argued that, the low academic performance in the division was as a result, to a large extent, of indiscipline. These findings concur with Grottfresson and Scroban (1996) who found out that improved academics functioning co – occur with a reduction in the prevalence of conduct difficulties. They also concur with Eshiwani (1983) who stated that discipline has a positive correlation with academic performance.

### 5.3. Conclusion

From this study the extent to which school environmental factors, teachers' related factors, home environmental factors and students' characteristics influence academic performance of the secondary school in the division has been established. The school environmental factors include inadequate physical facilities characterized by inadequate chairs, desks, inadequate and dilapidated classrooms, absence of equipped libraries and science laboratories; insufficient teaching and learning materials exemplified by lack of enough text books, absence of visual aids such as wall charts, diagrams, pictures, wall maps, photos, projectors and real objects and lack of equipment such as black boards rulers, set squares and compasses; inadequacies in assessment of teaching / learning strategies depicted by lack of immediate feedback; incompleteness of syllabi on time caused by inadequate teaching staff and absenteeism due to lack of school fees; and big teacher student ratio.

The teacher related factors found to affect academic performance negatively are inspection and supervision of teachers which is infrequent and teachers' attitude towards the students' and performance which was found out to be wanting. However, teacher qualification in the division was commendable.

Home environmental factors included negative parental attitude towards education depicted by lack of concern in their children's school work, poor attendance to school functions, poor relationships with child's teachers and failure to motivate them through rewards; parents low level of education manifested by most parents being primary and secondary school graduates; parents low economic status characterized by difficulty in paying school fees, buying extra text books and providing space and time for private study at home.

Students' characteristics include their negative attitude towards learning depicted by their failure to ask questions in class, consult teachers outside classroom and complete assignments and their indiscipline which sours their relationship with teachers and parents besides wastage of precious instructional time.

#### **5.4. Recommendations of the study**

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations were made:

The District Education Board to make the Bursary fund provision transparent to cater for students from poor families so that they can remain in school and have more contact hours with the teachers.

The government to further subsidize the cost of secondary school education in order for students from poor families to pursue education with minimal disturbances.

The school administration to solicit for sponsors to assist in funding the development projects for their schools.

The school Principals and Board of Governors to find means of establishing equipped libraries and science laboratories in secondary schools where students can do further reading and gain practical experience in science subjects.

The ministry of education to establish guidance & counseling and reference centres in various localities to advise parents and secondary school students on the importance of academic excellence.

Schools' guidance & counseling departments to be empowered and to be provided with trained personnel capable of handling academic problems and to help students make proper life goals and assist them to deal with frustration.

The school Principals and Deputy Principals to undergo education management and administration training in order to improve their leadership skills.

The government to employ more teachers in order to reduce the teacher – student ratios in the division.

More quality assurance and standards officers to be deployed into the division for proper inspection and supervision of teachers' methods of curriculum delivery and to emphasize on formative evaluation as an important aspect of the educational process.

### **5.5. Suggestions for further research**

Based on the research findings, the researcher made the following suggestions for further studies:

- i) A similar study to be carried in another division of Nairobi County.
- ii) Influence of drug abuse to performance in urban schools.
- iii) Impact of involvement in antisocial gangs to performance.
- iv) Prevalence of same sex relationship and its impact on education.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A -Questionnaires For Teachers

An Education research study focusing on factors that influence students' academic performance is being carried out. You are kindly requested to participate in the study by providing the required information. The information you provide shall be treated with utmost confidentiality. Please respond to the following questions as faithfully and honestly as possible. Thanks in advance.

#### Section A

Please fill in;

1. Your Age: 18-25  26-35  36-50  Above 50
2. Your Academic qualification :Form IV/VI Leaver  Diploma holder   
Degree holder  Masters  Others
3. Your Professional qualification: SI  Diploma in Education    
P.G.D.E  Masters in Education
4. Years of experience: 0-5  6-10  11-15  16-20  Over 20
5. Teaching Subjects: Languages  Humanities  Sciences   
Technical Subjects  Others

## Section B

Below are a number of factors which can have an impact on school performance. From your experience, express your opinion on how important each factor can be on influencing performance. (Please tick the appropriate box)

	Factors influencing Performance	1 Of Great Importance	2 Of Some Importance	3 Of No Importance
1	School environmental factors			
a)	Availability of Physical Facilities			
b)	Availability of teaching and Learning facilities			
c)	Assessment of achievement (Evaluation)			
d)	Completion of Syllabus			
e)	Teacher-Student's ratio			
2	Teachers related factors			
a)	Teachers qualification			
b)	Teachers Working Conditions			
c)	Inspection and supervision			
d)	Teachers Attitude			
3	Home Environmental factors (Socio-economics)			
a)	Parents attitudes towards education			
b)	Parents economic status			
4	Students Characteristics			
a)	Students attitude			
b)	Students Discipline			

**Section C.**

The following statements are related to performance level. Please indicate your reaction to each statement by ticking the appropriate cell.

	Academic Performance	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Students should work in their school work in order to pass.					
2	Well explained school rules would be helpful so that students know exactly what is expected of them.					
3	Special rewards should be given to students who do well in their exams.					
4	Students need to be reminded that their discipline affects their performance.					
5	Head teachers should give attention to the learning conditions of their students.					
6	Individual Recognition of student's effort means a lot to them.					
7	Indifferent attitude of the teachers hinders effective communication in class.					
8	Students ought to make their own school rules.					
9	Students need to be given challenging work to improve on performance.					
10	Many students want to do their best in everything they do.					

## Section D

Please respond to the following questions by ticking besides the option which best suits your school

1. How can you describe the physical facilities in your school?

a) Very adequate    b) Adequate    c) Inadequate    d) Very Inadequate

2. How is the availability of teaching and learning materials?

a) Very Sufficient    b) Sufficient    c) Insufficient    d) Very Insufficient

3. How often does your school undertake formative evaluation?

a) Very often    b) Often    c) Rarely

4. What is the average teacher-students ratio in your school?

a) 1:21-30    b) 1:31 - 40    c) 1:41-50    d) 1:51-60    e) Over 60

5. How can you describe your working conditions

a) Very Good    b) Good    c) Poor    d) Very Poor

6. How often do you receive supervision on your teaching methods?

a) Very Often    b) Often    c) Rarely    d) Never

7. Does the inspection and supervision assist you to improve learning on your teaching effectiveness?

a) Yes

Explain

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8. b) No

Explain

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9. How can you describe students' attitude towards learning in your school?

a) Very Positive    b) Positive    c) Negative    d) Very Negative

10. What is the level of students' discipline in your school?

a) Very high    b) High    c) Low    d) Very Low

## Appendix B - Questionnaires for Students

An Education research focusing on factors that influence students' academic performance is being carried out. The purpose for the study is to provide feedback about the current situation which could guide planners on ways which can help you improve on your academic performance. Please respond to the following questions as faithfully and honestly as possible. The information you provide shall be treated with utmost confidentiality

### Section A

Please fill in:

1. Your Age \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your Class \_\_\_\_\_
3. Your Gender \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where you live \_\_\_\_\_
5. Location of School (Division) \_\_\_\_\_

### Section B

Please respond to the following questions by ticking besides the option (Letter) which best suits your school.

1. How can you describe the physical facilities in your school?

- a) Very Adequate    b) Adequate    c) Inadequate    d) Very Inadequate

2. Is there is a science laboratory in your school?

- a) Yes    b) No

3. Is there a library in your school?

- a) Yes    b) No

4. How is the availability of teaching and learning materials, e.g text books, exercise books etc.

- a) Very Sufficient    b) Sufficient    c) Insufficient



5. How often do you receive assessment of your achievement e.g. assignments, Practicals, CATS, exams?  
 a) Very Often      b) Often      c) Rarely
6. How often are the assignment, CATS and exams marked promptly (on time)?  
 a) Very Often      b) Often c) Rarely
7. How often do you complete the syllabus on time?  
 a) Always b)Very Often      c) Often      d) Rarely      e) Never
8. How often do the teachers reward you or appreciate you when you do well in your work?  
 a) Always b) Very Often      c) Often      d) Rarely      e) Never
9. How often do your teachers attend the lessons?  
 a) Always b) Very Often      c) Often      d) Rarely      e) Never
10. Does your parent encourage you in your academics work?  
 a) Yes      b) No
11. How often does your parent check your class work?  
 a) Always b) Very Often      c) Often      d) Rarely      e) Never
12. Does your parent/guardian reward you when you improve in your academic work?  
 a) Yes

Explain

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b) No

Explain

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13. Does your parent /guardian provide you with basic needs e.g. enough food, clothes, proper housing and Sanitation?

a) Yes      b) No

14. Do you have time and space for private study at home?

a) Yes      b) No

If yes, how many hours do you read at a home in a day?

- a) More than 3 hrs    b) 3 hrs    c) 2 hrs    d) 1 hr    e) Less than an hour

If no, explain why you don't have time and space for private study

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15. How often do you stay away from school due to lack of school fees?

- a) Always    b) Very Often    c) Often    d) Rarely    e) Never

16. How often do you consult your teachers (Outside Classroom)?

- a) Always    b) Very Often    c) Often    d) Rarely    e) Never

17. How often do you do your homework?

- a) Always    b) Very Often    c) Often    d) Rarely    e) Never

18. What is the level of students' participation in school management and decision making?

- a) Too much    b) enough    c) Too little

19. Do you think students' discipline affect their performance?

- a) Yes    b) No

## Appendix C -Parents' Questionnaires

Dear Sir/ Madam

An Education research focusing on academic performance is being carried out. As a parent, you are kindly requested to participate in the study by providing the required information. The information you provide shall be treated with utmost confidentiality. Please respond to the questions as faithfully and honestly as possible. Thanks in advance.

### Section A

1. What is your age?

Below 30  31-40  41-50  51-60  Above 60

2. How do you earn your living?

Employed  Self-employed  Casual Laborer

3. How many children do you have in Secondary school?

One  Two  More than two

4. Which School is your child in?

National  Provincial  District Day School  Private Schools

### Section B

Please respond to the following questions by ticking the best option (letter)

1. How do you clear the school fees?

a) I pay once      b) In Installments      c) I take long to clear

2. How often do you have school fees arrears?

a) Never      b) Rarely      c) Often      d) Very Often

3. How many times does your son/ daughter miss school due to unpaid fees?

a) None      b) Once a term      c) Quite Often

4. How many text books do you buy for your child?

a) For all recommended subjects      b) More than three  
c) Less than three.      d) none

5. How far are you educated?

a) University      b) College      c) Secondary      d) Primary

6. How often do you check your child's school work?

a) Always      b) Very Often      c) Often      d) Rarely

e) Never

7. How many times do you attend school functions like Parents' Day, Prize giving day in your child's school?

- a) Always      b) Very Often      c) Often      d) Rarely      e) Never

8. Rate your relationship with your son/daughter's teachers in school.

- a) Very Good      b) Good      c) Fair      d) Bad      e) Very bad

9. Do you motivate your Son/daughter in academic endeavours?

a) Yes

Explain how

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b) No

Explain why

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10. Rate your relationship with your Son /daughter

- a) Very Good      b) Good      c) Fair      d) Very bad

11. Are you able to provide your child with basic needs I.e. enough food, clothes, shelter?

- a) Yes      b) No

12. How often do you reward your son/daughter for doing well in school work?

- a) Very Often      b) Often      c) Rarely      d) Never

13. Do you provide space and time for your child to read at home?

- a) Yes      b) No

14. Does your child work often after school hours to supplement your income e.g.(Selling vegetables, Mandazi, Githeri etc.)?

- a) Yes      b) No

## Appendix D – Interviews For Principals

Principal's Name .....

Name of School .....

1. What is the level of students' participation in school management and decision making?

a) Very High      b) High      c) Average      d) Low      e) Very Low

2. How can you describe the physical facilities in your school?

a) Adequate      b) Very Adequate      c) Inadequate      d) Very Inadequate

3. Is there a science laboratory in your school? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Is there a library in your school? \_\_\_\_\_

5. How can you describe the availability of the teaching and learning materials in your school?

a) Very sufficient      b) Sufficient      c) Insufficient      d) Very Insufficient

6. What is the average teacher - student ratio in your school? \_\_\_\_\_

7. How often do you reward your students for good performance?  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. What can be done to improve performance in your school?  
\_\_\_\_\_



9. What is the total No. of teachers in your school? \_\_\_\_\_

10. How many teachers have the right professional qualification? \_\_\_\_\_ out of  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. What is the total number of students in your school? \_\_\_\_\_

12. How can you describe the level of teacher motivation in your school?  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. How often do teachers get supervised in their teaching methods per year?  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. How often the students are assessed using CATS and Exams per term?  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. How can you describe the overall students' discipline in your school?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. How is the general students' attitude towards learning in your school?

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17. How many students on average stay out of school per term due to lack of school fees?

- a) Very Many      b) Many      c) Few      d) Very Few

18. How are the teachers working conditions in your school?

- a) Very Good      b) Good      c) Bad      d) Very Bad

19. What is the level of Parent participation in school activities e.g. open day, meetings, Prize giving day?

- a) Very High      b) High      c) Low      d) Very Low

20. How can you describe the performance of your school for the past five years?

- a) Very Good      b) Good      c) Average      d) Very Poor