FACTORS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MAKUYU DIVISION, MURANG’A SOUTH DISTRICT, KENYA

BY

NJOROGE ROBERT NJUGUNA

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DECLARATION
This is my original work and has not been presented to any other University for award of any other degree.

_________________________  ______________________
Signature                  Date

Njoroge Robert Njuguna
E55/ 11954/ 08

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

_________________________  ______________________
Signature                  Date

Dr. Florence M. Itegi
Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies. School of Education, Kenyatta University.

_________________________  ______________________
Signature                  Date

Dr. Dorothy N. Kyalo
Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies. School of Education, Kenyatta University.
DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my loving mum Joyce Wairimu for bringing me up single-handedly; my dear wife Faith Wambui, my daughter Prudence Wairimu; and my siblings: Jennifer Waithira, Janet Muthoni and Wilson Njoroge for their immeasurable support in my education journey.
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<thead>
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CATs</td>
<td>Continuous Assessments Tests</td>
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<td>CPE</td>
<td>Certificate of Primary Education</td>
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<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>FGM</td>
<td>Female Genital Mutilation</td>
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<td>FPE</td>
<td>Free Primary Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>KCPE</td>
<td>Kenya Certificate of Primary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KESSP</td>
<td>Kenya Education Sector Support Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoHEST</td>
<td>Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCEOP</td>
<td>National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCST</td>
<td>National Council for Science and Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Education Fund</td>
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ABSTRACT

Performance in national examinations is embraced as an indicator of quality in education systems that are examination oriented. Learners who perform well are perceived to have received high quality education. Despite the Government of the Republic of Kenya commitment to provide high quality primary education, pupils’ academic achievement remains a challenge in the public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District. The available statistics indicate that the division has consistently registered appalling results in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (K.C.P.E) examination. It also shows that the primary education standards in the division have been declining. This poses a serious threat to the socio-economic development of the region and the country at large. The purpose and objectives of the study was therefore to establish the school-based, socio-economic and socio-cultural factors influencing academic performance of public primary schools in Makuyu Division with a view to make recommendations.

The study adopted a descriptive survey design utilizing both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The target population was all the public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District, their deputy headteachers, teachers and pupils. Due to their disproportionateness, schools were stratified according to education zones and then simple randomly sampled using the lottery technique. The study involved a sample of 21 deputy headteachers, 105 teachers and 210 pupils making a total of 336 participants. Data were collected using a pupils’ questionnaire, focus group discussions for the deputy headteachers and teachers, and an observation checklist. Reliability and validity of the research instruments were determined by a pilot study. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics: quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17 for windows while qualitative data were analyzed inductively (thematically).

From the study, factors within the school and home environment which come into play and influence academic performance of the public primary schools in the division emerged. The school–based factors included use of Mother tongue and sub-standard Kiswahili and English in school and more so during the teaching/learning process; ineffective monitoring of private studies and individual learners progress; inadequacies in assessment and feedback; lack of shared vision and focused mission; and inadequate and poorly maintained physical and material resources. The socio-economic factors included low parental/guardian education level; low income and pre-occupation with work. The socio-cultural factors included low regard for education; initiation rite of passage; engagement in sex and dating; and entrenchment of the terrible outlawed Mungiki sect. Based on these findings, it was recommended that all stakeholders in education sector be sensitized on the importance of provision of high quality education; capacity building to improve acquisition and mastery of the language of instruction; emphasis on formative evaluation as an integral aspect of educational process; school administrators to undergo education management and administration courses so as to improve efficiency; collaboration between the Government of the Republic of Kenya and development partners to work out, introduce and implement sustainable economic activities; sensitization in societal beliefs, values and practices which hinder education outcomes; and reviewing, improving and strengthening guidance and counseling.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1: Background of the Study

Education is a key component of human quality essential for generating high incomes and sustainable socio-economic development. It is characterized as an essential ingredient in poverty eradication (Ogawa, 2010: 1). According to UNESCO (2007), education was formally recognized as a human right since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The Dakar Framework for Action (2000) declared that access to quality education was the right of every child. It affirmed that quality was at the heart of education. According to Samoff (2007, cited in Ogawa, 2010) the mastery of curriculum is measured by national examination and the best indicator of high quality education is a high score on the national examination.

The Dakar Framework for Action (2000) commits nations to the provision of primary education of good quality and improving all aspects of educational quality (UNICEF, 2007: 32). Since independence in 1963, the Government of the Republic of Kenya has placed considerable importance on education. Her overall policy goal is to achieve Education For All (EFA) in order to give every Kenyan the right to education and training irrespective of his or her socio-economic status (Ministry of Education, 2005b:14). Through the provision of education, the Government aims at enabling the youth to play a more effective role in the life of the nation by imparting to them the necessary skills and knowledge and inculcating the right attitude. In practice however, formal education has tended to concentrate on imparting knowledge for the sake of passing examinations (Republic of Kenya, 1982).
In response to the international commitments to Education for All goals and Millennium Development Goals, the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) Government launched the Free Primary Education (FPE) in January, 2003 which ensured that the many children who had attained school age and were locked out of the system were given opportunity to access primary education. This resulted in an increased enrolment of children from 5.9 million in 2002 to 7.2 million in formal public schools alone in 2004. This was an increase of 18 per cent (UNESCO, 2005: 11; Ministry of Education, 2005: 27; and Ministry of Education, 2005b: 39).

The Kenyan education system has evolved over time with major changes having been instituted in the 1980’s. In 1984, the 7-4-2-3 structure and system was replaced with the 8-4-4 structure and system which introduced a broad based curriculum at all levels following the Presidential Working Party on the Second University in Kenya, 1982 recommendations. The system was intended to make education more relevant to the world of work and thus produce skilled and high-level manpower to meet the demands of the economy (Ministry of Education, 2005b:31). The Working Party recommended one examination and a revamped Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) which should be taken at the end of the eight years of primary education.

The importance of primary education cannot be overemphasized. Bogonko (1992: 110) points that primary education is the fundamental basis for literacy and the acquisition of other basic skills as well as positive social attitudes and values which make life worthwhile in modern society. He also asserts that, primary education is the foundation upon which are built the other structures of modern educational and training systems. According to Ministry of Education (2005b:32) the primary education cycle last eight years and caters for learners of between 6-13 years leading

Literature has indicated the crucial role played by examinations. Republic of Kenya (1976) observes that examination provides the means for assessing the degree of past achievement of the learning objectives and in the process, also serve to stimulate the learner to put the necessary effort into learning. It further points that the results of examinations are used in estimating an individual’s future potential for continued learning and occupational competence. In a study of leadership style, job satisfaction and student achievement, Muchira (1988: 82) stressed the vital role of national examination. He contends that there is much loss or gain depending on how well or poorly one performs in a national examination. Bogonko (1992: 87) points that examinations are mobilizing forces in education and a means of testing its result.

According to Eshiwani (1993: 185), one of the major functions of any examination system is to measure the output of the educational system in which it operates often referred to as pupils’ achievement which reflects the system internal efficiency. He outlined three primary objectives of Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination which included ranking candidates according to the attainment of knowledge, skills and attitudes as specified in the syllabus; improving the learning process in primary schools by providing the schools with constant feedback on candidates performance; and selecting pupils to secondary schools and to post primary technical training institutions using the academic performance as a base. According to this view, they measure the mastery of curriculum. Sifuna and Nawamura (2007, cited in Ogawa, 2010) claim that high score in national examinations are the best indicators of a high quality education. Similarly, Abagi,
Olweya and Otieno (2000:13) pointed out that in Kenya, examinations are used as measures of achievement of the education system’s objectives and in assessing the quality of the education offered. They contend that schools that perform well in national examinations are viewed as offering high quality education as opposed to those that perform poorly.

Scholars and studies have revealed that there are multifarious factors within the home and school environment which influence pupil’s achievement in learning institutions. Edmonds (1982, cited in Lunenburg and Orstein, 2008: 345) identified an effective school as one in which there is a strong leadership, an orderly and humane climate, frequent monitoring of student’s progress, high expectations and requirement for all students. This clearly shows that the school characteristic plays a very crucial role as far as academic performance is concerned. These characteristics have been deepened and broadened. In his paper, Correlates of Effective Schools: The First and Second Generation, Lezotte (1991), identified seven characteristics of effective schools which he referred to as “Correlates of Effective School”. These include: safe and orderly environment, climate of high expectations of success, instructional leadership, clear and focused mission, opportunity to learn and student time on the task, frequent monitoring of students' progress and home-school relations. He argued that the extent to which the correlates are in place in a school has a dramatic, positive effect on student achievement. Republic of Kenya (1999: 91) established that poor performance at examinations is as a result of poor teaching, absenteeism among learners and teachers, irrelevance of the curriculum and the inadequacy of the examination system.
According to UNICEF (2007: 88) children achievement to education is influenced by the degree of support they receive at home, the quality of teachers, the teaching methods employed, the extent to which they are engaged as actors in the educational process, the availability of the necessary teaching aids and resources and a willingness to offer the necessary flexibility to facilitate their regular attendance.


Research studies have established that academic performance is also influenced both negatively and positively by socio-economic status of the family. Basil (2007) points out that poor parental care with gross deprivation of school and economic needs of a child usually yield to poor academic performance. He also asserts that good parenting supported by strong economic background could enhance strong academic performance of the child. Similarly, Orodho (1996:180) and Atkinson and Feather (1966, cited in Muola, 2007), also contend that parental education influences students achievement. Gakuru (1977, cited in Kibera and Kikomoti, 2007) states that wealthier and better educated parents create conducive learning atmosphere for their children. UNICEF (2005:9), UNICEF (2000) and Marshall (1984:61) pointed that parents with little formal education may also be less familiar with the language used in school, limiting their ability to support learning and participate in school related activities. Muola (2007) and Kibera and Kikomoti (2007:114) have shown that occupation status
of the parent determines student achievement. Ministry of Education Science and Technology (2001) observed that some economic activities in some regions in Kenya disrupt normal school routine and the pupils are not able to cover the syllabus which may result to poor academic performance.

Studies have also demonstrated that student achievement is influenced by socio-cultural factors. UNESCO (2005:139) and Ministry of Education (1994:102) reveal that students’ achievement is highly influenced by the community and/or parents attitude towards education. Kibera and Kikomoti (2007: 147-148) accuse the society of denying girls adequate time to study which result to poor performance in school. Cultural practices such as initiation rite of passage (circumcision and clitoridectomy) ceremonies and early marriages are said to affect academic performance (Ministry of Education, 1994:106-109; Kombo and Waiyaki, 2002:60; Mukhongo, 2003:20; Mutesa, 2003 and UNICEF, 2005:9). Safron, Schulenberg and Bachman (2003, cited Parkes, Wight, Henderson and West, 2010) have demonstrated that academic performance is affected negatively when learners engage themselves in sexual activity and dating. Grimm (2007, in Parkes et al, 2010) has argued that engagement in sexual activities impedes school work. Studies reviewed in Fukofuka (2007) suggest that religiosity/spirituality has a positive impact on students’ academic achievements. Burnet (1994); Ministry of Education Science and Technology (2001); UNESCO (2003); and UNICEF (2005) asserted that organized groups related activities have a negative impact on schooling and academic performance.

In spite of the Government of the Republic of Kenya’s commitment to provision of primary education of high quality and several studies having been undertaken on factors affecting academic performance, it emerged that the public primary schools in
Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District have consistently registered appalling results in the national examination and decline in the standards (District Education Office-Murang’a South, 2010). Eshiwani (1993) warns that when a region lags behind in the number of pupils who pass a national examination, its socio-economic development is likely to be retarded. This necessitated an extensive study (utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches) on the three factors affecting academic performance and a strong focus being on the socio-cultural factors influencing academic performance of public primary schools in Makuyu Division with a view to make recommendations so as to enhance education outcomes.

1.2: Statement of the Problem
National examinations play a significant role in education systems. In the 8-4-4 system of education, Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (K.C.P.E) examination is taken at the end of the eighth year of primary education. Learners who perform well are perceived to have received high quality education essential for sustainable socio-economic development and poverty eradication as opposed to those who perform poorly (Abagi et al, 2000:13). The performance in the national examination is used as a criterion for certification and as a base for selecting pupils to join secondary schools and post-primary technical institution (Eshiwani, 1993:184).

Despite the Government of the Republic of Kenya commitment to provide high quality primary education, outstanding pupils’ academic achievement remains a challenge in the public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District of Murang’a County. The available statistics indicate that the division has not only consistently performed dismally in the national examination but also experienced observable decline in academic performance. The division’s mean standard score
(M.S.S), for example, in 2005 was 237.24; 242.47 in 2006; 241.75 in 2007; 240.56 in 2008 and 236.21 in 2009 (District Education Office, Murang’a South, 2010). This poses a serious threat to the socio-economic development of the region and the country at large. There was therefore a dire need to establish the school-based, socio-economic and socio-cultural factors influencing academic performance of the public primary schools in the region.

1.3: Purpose of the Study
The purpose of the study was to establish the factors influencing academic performance of the public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District of Murang’a County using the quantitative and qualitative approaches with a view to make recommendations so as to enhance education outcomes.

1.4: Objectives of the Study
The objectives of the study were:-

i. To establish the school-based factors which influence academic performance in public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District.

ii. To establish the socio-economic factors which influence academic performance in public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District.

iii. To establish the socio-cultural factors which influence academic performance of public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District.
1.5: Research Questions
The study was guided by the following research questions:-

i. What are the school-based factors which influence academic performance in public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District?

ii. How do socio-economic factors influence academic performance in public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District?

iii. What are the socio-cultural factors which influence academic performance of public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District?

1.6: Assumptions of the study
In the course of the study, it was assumed that all participants would be co-operative and provide reliable responses; participants have acquired listening, reading and writing skills; and there were varied school-based and home factors influencing students’ academic achievement.

1.7: Limitations of the Study
The study limited itself to establish the factors influencing academic performance in primary schools. It restricted itself to Makuyu Division in Murang’a South District, Murang’a County in Kenya. This was occasioned by lack of adequate time and resources to allow the researcher to carry out an extensive study in the entire district, otherwise for a more conclusive result, the whole Murang’a County should have been studied. Due to other logistics, it was not possible to trace parents and other education stakeholders in the region and seek their views on the factors influencing academic performance of public primary schools.
1.8: Delimitations of the study
The study confined itself to public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District of Murang’a County. Out of the 46 public primary schools in the division, 21 schools from her two education zones (Makuyu and Kamahuha) participated in the study. In each of the selected schools, deputy head teachers took part in the study. Teachers and primary eight pupils present by the time of the study were randomly sampled to take part.

1.9: Significance of the Study
The study established the factors within the school and home environment which come into play and influence students’ academic performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examination. It indeed unveiled the school-based factors, socio-economic and socio-cultural factors that determine academic performance of the public primary schools in the division.

The study would be of great significance to teachers and school administrators because of the generated knowledge and awareness created that would propel them to takes necessary measures not only to uplift the academic performance of their respective schools but also to mould responsible citizens. The study would be of immediate benefit to the society, because it revealed its’ influence on academic achievement and recommended sensitization on the importance of provision of quality education and societal beliefs, values and practices which hinder education outcomes.

The other beneficiary of study findings is the Ministry of Education and in particular the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards which is a professional arm of the Ministry responsible for controlling the quality of education in Kenya. The study
indeed identified educational institutional needs for improvement which is one of the objectives of quality assurance. Lastly, the study serves as a guide to the future researchers in the education sector.

1.10: Conceptual Framework
In Kenya and in the education systems that are examination oriented, there is always the expectation of producing outstanding results through achievement of respective national examinations. However, this expectation does not always come true due to the interplay of multiplicity of factors within the home and school environment revealed by past studies. These factors are broadly classified as school- based factors, socio-economic factors and socio-cultural factors as indicated in the Figure 1.1.

The school-based factors determining academic performance indicated in the conceptual framework include pupils’ traits; school leadership/management; shared vision and focused mission statement of the school; medium of communication/instruction; monitoring of private studies; instructional evaluation; reporting pupils’ progress; and adequacy and nature of material and physical resources. The socio-economic factors include parental level of education; income; pre-occupation with work; and family size while the socio-cultural factors include community and/ or parents attitude towards education; initiation rite of passage; early marriages; and preoccupation with sexual activity and dating; religiosity/spirituality; organized gang (the Outlawed Mungiki Sect) related activities; and gendered division of labour.

The conceptual framework further suggests that academic performance is determined by a number of different factors other than the aforementioned. These include
teachers’ characteristics, for example, gender and age among others and the Government Policies on retirement age, recruitment into teacher education modules, promotion on merit and introduction of FPE which affects teaching/learning environment. The conceptual framework also shows that academic performance is influenced by the roles of Semi Autonomous Government Agencies (SAGAs), such as the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) responsible for approving curriculum support materials used in primary schools in particular text books developed by publishers and developing curriculum support materials for areas not attractive to private publishers; the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) responsible for moderating and administering the national examination (KCPE); and Teachers Service Commission (TSC) responsible for registration, recruitment, distribution, remuneration, promotion, discipline and maintenance of teaching standards in the country.
**Independent Variables**

**School-Based Factors**
- Pupils’ traits
- School leadership
- Vision and mission
- Medium of communication
- Monitoring of private studies
- Instructional evaluation
- Reporting pupils progress
- Material and physical resources

**Socio-Economic Factors**
- Parents’ level of education
- Parental income
- Parents’ pre-occupation with work

**Socio-Cultural Factors**
- Attitude towards education
- Initiation rite of passage
- Pre-occupation with sexual activities and dating
- Religiosity/spirituality
- Organized gang related activities
- Early marriages

**Moderating Variables**
- Government Policies
- Kenya Institute of Education
- Kenya National Examinations Council
- Teachers Service Commission

**Dependent Variables**
- Academic Performance of Public Primary Schools in KCPE Examination

**Intervening Variables**
- Teachers’ characteristics
- Class size
- Family size
- Gendered division of labour

**Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework on Factors Influencing Academic Performance of Public Primary Schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District**
1.11: Operational Definitions of Central Terms

**Academic performance:** This refers to pupil education achievement

**Characteristics:** These refer to traits such as age, sex and commitments

**Outstanding performance:** It refers to remarkable, satisfactory or improved pupil educational achievements above the average score (250 marks)

**Dismal performance:** It refers to appalling or poor academic results below the average score

**School-based factors:** These refer to things which emanate from the school influencing teaching/learning process for example, organizing and monitoring private studies and pupils’ academic progress, articulation of shared vision and focused mission of the school and language policy

**Socio-cultural factors:** These refer to societal beliefs, values and practices, for example, initiation rite of passage, engagement in sexual activity and dating and early marriage influencing education process

**Socio-economic factors:** These are social and economic attributes of an individual or a family in any given society. These include level of education, occupation and income.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1: Introduction
This chapter presents related reviewed literature on the importance of national examination, in particular the K.C.P.E in independent Kenya and variables that interact within the home and the school to influence academic performance. This is organized in three sections. Section one focuses on the importance of the national examination in independent Kenya; section two on the factors which influence academic performance which include school-based factors, socio-economic factors and socio-cultural factors; and section three on the summary of the related literature.

2.2: Importance of National Examination in Independent Kenya
For many years in Kenya, examination has been accepted as an integral aspect of the education system. Eshiwani (1993:181) observes that in Kenya the examination systems have been based on the structures or levels of the education system. He points that before the introduction of the 8-4-4 education system, Kenya had three public examinations namely, the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE), the Kenya Certificate of Education (KCE) and the Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education (KACE). The CPE was abstracted and replaced by the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination, which is taken by primary school pupils at the end of standard eight.

Literature has demonstrated the important role played by examinations in Independent Kenya. According to the Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies of 1976, examination provides the means of assessing the degree of past achievement of the learning objectives and in the process also serve to stimulate the
learner to put the necessary effort in learning. The report pointed out that the results of examinations are used in estimating an individual’s future. Muchira (1988:82) in concurrence with the above report attaches a lot of importance to national examination results. He asserts that there is much loss or gain depending on how well or poorly a student performs in school work.

Eshiwani (1993:15) reiterates the role played by examination system. He asserts that one of the major functions of any examination system is to measure the output of the educational system in which it operates often referred to as pupils’ achievement. He contends that achievement and the number of pupils who successfully complete a cycle or a course reflects the system’s internal efficiency. Abagi et al (2000:13) concurring with the above assertions point out that in Kenya examinations are used as measures of achievement of the education system objectives and in assessing the quality of education offered. They reveal that schools that perform well in national examinations are viewed as offering high quality education as opposed to those that perform poorly. According to Eshiwani (1993), the primary objectives of Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination include ranking candidates according to the attainment of knowledge, skills and attitudes as specified in the syllabus; improving the learning process in primary schools by providing the schools with constant feedback on candidates performance; and selecting pupils to secondary schools and to post primary technical training institutions using the academic performance as a base.

Though literature has indicated that national examinations are used in measuring quality of education, it also points out that focus on examination can have adverse effect on education. O’sullivan (2007, cited in Ogawa, 2010) has lamented that the
focus on examination results can be detrimental to the quality of teaching and learning as teachers tend to rely on rote teaching and learning to prepare children for the tests. The report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya of 1999 is consistent with O’Sullivan (2007, cited in Ogawa, 2010). The commission observed that the 8-4-4 system of education lays a lot of emphasis on examination which has resulted to extra tuition. It further points that during tuition most teachers are engrossed in the process of drilling learners to pass exams at the expense of enhancing analytical and problem solving skills. UNESCO (2007:70) advised that, children need to be helped to acquire skills in analyzing, investigating, creating and applying knowledge if they are to achieve their optimum potential. Education systems should therefore not only aim at developing cognitive development but also promoting values and attitudes of responsible citizens and nurturing creative and emotional development as espoused by UNICEF (2005).

2.3: Factors Influencing Academic Performance
Studies have shown that there are multifarious factors which influence academic performance in learning institutions. These factors operate within the home and the school and in a significant way determine effectiveness of a school.

Various authors and studies identified specific characteristics of affective schools and defined effectiveness partly in terms of outstanding student achievement. Ronald Edmonds (1982, cited in Lunenburg and Orstein, 2008:345) defined effective school as one in which lower-class students’ score as high as middle class students on basic skills tests. Based on the analysis of such schools, Edmonds identified an effective school as one in which there is strong leadership, an orderly and humane climate,
frequent monitoring of students progress, high expectations and requirements for all students, and focus on teaching important skills to all students.

Similarly, in his paper, Correlates of Effective Schools: The First and Second Generation, Lezotte (1991) identified seven characteristics of effective schools which he called correlates of effective schools. These include safe and orderly environment, climate of high expectations of success, instructional leadership, clear and focused mission, opportunity to learn and student time on the task, frequent monitoring of student progress and home-school relations. He attaches a lot of value to the correlates since they have been shown to influence students learning. According to him, the extent to which the correlates are in place in a school has a dramatic, positive effect on student achievement. Reviewed below is literature on the school-based factors, socio-economic and socio-cultural factors which influence academic performance.

2.3.1: School–Based Factors Influencing Academic Performance
Teachers are important school personnel whose role is essential for the achievement of school goals and objectives. Research by Sifuna (1985:53) on the quality of primary schools and pupils achievement in Kenya found that, the distribution of teachers in the primary school system is an important factor in determining the quality of education. He established that teachers and their qualifications is an important index that tends to influence the quality of primary education. He found a correlation between performance and the teaching staff. He observed that the number of pupils who pass the CPE examination mainly depends on the quality of the teaching staff.

The Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya (1999:91) concurring with the above findings, advised that in order to enhance quality it is
imperative to have a well-qualified and highly motivated teaching force, capable of understanding the needs of the learners, and the curriculum, in order to implement it affectively. The commission further established that poor performance at examinations is as a result of poor teaching, absenteeism among learners and teachers, irrelevance of the curriculum and the inadequacy of the examination system.

A recent survey carried by the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) established that teacher professional training and experience had an impact on pupil performance, with pupil who were taught literacy by teachers with higher professional qualifications and those teachers with many years of experience performing better than pupils taught by teachers with lower professional qualifications and fewer years of experience (The Standard, June 22, 2010). Teaching/learning strategies are documented to influence academic performance. According to UNESCO (2007: 34) teaching and learning must involve a variety of interactive methodologies to create stimulating and participatory environments. Barasa (2007:110) calls for effective attendance and accountability on the part of all those concerned. He recommends establishment of an attendance check procedure to ensure that teachers and students are in their assigned places at the required hour.

High expectations are documented to be related to education outcomes. Lezotte (1991), Edmond (1987, cited in Lunenburg and Orstein, 2008), and Harris and Bennett (2005:129) claim that in effective schools there is climate of high expectations in which the staff believes and demonstrate that all students can attain mastery of essential skills and have the capability to help all students achieve the mastery. Hosford (1984:66) puts the onus to communicate academic expectations for
achievement on the teachers. Brophy and Good studies (1974, cited in by Hosford, 1984) show that there are powerful effects on performance when teachers communicate their goals for performance to those they are teaching. They assert that if teachers set high but attainable goals for academic performance, academic achievement usually increases but if they set low goals, academic achievement decreases. Hosford echoes that effective teachers consistently project a higher expectation of learning for each of their students. He points that these expectations should be within the student’ learning limits and are fully understood by the teacher and student. Accordingly, the goals are reached through mutual understanding, cooperation, and team work.

Butter (1987, cited in Kafui, 2005) found homework to be a correlate of academic performance. He stated that homework bore a positive relationship with learning when it is relevant to learning objectives; assigned regularly in reasonable amounts; well explained; corrected and reviewed during class time and used as an occasion for feedback to students. Schools where teachers give and mark homework promptly have better results (Eshiwani, 1983 and Orodho, 1996:196).

Gamage (2006:71) points out that, effective schools have teachers who display a strong sense of responsibility for the students learning. They organize and monitor students’ private studies. According to Hosford (1984:63), when students are left to work privately and are not monitored by the teacher, they often spend less time engaged in the activities for which they are responsible. He points out that in classes where a good deal of work is done by students on their own, the engagement rate in academic subjects declines if teachers do not keep their monitoring behaviour at a high level. Harris and Bennet (2005:129) support the assertion that teachers in
effective schools work in collegiality and collaboration to achieve shared goals; have high expectations of the students; teach purposively; monitor student work; and give positive feedback.

Studies have also revealed that school leadership is a crucial factor in the success of a school. It can be considered as a cornerstone of organization effectiveness. In his policy study on the factors influencing performance among primary and secondary school pupils in Western Province of Kenya, Eshiwani (1983) found that schools which consistently perform well have sound and effective leadership. This is confirmed by Lezotte (1991) and Edmond (1987, cited in Lunenburg and Orstein, 2008) who assert that effective schools’ studies have shown that effective schools have strong leadership. Muchira (1988:174) in a study of leadership effectiveness in Primary Teachers College established that principal’s leadership styles have positive correlation with the students’ achievement. Hemphill (1949, cited in Muchira, 1988:45) views leadership as a dynamic process, varying from situation to situation with changes in leaders, followers and situations. According to his view, leadership is a function that often depends on the situation in which the leader operates

According to the Fiedler’s Contingency Theory of Leadership, the effectiveness of a leader in achieving high group performance is contingent on the leaders motivational system and the degree to which the leader controls and influences the situation. The three situational factors include leader-member relations, task structures and the leader’s position power (Lunenburg and Orstein, 2008: 131, Barasa, 2007:49, and Gamage, 2006:101). The theory hence maintains that effectiveness depends on the proper match between the leader’s style of interacting with the subordinates and the degree to which the situation gives control to the leader (Okumbe, 1998:320).
There is therefore no best leadership style: the situation dictates the one to be employed.

Leaders motivational system | Situational favourables | Outcome
---|---|---
Leadership style | • Leader member relations • Task structure • Leader’s position power | Effectiveness

**Figure 2.1: Major Variables in Fiedler’s Contingency Theory**

Source: Adapted from Lunenburg and Orstein (2008:131)

Muchira (1988:87) argues that school administrators (principals) are responsible for students’ achievement. He points that significant responsibility is placed on the schools to make students perform well and principals are expected to shoulder a great deal of that responsibility. Effective school research stresses the role played by the school administrator. It indicates that the principal, as the instructional leader, is critical to keeping a school focused on instruction, to setting high expectations in standards and goals towards improved student achievement, to ensure a common curriculum and to provide leadership for teachers (Lunenburg and Irby, 2006:171).

Gamage (2006:105) views leadership as a relationship between an individual and other members of a group in a given environment. He asserts that leadership is about working with and through people to achieve organizational goals. He is of the opinion that effective leader can empower, motivate and energize the followers. He advises that leaders need to relate to staff in ways to arouse their personal commitments and motivate them towards the accomplishment of the shared vision. Kent (1995) points that schools are likely to be more successful in achieving in-depth learning when leaders work with the staff and community to build a collective educational vision that is clear, compelling and connected to teaching and learning. He believes that
such a vision helps focus attention on what is important, motivates staff and students and increases the sense of shared responsibility for student learning.

Eshiwani (1983) attributes poor results to the “arm chair” head teachers who do not know what goes on in the classroom. According to Ministry of Education (1987) heads are expected to teach a reasonable teaching load. It points out that this is invaluable in helping the school administrators to be in touch with the actual teaching/learning situation in school. Gamage (2006:117) supports this position and states that a leader needs to understand the true picture of the organization including its nature and needs. To understand the school better, Griffin (1994:13) recommends that the head should scan through, comment and sign students’ reports forms every term. He argues that, by doing so, the head will get a feel of the whole school, class by class and can often spot things going wrong with the teaching when these would not have been brought to light in any other way. The values espoused by a leader should be demonstrated in his or her behaviour.

Cotton (2003:23, cited in Gamage, Adams, and McComana, 2009) asserts that principal’s behaviour have a significant impact on student achievement. These include the establishment of a vision, clear learning goals and high expectations for learning for all students interactions and cordial relationships with relevant stakeholders with communication and interaction, emotional and interpersonal support, visibility and accessibility, and parent/community participation; developing a school culture conducive to teaching and learning through shared leadership and decision making, collaboration risk taking leading to continuous improvement; providing instructional leadership through discussions of instructional issues, observing classroom teaching and giving feedback, supporting teacher autonomy and protecting instructional time;
and being accountable for affecting and supporting continuous improvements through monitoring progress and using student progress data for program improvement.

Literature has indicated that to realize success the head teacher must provide adequate (and essential) facilities and resources. Eshiwani (1983:23) contends that differences in school facilities amount to differences in achievement. Republic of Kenya (1999:92) revealed that the quality and adequacy of resources such as physical facilities, equipments, teaching and learning materials have a direct bearing on quality as they determine how effectively the curriculum is implemented. She reported that quality cannot be achieved and sustained if the resources and facilities are not available and in sufficient quantity and quality. UNICEF (2007:88) points out that children achievement in education is not only influenced by the availability of the necessary teaching aids and resources but also by the degree to which they are engaged as actors in the education process and a willingness to offer the necessary flexibility to facilitate their regular attendance.

Class sizes have also been identified as a determinant of academic performance. Studies have indicated that schools with smaller sizes perform better academically than schools with larger class sizes. Kraft (1994, cited in Kafui, 2005) in his study of the ideal class size and its effects on effective teaching and learning in Ghana concluded that class sizes above 40 have negative effects on students achievements. Similarly, a recent survey carried by the KNEC established that pupils in smaller classes tended to perform better in numeracy than pupils in larger classes (The Standard, June 22, 2010).
Instructional supervision is said to influence the quality of education and subsequently the student performance in national examination. Neagley and Evans (1960:1) were of the view that effective supervision of instruction can improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. This onus has been put on the head teachers. According to Ministry of Education (1999:92) and Olembo, Wanga and Karagu (1992:62) the heads should be the front line inspectors of their own school. Olembo et al (1992:84) further assert that instructional supervision is mostly undertaken to help teachers maintain and improve effectiveness in the classroom. They point out that the activity aims at influencing teacher behaviour and pupil performance in the classrooms.

2.3.2: Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Academic Performance
Socio-economic factors have been cited as a determinant of students’ performance in national examinations. Basil (2007) points out that poor parental care with gross deprivation of social and economic needs of a child usually yield poor academic performance of the child. He believes that good parenting supported by strong economic background could enhance strong academic performance of the child. According to him, students’ achievements is predicted where the child is properly counseled in the choice of his or her courses and vocation that matches ability, interest and capability.

Literature has indicated that academic performance is influenced by the income of parents. According to Marshall (1984:61), children from poor parents often have to do heavy chores in homes and farms or go out trading before attending school in the morning and after returning home in the afternoon. He states that the family may not be able to afford school uniform or adequate food. Marshall further points out that at
night there may be no place where the child can do his homework and insufficient light for him to work. Marshall also contends that poor parents or guardians often do not attend meetings at the school due to lack of suitable clothes and cannot communicate in English language. Marshall also observes that these parents would feel out of place and ashamed and would not know what to say to the teacher if they meet him/her. Basil (2007) concurring with Marshall’s observation laments that low income level of parents is a major impediment to academic success.

Ministry of Education (1994) contends that financial ability of parents may lead to absenteeism of learners thus threatening student achievement. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2001) notes that school drop-out; absenteeism and general truancy is rampant in coffee, miraa and tea picking, cane and sand harvesting, and fishing regions in Kenya. It laments that although these activities appear to be supplementing family incomes, they disrupt the normal school routine hindering the syllabus coverage and consequently students are not well prepared for the evaluation tests.

Parents level of education has been said to have a multifarious impact on children’s ability to learn in school. According to Willms (2000, cited in UNICEF, 2000) in one study children whose parents had primary school education or less were found to have more than three times low test scores of grade repetitions than children whose parents had at least some secondary schooling. UNICEF (2000) points out that parents with little formal education may also be less familiar with the language used in school and this limits their ability to support learning and participate in school related activities.
UNICEF (2005:9) observes that children whose mothers have no education are more than twice as likely to be out of school as children whose mothers have some education. Basil (2007) lamented that children under the care of illiterate mothers find themselves roaming about the streets labouring to make the ends meet. Atkinson and Feathers (1966, cited in Muola, 2007) point out that achievement motivation of children whose fathers have attained high income occupations tend to be high.

Marshall (1984:59) observes that educated parents tend to attend meetings, exhibitions of work or entertainments at school when invited. They discuss their children with the teacher; take an informed interest in their children’s work; and make easy effort to send their children to school promptly, regularly, clean, well fed and provided with the necessary equipment for school work.

According to Kibera and Kikomoti (2007:115) the language spoken at the homes of the parents from the high socio-economic class is often the medium of instruction in schools hence children from this class have an advantage over children who speak Mother tongue at home. They point out that parents from the high socio-economic status are able to buy their children books which parents from low socio-economic class cannot afford. They argue that this increase their children’s chances to acquire more language for educational purposes.

Gakuru (1977, cited in Kibera and Kikomoti, 2007:113) revealed that wealthier and better educated parents send their children early to private nursery schools and create conducive learning environment at home. This put their children at an advantage in the school work compared to children of poor parents. The occupation status of the parents is found to determine student achievement. In his study of the relationship
between academic achievement, motivation and home environment among standard eight pupils in Machakos District, Muola (2007), found that the parents in high occupational status were able to provide the necessary learning facilities and to assist the child with homework. Concurring with this finding, Kibera and Kikomoti (2007:114), point out that high socio-economic status parents’ show a lot of concern over their children’s poor performance at school. They take time to help them with homework and inspire them to achieve high educational goals.

Family size is documented as a determinant of educational outcomes. Muola (2007) asserts that a parent with a small family find it easy to provide for the physical needs of the child and is in a position to give him/her attention, encouragement, stimulation and support with his/her school work. Muola observed that this could have a motivating effect on a child from the small family in comparison with a child from a large family where the parents are always busy trying to find ways of meeting basic needs of the family.

2.3.3 Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Academic Performance

Literature has indicated that academic performance is affected both positively and negatively by socio-cultural factors. UNESCO (2005:139) reveals that student achievement is highly influenced by the community and/or parents attitude towards education. She observed that pupils would work harder and perform well if they realize that their parents are interested in their school work. Along the same line, Kibera and Kikomoti (2007:115) point out that, children who are not encouraged by their parents in school work are likely to go to school late, for they may be given duties to perform before going to school. They warn that constant late-attendance at school is bound to have an adverse affect on academic performance.
In a report, it is claimed that negative parental attitude including lack of moral guidance encourage children to seek employment and eventually drop out of school (Ministry of Education, 1994:102). This affects performance in national examination when pupils resume sitting for the examination having not covered full course work. In relation to this, UNICEF (2000) advices that to achieve academically children must attend school consistently. It cites Miskel et al (1998) study of village-based schools in Malawi which demonstrates the relationship between school attendance and achievement. The study had found that students with higher rates of attendance had greater learning gains and lower rates of repetition.

Kibera and Kikomoti (2007:147-148) blame the society for denying girls adequate time to study. They contend that the society does not put a lot of emphasis on education for girls. They further point out society’s view that a woman does not need to be educated because unlike men who is the head of the family and bread earner, she is expected to be a wife, a home maker and a mother.

Gendered division of labour has been found to affect academic performance. Studies have shown that girls perform domestic duties which conflict with the pursuit of education. They are over-burdened with household duties such as fetching water and firewood, washing clothes and dishes, taking care of the siblings and other related jobs at the expense of their studies (Kibera and Kikomoti, 2007:148). Along the same line, Republic of Kenya (1999), reported lack of gender sensitivity in schools. It disclosed that in some schools, duties are allocated inequitably with girls doing more and hence having less time for studies. In other schools, male teachers were reported to send girls to cook for them while the boys were learning. These rob them of adequate time to study and as a result perform poorly in school.
Kombo and Waiyaki (2002:60) assert that socialization in some communities has put emphasis on various aspects other than school-work, for example circumcision ceremonies. Mukhongo (2003) in his study on influence of circumcision ceremony in education of primary school pupils among the Bukusu community in Kanduyi Division of Bungoma, Kenya found out that primary school learners tended to drop out of school at a higher rate during the circumcision period than at any other season. The practice was found to be common among the low socio-economic families who spend most of their time visiting relatives soliciting for funding and rehearsing in songs and dances before circumcision.

Literature has also indicated that initiation rite of passage is associated with attitudinal changes. According to Ministry of Education (1994:104), it is alleged that circumcision, through the content of ceremonies changes attitudes. The rite of passage was reported to confer adult status on the initiates which result to behaviour change, for example, boys and girls among the Kipsigis feel that they are “adults”. It was indeed found that after circumcision ceremonies, boys and girls view themselves as “men” and “women”, “too mature” to be taught by the uncircumcised thereby breeding indiscipline. Mutesa (2003), in his study on socio-economic, cultural and school-based factors affecting the aspiration of Samburu girls in secondary schools, of Samburu District in Kenya found that girls who are circumcised perceive themselves as adult and despise their uncircumcised colleagues and teachers. Studies have therefore shown that initiation rite of passage breeds indiscipline in schools. Eshiwani (1993:105) advices that school discipline must be maintained at all times because it is when there is good discipline that proper learning can be expected to take place.
Literature has indicated that education outcome is affected by early marriages. In a study, Ministry of Education (1994:106) established that marrying girls at an early age is perceived as a profitable business because of the promise of bride price. It found that, sometimes in very remote areas, the practice prevent schooling of girls for fear that their market value will depreciate. In concurring with the findings, UNICEF (2005:9) points out that bride price are incentive for parents to forgo educating their daughters and instead marry them sometimes as young as ten years to older men. Girls hence stop attending school once they get married.

Recent studies have demonstrated that academic performance is affected negatively when learners engage in sexual activities. Safron, Schulenberg and Bachman (2001, cited in Parkes, Wight, Henderson and West, 2010) highlight specific effects of being preoccupied with sexual activity and dating. They outline possibility of disruption to education by pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections and loss of time and concentration on the education objectives as the detrimental effects of engagement with sexual activity and dating. Mier (2007, cited in Parkes et al, 2010) asserts that sexual debut may also lead to emotional problems such as depression and low self esteem which could impede school work.

Studies suggest that religiosity has a positive impact on academic performance. In researching on the impact of spirituality on academic performance, Fukofuka (2007) found that students who take the time to commit to spiritual activities enhance their ability to excel academically. He cites several studies that indicate that spirituality has a positive impact on student academic performance. Among them, Walker and Dixon (2002) in their study had established that spiritual beliefs and religious participation were positively related to academic performance. Similarly, Line (2005) also cited,
established a strong relationship between academic performance and personal religiosity, especially in the area of personal scripture study, living up to church standards and personal prayer life. He observed that when students enrich themselves from scripture, abiding by their church standards regardless of faith and have a consistent prayer life, their academic performance respond positively. Jeynes (2002, cited in Fukofuka, 2007) also found that religious commitment had a positive impact on the academic performance of students and also on their school-related behaviour. Jeynes observed that students who were committed to their religion were well behaved in school and had better academic performance.

Literature has also indicated that organized gangs related activities have negative impact on academic performance. According to Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2001:61) the culture of violence has been introduced in the society. There is violence in the homes, streets and everywhere. Along the same line, UNESCO (2003:143) echoes that schools are not safe havens. It states that they not only suffer gang-related violence spilling over from the streets, but are themselves rapidly becoming centers of gang activities functioning particularly as site for recruitment and socializing (Bodinger, Deleriarte, 1993; Arthur and Erickson, 1992 cited in Burnett, 1994).Walker, Ramsey and Greshman (2004) note that gang members have low participation in school activities.

Burnett (1994) contends that presence of gang play a significant role in the widespread increase of violence in schools. He stated that because gangs by definition are organized groups, and are often actively involved in drug and weapons trafficking, their mere presence in school can increase tension in them. Walker et al (2004) warn that violence and threats of it is highly disruptive to the school environment and
interferes significantly with teaching–learning process. They point out that physical and psychological violence is destructive both to individuals’ self esteem and to their emotional well-being.

UNICEF (2005:9) laments that many girls are victims of sexual harassment and violence inside and outside the school. It points out that when parents are afraid that their daughters will not be safe going back and forth to school or in the environment they keep them home. UNESCO (2003:143) in concurrence claims that many girls who surmount the barriers preventing them from attending school face sexual harassment and sexual abuse from peers and teachers once they are enrolled. These practices may have contributed to poor performance of girls in academic work and loss of interest in school which may result to school drop-out (Kibera and Kikomoti, 2007:148).

2.4 Summary of the Literature Reviewed

The literature reviewed has unveiled that examination is an integral aspect of the education system. It has pointed that performance in national examination is used as an indicator of quality. It further points out that national examination provide schools with instant feedback on candidates performance, and serve as a base for selecting learners to join the next level of education.

Literature on effective schools has shown that the successful schools have unique characteristics and processes which help all children learn at high levels. These include instructional leadership, clear and focused mission, safe and orderly environment, climate of high expectations of success, frequent monitoring of student time on the task, and positive home and school relations. These characteristics have

Scholars and studies have pointed that there are multifarious factors within the school and home which come into play and determine students’ achievement. These factors have been broadly classified as school-based, socio-economic and socio-cultural. The school-based factors highlighted include teacher characteristics, pupil characteristics, school leadership (school management), quality and adequacy of learning/teaching resources, instructional supervision, class size, and category of the school. Parental income, occupation, parents (level of) education, medium of communication used at home, and family size emerge as socio-economic factors. The socio-cultural factors highlighted include community/parents attitude towards education, initiation rite of passage, early marriages, gender division of labour, preoccupation with sexual activity and dating, religiosity/spirituality and organized gangs’ related activities.

Although several studies have been carried out on factors affecting academic performance, there is a dearth of literature on socio-economic and socio-cultural factors. It also emerged that the public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District of Murang’a County have consistently registered appalling results in the national examination (KCPE) and worrying decline in performance. This necessitated an extensive study (utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches) on the three factors and a strong focus being on the socio-cultural factors influencing academic performance of public primary schools in the division.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1: Introduction
This chapter presents the research design, locale of the study, target population, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments, validity and reliability of the research instruments, data collection techniques, ethical considerations and data analysis plan.

3.2: Research Design
The study adopted a descriptive survey design utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A descriptive research involves collecting data in order to test hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study. It determines and reports the way things are (Gay, 1996:249). In addition, this type of research attempts to describe such things as possible behaviour, attitudes, values and characteristics (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003:160). For this study the design was ideal because the researcher was interested in establishing and reporting the factors which influence academic performance in public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District. The design was also deemed appropriate because it seeks to answer the research questions “What is?” (Orodho, 2009:42). In this case it sought to answer the question what school-based, socio-economic and socio-cultural factors influence academic performance of public primary schools in Makuyu Division.

The rationale for adopting survey design was that it allows collection of data from a sample of participants from a target population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables (Gay, 1996 and Orodho,
2009). The latter further points out that survey study gathers data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of the existing conditions and determining the relationship that exists between specific events. In survey research, the researcher collects data by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals or by observation. A pupils’ questionnaire and an observation checklist were used to collect quantitative data forming the basis of quantitative approach. To collect qualitative data, the researcher used a focus group discussion schedule for the deputy headteacher and teachers from the sampled schools. The qualitative data obtained formed the basis of qualitative approach.

3.3 Locale of the Study
The locale of the study was Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District in Murang’a County where the researcher had been a teacher. Its economic activities included farming: both subsistence and commercial even though the region receives relatively low rainfall; sand harvesting; and quarrying the land for stones. The division had two education zones namely, Makuyu and Kamahuhu. There were 31 public primary schools in Makuyu zone and 15 in Kamahuhu making a total of 46 public primary schools. Having been a teacher in the division for twelve years, the researcher had been expecting outstanding academic performance from the public primary schools in national examination. However, the expectation was never fulfilled. Instead, the academic standards had been appalling and declining. This alarmed the researcher and necessitated a study to establish the school-based factors, socio-economic and socio-cultural factors influencing academic performance of the public primary schools in the division. In spite of the locale being accessible, the researcher also found no evidence of a similar study having been carried out in the region.
3.4 Target Population
The target population in the study was all the 46 public primary schools in the division, their deputy headteachers, teachers, and pupils. They were found ideal because it was hoped that they would give desirable and reliable information regarding school-based, socio-economic and socio-cultural factors which come into play and determine education outcomes.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedure
The sample of this study was drawn from all the public primary schools in the division. Due to their disproportionateness, schools were stratified according to the two education zones namely, Makuyu and Kamahuha Education Zones. The two therefore constituted the strata. This sampling design ensured that each zone contributed to the sample a number proportional to its size in the population. Subsequently, schools were drawn from each stratum by simple random sampling utilizing the lottery technique. This offers every member (school) of the stratum an equal chance of being selected (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003:45). If not, Makuyu Education Zone which had a larger number of schools than Kamahuha Education Zone could have been overrepresented while the latter underrepresented as far as the quantitative aspect of the study was concerned. In this instance, out of the 46 public primary schools in the division, 21 (46%) were sampled. The sample size was therefore composed of 14 (67%) public primary schools in Makuyu zone and 7 (33%) in Kamahuha. Although this number was larger than the 10% sample size claimed as enough for descriptive studies by Gay (1996, in Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003:45), the researcher found it ideal for this study so as to reduce standard error.
The deputy headteachers of the 21 primary schools were purposively selected to take part in the focus group discussion (FGD). They represented their headteachers who are the Chief Executive Officers (C.E.Os) of their schools serving as curriculum and instructional leaders and on whom the onus for the school to perform well is put. In every selected school, simple random technique was used to draw five teachers (two from lower and three from upper primary) to participate in the focus group discussion. Regardless of the levels they teach, the teachers participated in the study because they serve as the curriculum implementers. In addition, they were considered to interact day in, day out with their learners and the members of the general public either in or outside school hence they were in a better position to give desirable information. The purpose of keeping the number of discussants small was to ensure that all members participate actively in the discussion (Mwiria and Wamahiu, 1995:12) and to reduce the tendency for side conversations between them (Orodho, 1999:211).

In every sampled school, primary eight pupils present by the time of the study in every sampled school were stratified according to gender and then systematic sampling technique adopted to select the participants. The sampling constant ‘k’ of either gender was determined by dividing the class enrollment based on gender by the desired sample size (5 boys and 5 girls) then a random start from the initial case between 1 and ‘k’. As a result, a total of 10 pupils were selected making a total of 210 participants. The primary eight learners were selected because they were considered by the researcher as more socialized than the others in the lower levels. In addition, they were in their final year of primary education cycle preparing for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (K.C.P.E) examination whose results serve as an indicator of quality of education offered. In addition; it was assumed that the pupils
have acquired listening, reading and writing skills which were all vital for this study. The total sample size of the study was therefore 336 participants.

3.6: Research Instruments
The study utilized three research instruments namely, a questionnaire for pupils, focus group discussion guide for deputy headteachers and teachers, and an observation checklist.

3.6.1: Questionnaire
In the study, quantitative data were obtained using pupils’ questionnaire composed of close-ended, contingency and matrix questions. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the pupils to obtain pertinent information relating to the school based, socio-economic and socio-cultural factors which influence academic performance. According to Gay, (1996:254-255) the research tool was appropriate for the study since it offers a researcher an opportunity to establish rapport with the participants, explain the purpose of the study and clarify individual items. It also offers participants an opportunity to express their ideas and feelings. The instrument was also adopted because it offers the researcher an opportunity to collect a large amount of information within a short-time and the questions are standardized (Orodho, 2009:157).

3.6.2: Focus Group Discussion
The researcher held discussions with the deputy headteacher and the five selected teachers from every sampled school to obtain qualitative data. The purpose of having a small number of the discussants was to ensure that all participate in the discussion (Orodho, 1999; Mwiria and Wamahiu, 1995). During the discussion, the researcher
clarified and elaborated the purpose of the study; gained confidence of the participants; facilitated the discussion guided by the FGD schedule; and ensured participation of everyone at the same time observing non-verbal cues. The focus group discussion was appropriate for this study since it allows the participants to share their opinions and hear those of others (Gay, 1996:224) and to talk about the problems they encounter and suggest possible solutions (Mwiria and Wamahiu, 1995).

3.6.3: Observation Checklist
In all the sampled schools, the researcher used an observation checklist to collect quantitative data. The researcher visited two lower primary classes and two upper primary classes in all the sampled schools and observed their physical appearance; adequacy of desks; and availability of wall charts. The researcher also observed adequacy and nature of the latrines and the display of vision and mission statement in the school. The use of the checklist was preferred because it allows the researcher to observe and inspect variables or actions as they are or as they happen (Orodho, 2009:43). This helped the researcher to make his own conclusions on the observed variables.

3.7: Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments
3.7.1: Validity
Orodho (2009:187) defines validity as the degree to which a test measures what it purports to be measuring. The researcher developed a table showing the distribution of questions which aided in item analysis focusing on the content. He analyzed each question against the objectives of the study. The developed research instruments were later submitted to the research supervisors who examined them individually and provided feedback to the researcher. Their recommendations were incorporated in the
research instruments. The research tools were then pre-tested in one of the un-sampled schools so as to establish whether the questions were measuring what they were supposed to, provoke a response, clarity of wording and check ambiguity.

3.7.2: Reliability
A pilot study was carried out in one of the un-sampled schools to ascertain the reliability of the research instruments. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the participants and collected them after their response. The split-halves method on Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation Technique were used to determine the degree of correlation or the extent to which the content of the questionnaire was consistent. In this instance, the test items were divided into two halves; each half scored independently of the other; and correlated the scores from the two groups obtaining a high correlation coefficient of 0.95 which proved that the test was reliable.

3.8: Data Collection Techniques
Through the Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies the researcher submitted an approved research proposal to the Graduate School, Kenyatta University for examination. Upon receiving an approval to proceed for data collection, the researcher organized to obtain authority (research permit) to conduct research from the National Council for Science and Technology (NCST) at the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MoHEST) headquarters, responsible for coordination of research and experimental development in Kenya. The researcher therefore presented to the Secretary NCST, two final copies of the proposal, two passport size photographs and an application form duly completed and endorsed by the Graduate School.
After obtaining the research permit and research authorization letter from the NCST, the researcher proceeded to the field. He made courtesy call to the District Commissioner, Murang’a South District to deliver a copy of the research authorization letter from the NCST. Thereafter, the researcher made a similar visit to the District Education Officer, Murang’a South District seeking a letter of introduction to the head teachers of the sampled schools.

Lastly, the researcher made courtesy calls to the sampled schools’ heads, presented the letter of introduction from the DEO’s office, clarified and elaborated the purpose of the study and requested to meet the deputy headteachers, sample and meet teachers and pupils for data collection. Subsequently, the researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the participants so as to guide them on how to answer and to assure them of confidentiality. However, due to difficulties in reading and understanding expressed by participating learners, the questions were read out loudly in order for them to give suitable responses. The research tool was collected at the end of the session. Thereupon, the researcher held discussions with the deputy head and sampled teachers within duration of an hour. This was followed by collection of quantitative data using the observation checklist.

3.9: Ethical Consideration

Upon visiting every sampled primary school, the researcher introduced himself to the present school administrator and explained the purpose and nature of the study without pre-empting its results. He then sought consent to carry out the research in the school which involved interaction with the learners and the teaching personnel and making observation within the school environment. After being granted permission, the researcher requested the school administrator to organize a convenient interaction
place and arrange on how he would select the participants. The researcher assured the participants confidentiality by explaining that the information to be obtained (from them), would only be used for the purpose of the study and no undesirable persons will have access to it. In addition, the researcher asked the participants to respond to the questionnaire without writing neither their names nor of their school.

3.10: Data Analysis

In this study, data analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative methods. The use of the two approaches allows a researcher to obtain more comprehensive data and compensates for limitations with use of a single approach (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:397). The quantitative data were drawn from the questionnaire and observation checklist while the qualitative data were obtained from the focus group discussion. The quantitative data collected were edited, coded, entered into the computer and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program for windows. They were analyzed by use of simple descriptive statistics which entailed tabulating; computing frequencies and percentages; interpreting and discussing obtained data. This method was found suitable because it gives a quick visual impression of the quantifiable variables and allows a researcher to describe a mass of numbers in terms of general trends, tabulate data and present it in graphic form (Orodho, 2009:257). Bar graphs and pie charts were therefore adopted to present the data. Qualitative data were analyzed inductively. This entailed organizing obtained data, coding, categorizing and developing patterns (themes) which resulted to a narrative structure.
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1: Introduction
The purpose of the study was to establish the factors which influence academic performance of the public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District, Kenya.

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the quantitative and qualitative data collected. The study was guided by the following research questions:-

i. What are the school-based factors which influence academic performance in public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District?

ii. How do socio-economic factors influence academic performance in public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District?

iii. What are the socio-cultural factors which influence academic performance of public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District?

The major themes of the study were therefore, the three independent variables namely, the school based factors, socio-economic factors and socio-cultural factors influencing academic performance.

4.2: School–Based Factors Influencing Academic Performance
In this sub-section, various school–based factors which had bearing on academic performance are discussed. These include enrolment by age and sex, previous national examination results, medium of instruction, private studies, instructional evaluation, and physical and material resources.
4.2.1: Enrolment by Age and Sex

This study found that primary eight pupils in Makuyu Division were of different range of ages as categorized in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Sampled pupils by Age and Sex (N =210)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Girls (%)</th>
<th>Boys (%)</th>
<th>Total both sex (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>24.76</td>
<td>21.90</td>
<td>23.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>42.86</td>
<td>32.38</td>
<td>37.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-15</td>
<td>23.87</td>
<td>25.71</td>
<td>24.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>8.57</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>14.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings indicated that the most popular age group was 13-14 (37.62%) and 15-16 (14.29%) as the least. It was found that 39.05% of the sampled learners were over-age as the primary education cycle in Kenya caters for learners of between 6-13 years-old and 14-17 years old for secondary education. This was attributed to the introduction of FPE in January, 2003 by the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) Government which ensured that Kenyan children eligible for primary schooling have opportunity to enroll and remain in school to learn and acquire quality basic education and skills training. The number also suggested that there had been cases of repetition in schools which did not have major positive impact on performance as reflected by national examination results (K.C.P.E). The study also found that there were more boys than girls at schools in the advanced age groups a manifestation of the value parents/guardians attach to the education of the boy- child as opposed to the education of girl child.
4.2.2: Previous National Examination Results

All the sampled primary schools had presented candidates for the national examination (KCPE). Their results since 2006 to 2010 were analyzed in the Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: KCPE Results of the Sampled Schools since 2006-2010 (N =21)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M.S.S</th>
<th>2006 (%)</th>
<th>2007 (%)</th>
<th>2008 (%)</th>
<th>2009 (%)</th>
<th>2010 (%)</th>
<th>AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>250-299</td>
<td>23.81</td>
<td>9.52</td>
<td>9.52</td>
<td>9.42</td>
<td>9.52</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200-249</td>
<td>66.67</td>
<td>76.19</td>
<td>71.43</td>
<td>85.71</td>
<td>85.71</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150-199</td>
<td>9.52</td>
<td>14.29</td>
<td>19.05</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-149</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study found that none of the schools attained a M.S.S. of 300 and above, and also below 150 in all the years. This was a manifestation that learners in the entire division were not adequately prepared for the KCPE examination. The results further showed that the learners were not provided with opportunity to become competent: hardly were they given tasks they were capable of performing so as to enhance self concept.
and gain self respect from the good feeling of performing in addition to, inflating ones ego. The national examination results also denoted that the learning environment was unattractive and un-stimulating: it could not allow and encourage pupils to develop a greater autonomy and assume greater responsibility for their own learning.

Figure 4.2: KCPE Analysis since 2006 – 2010

In addition, on average 3 (14.29%) schools attained a M.S.S. within the range of 250-299; 16 (76.19%) were within the range of 200-249; and 2 (9.52%) 150-199. It was hence logically argued that 18 (85.71%) schools were below average mark and 3(14.29%) were slightly above. By perusing the results of individual schools, the researcher observed that in the year 2010, 16 (76.19%) schools recorded remarkable rise, 1 (4.76%) maintained while 4 (19.05%) registered a drop. This was attributed to the introduction of FPE in January 2003 whereby many children who had attained the
school age and were locked out of the systems were given opportunity to access primary education. These learners were relatively mature, eager and willing to learn hence the notable rise in academic achievement. Other benefits accrued to FPE which had positive impact were the provision of teaching/learning resources which aroused learners’ interest in learning and increased scope of feeding program which reduced cases of learners who absented themselves from school due to lack of food.

The study further established that the quality of education in the region was low. This was evidenced by the consistent poor performance in national examination (Table 4.2) and questionnaire findings as far as rating of KCPE performance since 2006 to 2010 was concerned. Majority of the participants did not candidly report the right performances of their individual school; 5 (2.38%) viewed it as very good, 139 (66.19%) as good / fair and 56 (26.67%) as dismal which did not agree (correspond) with exact performance as shown in Table 4.2. In a focus group discussion (FGD), a teacher lamented over the quality of education in his school when he stated that the school has not only been performing dismally academically but also in co-curricular activities. Drug and substance abuse, early sexual debut and lack of values such as respect, humility and cooperation discussed in sub-section 4.3 and 4.4 were manifestations of low quality of education.

4.2.3: Languages Used
This study found that languages used have direct bearing on student academic achievement. There were low incidences of usage of English language as a medium of instruction despite the Ministry of Education Policy, that in upper primary, English be used as the medium of instruction throughout the country. Through the questionnaire,
the researcher established that English language was hardly used as medium of instruction as 47 (22.28%) participants claimed that it was used always, 150 (71.43%) sometimes and 13 (6.9%) indicated used rarely. This was confirmed by a participant in a FGD in one of the schools. “In some cases we use Kiswahili and Mother tongue to elaborate some concepts.” The use of Kiswahili and Mother tongue as an excuse to elaborate some concepts manifested lack of mastery of the medium of instruction. This in return affects second language acquisition due to lack of sound role models to be emulated hence presence of handicapped learners in the language. The high incidences of using any other language other than English during the instructional process denoted that the head teachers had somewhat neglected their role as front line inspectors of their schools which could help improve effectiveness as argued by Olembo et al (1992) and Neagley and Evans (1960). It was logically argued that head teachers lagged in provision of instructional leadership through discussion of instructional issues, observing classroom teaching and giving feedback, practices which could improve performance. This supports Eshiwani (1983) who attributes poor results to ‘arm chair’ head teachers, who do not know what goes on in the classroom.
Regarding the languages used by learners among themselves, the study established that Kiswahili and Mother tongue were the most widely used as indicated in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Languages Used by Pupils among Themselves (N=210)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages used</th>
<th>Boys (%)</th>
<th>Girls (%)</th>
<th>Both Sexes (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother tongue</td>
<td>38.10</td>
<td>31.43</td>
<td>34.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>12.38</td>
<td>12.38</td>
<td>12.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td>49.52</td>
<td>56.19</td>
<td>52.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More boys (38.10%) than girls (31.43%) had higher preference in usage of Mother tongue. Contrastingly, more girls (56.19%) than boys (49.52%) had higher preferences in usage of Kiswahili which itself was sub-standard; nevertheless, it was
the most preferred language. English language emerged as the least preferred medium of communication, even though it was reportedly well below the standard grammar.

Figure 4.4: Languages Used by Pupils among Themselves

These high preferences on the first language and sub-standard Kiswahili grammar had adverse effect on concept formation and articulation hence serious difficulties in comprehension, analysis and synthesis, translating to poor academic performance as indicated in Table 4.2. In addition, they hindered second language (English) acquisition thus limiting vocabularies which were essential during the teaching / learning process. The impact of using Mother tongue was confirmed by a deputy head teacher in a FGD in one of the schools, “Because of using Mother tongue our pupils perform poorly especially in languages.” This sentiment was supported in another school by a participant, “They have difficulties in reading and comprehending texts.”

The less usage of English language by the teachers and learners, and the high preferences of Kiswahili and Mother tongue implied lack of clear and focused mission of the schools which is a correlate of effective school according to Lezotte (1991). To confirm this implication the observation checklist showed that 14 (66.67%) and 7
(33.33%) schools have their mission and vision statements respectively displayed, denoting deficiency in common core values which help to guide the staff. The school administrators on whom the onus to articulate shared vision and mission is put on bore the blame.

4.2.4: Private Studies
It was found that learners carried out private studies early in the morning, after lunch-break and after classes before they go back to their homes. However, the study established that the studies were neither properly organized nor monitored hence poor utilization of valuable time. This was evidenced by the measures employed and the K.C.P.E. examination performance since 2006 to 2010.

Table 4.4: Measures Put to Ensure Proper Utilization of Private Studies (N=210)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures put in place</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitored by teacher on duty</td>
<td>68.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitored by class prefect</td>
<td>70.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Given class assignments to do</td>
<td>82.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers check and mark the assignments</td>
<td>73.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study found that the most popular measure was giving class assignments (82.86%) even though the monitoring system was questionable as it was left to the teacher on duty (68.57%) and class prefects (70.0%). This indeed showed very clearly that private studies were mostly monitored by class prefects than by teachers denoting the latter’s inadequacies in real sense of commitment. This was contrary to the practices of effective schools whereby teachers’ posses a strong sense of responsibility for the student learning; teachers who organize and monitor students’
private studies as pointed out by Gamage (2006:71). This implied that pupils were less engaged due to lack of effective monitoring practice which culminated to poor results as Table 4.2 indicates. It indeed supports Hosfords’ (1984:63) assertion that when students are left to work privately and are not monitored by the teacher, they spend less time engaged in the activities for which they are responsible.

4.2.5: Instructional Evaluation
Instructional evaluation was embraced as an important aspect of educational process. Among the tests administered included end of term examination (100%), mid-term examination (96.43%), class exercises (87.14%) and continuous assessment tests (78.57%). However, there was a major concern over class exercises and continuous assessment tests (CATs). The 87.14% denoted some inadequacy in assessment hence the conclusion that learners were not fully engaged during the instructional process. It was also evident that less emphasis was laid on continuous assessment tests, an indication that majority of the teachers and school administrators were somewhat ignorant of the crucial role played by formative evaluation. The poor performance in the national examination was hence attributed to the failure to determine achievement of the learners and assess suitability of teaching / learning resources and effectiveness of the teaching/learning strategies concurring with the Republic of Kenya (1999:91) who attributed poor performance at examinations to inadequacy of the examination system.

The study also observed inefficiency in recording and reporting pupils’ progress. This was evidenced by the focus group discussion establishment that 16 (76%) schools had no report forms while 5 (14%) had but not among all the pupils. This suggested that recording, reporting and monitoring pupils’ progress was not as important as sitting
for examinations. It further indicated that head teachers who serve as the curriculum and instructional leaders do not effectively monitor the progress of individual learners which is a correlate of effective schools as argued by Lezzote (1991) and Edmond (1987, cited in Lunenburg and Orstein, 2008). The unavailability of this crucial document robs the head an opportunity to get a feel of the whole school, class by class and spot things going wrong with the teaching when these would not have been brought to light in any other way as argued by Griffin (1994). The act of scanning through, commenting and signing of the pupils’ report forms is motivating to the learners. However, it was lacking in the region culminating to the poor results. Lack of the pupils’ report forms not only hindered teachers from monitoring the academic progress of individual learners but also communicating their academic expectations for achievements which is a characteristic of effective teachers as argued by Hosford (1984).

4.2.6: Physical and Material Resources

This study found through the observation checklist that in some schools, some physical and materials resources were inadequate and in deplorable conditions in others. These included classes, latrines and desks. Some classes (52.38%) had smooth floors while others (47.62%) had uneven. In most schools (57.14%), classes had lockable doors while windows had shutters. This implied that teaching and learning resources could be left in classes for the learners to review, linking with what they had previously learnt in class. However, the researcher found that this was not a common practice in some schools: wall charts were displayed in some and more so in lower primary. This depicted existence of a problem in development and utilization of teaching/learning resources especially the non-projected, for instance, charts, flash
cards, maps, diagrams, posters, photographs and pictures which can help to increase learners’ perception and develop their interest. These findings concurred with Republic of Kenya (1999) which revealed that quality and adequacy of resources such as physical facilities, equipments, teaching and learning materials have a direct bearing on quality as they determine how effectively the curriculum is implemented.

The inadequate latrines in some schools (61.90%) pose a problem in the teaching and learning process. Learners would queue desperately in the morning and at break time to use the facilities resulting to poor preparation for the in-coming lesson as well as loss of instructional time. It also create a fertile ground for indiscipline whereby the young and ‘weak’ are harassed (bullied and teased) by their younger and ‘stronger’ peers. This often results to emotional imbalance which impedes learning/teaching process. The inadequate and poorly maintained desks (33.33%) affect negatively teaching/learning process. Pupils were found uncomfortably seated. This adversely affects their listening, reading and writing skills since they have to be on high alert to avoid falling down and embarrassment. The sitting manner threatens co-operative learning since learners at times would be found quarreling over positions injuring the social need, specifically affiliation.

**4.3: Socio–Economic Factors Influencing Academic Performance**

In this sub-section, socio-economic factors which have bearing on student academic achievement are discussed. These include parental/guardian education, income and pre-occupation with work.
4.3.1: Parental/Guardian Education

Parental education is important in relation to homework. Through the questionnaire, the study found that completion of homework/assignments was wanting as indicated by 64 (30.48%) who complete always, 118 (56.19%) complete sometimes and 28 (13.33%) who never complete. This was confirmed by focus group discussions when some participants echoed that there are many cases of pupils who do not complete. In establishing the circumstances under which they do not, the study found that some learners (33.33%) fail to complete due to lack of assistance and encouragement at home indicating that the parents/guardians level of education was questionable. This implied that learners lack role models who are inspiration behind attainment of high scores in national examinations leading to prestigious courses. This finding was confirmed by a focus group discussion in one of the schools when a participant lamented over parents’ level of education by saying, “Some of the parents are standard 8 leavers while others are school drop-outs who have nothing or very little to offer.” This led to the conclusion that majority of the parents/guardians are ignorant and/or have low regard to education. The researcher hence concurred with Marshall (1984) that educated parents take an informed interest in their children’s work. The failure to complete homework denoted lack of enough practice on the task and discouraged the teachers from giving and reviewing assignments regularly during class time which translated to poor results.

4.3.2: Parental/Guardian Income

Parents’/guardians’ income has an important bearing on this study. This is because it is one of the determinants of learner’s lifestyle. To establish the implication of the parents’/guardians’ income on education, the researcher, through the questionnaire
asked the participants to indicate the circumstances under which they fail to complete their homework. The results were indicated in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Circumstances in Which Pupils Fail to Complete Homework (N=210)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circumstances</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living in poorly lit rooms</td>
<td>59.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of study area at home</td>
<td>33.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of assistance at home</td>
<td>54.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of text books to refer</td>
<td>79.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study found that most of the parents were low wage earners as suggested by the findings in the Table 4.5. The 83 (59.29 %) participants who were living in poorly lit rooms implied that their parents/guardians had not been able to install electricity and solar panels in their homes and could not afford to buy sufficient paraffin making studying impossible. The 47 (33.57%) participants who indicated lack of study area at home implied that there was overcrowding in their homes leaving little or no space at all for studying and lack of important facilities such as tables and chairs which were all essential for the learning process. The study also established that there was an acute shortage of text books despite the Government’s effort through the FPE to provide learning/teaching resources. The 111 (79.29%) implied that due to the low economic status, parents/guardians could not afford to buy essential supplementary books which pupils were not issued with at school, take their children early to school which is a common practice of the wealthier and better educated parents as found by Gakuru (1997, cited in Kibera and Kikomoti, 2007:113), engage their children in extra coaching after school, acquire television sets where they could watch program which aid in promotion of language development among other aspects and to buy
internet enabled mobile phones and computers which could all help in accessing more information for education purposes. This translated to lack of enough practice and low vocabulary level essential for education process. The end result was poor academic performance as indicated in Table 4.2. These parents lack time to help their children in doing homework and inspiring them to achieve high educational goals. The study fully concurs with Basil (2007) that gross deprivation of social and economic needs of a child usually yield poor academic performance of the child.

![Circumstances under Which Learners Fail to Complete Homework](image)

**Figure 4.5: Circumstances under Which Learners Fail to Complete Homework**

4.3.3: Pre-Occupation with Work

Parent’s or guardian’s pre-occupation with work was an important variable of this study. This was because it was a determinant of their lifestyle. Their pre-occupation with work revealed their regard to education and its impact on the attendance at school meetings/functions. The attention given to attendance at school functions by parents is indicated in Table 4.6 as established by the questionnaire.
The study found that few parents have major regard to education as evidenced by those who attend sometimes (58.57%) and those who never attend (6.19%) in comparison with those who attend always. Statistically, it was observed that there was a significant difference between the number of the boy-child parents (91.42%) and girl-child parents (94.29%) who avail themselves. However, there was a notable variation between those who attend always and those who attend sometimes as far as gender was concerned. The attendance incidences were a clear manifestation of low education level of the parents/guardians concurring with Marshall (1984:59) that educated parents tend to attend meetings, exhibitions of work or entertainment at schools when invited. Their in-availability denies them the opportunity to discuss with teachers their offspring progress culminating to low quality education.
The study established that majority of the parents/guardians (67.62%) were unable to attend school meetings due to their pre-occupation with work and lack of interest (34.29%). It was indeed noted that most of the parents were casual labourers in the neighbourhood coffee plantations, sand and stone harvesters, and peasant farmers. Attendance at school functions was considered to be a waste of valuable opportunities as low income earners (menial workers) and a threat to source of livelihood. This implied that parents and guardians do not realize when things are going wrong, for example, discipline which has a positive correlation with academic performance as argued by Eshiwani (1993). Their poor attendance jeopardizes the learning/teaching process. This led to a conclusion that source of living and its attachment is a determinant of students’ academic achievement concurring with Muola (2007) study.

The study established during the FGDs that some parents work at night and hence could not attend school functions. “Some go to work at night and require time to rest during the day hence consider attendance as secondary,” a participant explained. This was perceived as a major threat to discipline as some learners spend the night in the absence of their parents or under the care of their house helps leaving gaps or deficits which could be easily filled by many negative influences. Another FGD revealed that some learners are usually under the care of their grandparents who do not attach a lot of importance to schooling and education, “Some parents work and live far away from their homes leaving their children under the care of their grandparents some of whom cannot make any contribution.” The FGDs revealed that some of those who avail themselves were often extrinsically motivated. It was noted that attendance in some schools was due to fear of being penalized. Some schools were reported to have put stiff penalties to push them to attend. Other schools had
stringent measures (like keeping children at home) which propel parents/guardians to school. A teacher explained that they ensure pupils remain in their homes and accompany their parents/guardians to school. However, this measure was found to be counterproductive as it leads to loss of valuable instructional time adversely affecting academic performance.

The study established that when parents/guardians were unable to avail themselves at school when required, they employ some measures which have adverse effect on education outcomes. These included sending their elder sons or daughters to represent them some of whom are primary eight graduates while others are school drop-outs who do not make meaningful contributions to the discussions. Grandparents who were themselves illiterate were reported to feature in school functions representing the parents. This denoted lack of support to the system demoralizing the teaching staff and ultimately results to poor academic performance as shown in Table 4.2. It was hence logically argued that majority of the parents/guardians are uneducated. They shun meetings at schools and hence lack the opportunity to discuss their children learning progress with their teachers.

4.4: Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Academic Performance

In this sub-section, various socio-cultural factors which had direct bearing on academic performance are discussed. These include, parents/guardians attitude towards education, initiation rite of passage, pre-occupation with sexual activities and dating, religiosity and organized gang-related activities.
4.4.1: Attitude towards Education

This study found that most parents/guardians had questionable attitude towards education as evidenced by their attendance to school functions, concern over their children’s homework, and absenteeism. Out of the total participants, 74 (35.24%) indicated that parents/guardians attend school meetings always, 123 (58.57%) attend sometimes and 13 (6.19%) never attend. The results indicated that parents’ attendance at school meeting was poor (wanting) and thus demoralizing to the members of the instructional team affecting their efficiency and effectiveness. It indeed denoted lack of support to the system which cannot run efficiently without their input. Through the questionnaire it was also found that parental concern over homework was wanting as indicated in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Parental Concern over Children’s Homework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incidences</th>
<th>Boys (%)</th>
<th>Girls (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concerned always</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned sometimes</td>
<td>43.81</td>
<td>44.76</td>
<td>44.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never concerned</td>
<td>22.90</td>
<td>21.90</td>
<td>22.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Equal number of parents who showed concern always was reported. Nonetheless, slight variation was noted as far a gender was concerned; 43.81% boys and 44.76% girls reported concern sometimes and lack of concern was 22.9% against 21.9%. These findings indicate a lack of consistent parental concern over children’s homework which de-motivates teachers and learners ultimately resulting to poor results as indicated by Table 4.2. The significant number of those who were never concerned (22.38%) demonstrated lack of collaboration between teachers and parents whereby the latter abdicated their responsibility to ensure their children complete their
homework/assignment. Majority of the parents were found to be less concerned as evidenced by those who indicated sometimes (44.29%) and never concerned (22.38%). This was a manifestation of low regard for education by parents in the region which had an adverse effect on academic achievement. It confirmed UNESCO (2009:19) observation that pupils would work harder and perform well if they realize that their parents are interested in their school work. Only if parents/guardians show concern over education pupils would embrace it. This finding agrees with UNICEF (2007:88) revelation that children achievement is influenced by the support they receive at home.

![Figure 4.7: Parental Concern over Children’s Homework](image)

The study also established that pupils absented themselves from school due to being given domestic duties especially during the planting period, harvesting seasons and dry spells. This denied the pupils sufficient exposure to curriculum or opportunity to learn which significantly influenced their academic achievement. The practice
demonstrated parents/guardian low regard to education process. The study concurred with Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2001) that some economic activities in some regions in Kenya disrupt normal school routine.

**4.4.2: Initiation Rite of Passage**

This study found that initiation rite of passage (circumcision and clitoridectomy) was embraced in the region. The study established that the initiates pose problems during the teaching/learning process. Out of the total number of participants, 21 (10%) indicated always, 103 (49.05%) sometimes while 86 (40.95%) did not associate any problem to the rite of passage. The study further established that the attendance at school by the learners who have undergone the initiation rite of passage was unpleasant: 87 (41.43%) indicated regular attendance and 99 (47.14%) irregular attendance while 24 (11.43%) did not respond. This finding was confirmed in a FGD in one of the schools when a participant lamented that most of the boys and girls who have undergone the rite of passage register poor attendance at school and performance in examinations. However, boys from the Akamba community in Kambiti Location, who have undergone the rite, were not associated with any problem. “Boys from the Akamba are circumcised when they are too young and do not neither realize nor pose any problem to the teaching/learning process,” a participant reported. The study further established through the FGDs, that the rite was a major problem in the division as it was found to breed psychological, moral and social unrest. One of the participants reported the problems which they face in the school when handling pupils who have undergone the rite of passage:

Fear while correcting the errant pupils as some initiates got recruited into the terrible outlawed Mungiki sect during seclusion period; stubbornness which results to anger and subsequently to waste of instructional time trying to address the situation; moral decadence promoted by the teachings of the
ceremony whereby the male initiates are advised on how to approach females, for example, by scratching the palm of the person of interest so as to register the desire, and the need for having sex after circumcision so as to experience how nicely the penis penetrates into the females’ vagina during an intercourse; conflict between the circumcised and the uncircumcised where the former seeks recognition from the latter and the teachers; pupils who have undergone the rite of passage consider themselves as superior than the others or too mature and in some cases despise the female teachers; poor concentration in class due to identity crisis and emotional imbalance as a result of engagement in sex which itself make them feel shy or embarrassed; drugs and substance abuse whereby incidences of tobacco sniffing is a common practice especially for those linked to the terrible outlawed Mungiki sect; increased cases of harassment, for example, where the circumcised do not want to share with the uncircumcised some of the essential facilities like latrines and also when they feel that they are belittled by the young and the uncircumcised; and formation of gangs and cliques whereby boys and girls who have undergone through the rite of passage have social groupings. This hinders co-operative learning in class.

The psychological, moral and social unrest bred by initiation ceremonies and their contents/ teaching were major hindrances to teaching/learning process. The final results were poor academic results. It was indeed clear from the highlighted problems that initiation rite of passage breeds indiscipline in schools as argued by Mutesa (2003) and does not support learning as Eshiwani (1993) pointed out.

4.4.3: Pre-Occupation with Sexual Activities and Dating

It was evident from the study that there were cases of early sexual debut in the public primary schools in the region. Through the questionnaire, the study established that pupils who engage in sex and dating create problems in class: 32 (15.24%) participants reported always and 109 (51.9%) sometimes while 69 (32.86%) did not associate them.
Figure 4.8: Occurrence of Problems Posed by Pupils who Engage in Sex.

These findings were confirmed by the focus group discussions which outlined the related problems in school as reported by one of the participants:

- Disrespect to teachers as they are considered as equals as far as sex is concerned; poor concentration in class due to preoccupation with thoughts of their partners and feelings; emotional imbalances as some feel shy of the act, others are excited while others are afraid of losing sex partners; fighting over sexual partners especially girls; influencing others to indulge in sex by narrating the amorous feelings and gains; identity crisis whereby those who engage in sex seek recognition from the society; conflict with oneself especially when one is confronted with two conditions, for example, whether to give in or not and is unable to make an informed choice; apparent indifferences from parents while attempting to address the problem as they are either ignorant or ambivalent; lack of requisite guidance and counseling skills to address the problems; and absenteeism due to embarrassment and when dating especially an elderly partner.

The researcher attributed the above problems to family lifestyle whereby it was found that there was overcrowding at homes exposing children to sex. Due to poverty and ignorance, some parents share same room with their children and observe their conjugal rights subsequently arousing the latter sexual urge. Others due to poverty of morals make their demands in the presence of their offspring tempting them to go out and explore. Pupils' chronological age was also found to have some effect. Table 4.1
indicated that there were some pupils who were a bit elderly [the (14-15) and (15-16) age groups] who ought to be in secondary level of education. These were mature pupils fighting against adolescence a critical stage in a person’s life. The more such learners were, the higher the chances of indulging in sex and influence others. The study also found in sub-section 4.4.2 that circumcision ceremonies and their teachings, for example, scratching a palm of a female as a mean of registering some interest in she, and the need for the initiate to have sex after the seclusion period to experience how nicely a male penis penetrates into a female’s vagina, lure the initiates to engage in teenage sex which was believed to be enticing. The socio-economic status of the parents’ was also blamed for pupils / children engagement in sex. The study found that some parents usually go to work at night leaving their children on their own or under the care of house helps who may not be keen on discipline. Others were found to earn their livelihood and reside far away from their homes leaving their offspring under the care of the elderly who may not correct any unbecoming behavior. This practice creates gaps in children’s life which could be easily filled with negative behaviors, for instance, engagement in sex, drugs and substances abuse, and violence. In addition, they were found to rob parents’ valuable opportunity to cultivate positive behaviours and values in their children. Poor parenting was therefore blamed for the vice.

Through the questionnaire, the study found that teenage sexual debut negatively affects pupils’ academic achievement. Out the total participants, 158 (75.24%) rated the academic performance of those who engage in sex as poor, 33 (10.48%) well and 11 (5.24%) very well. This was confirmed by the focus group discussion whereby participants from one of the schools blamed involvement in sexual activities for poor results, “Boys and girls who engage in sexual activities have poor concentration in
class and as a result perform poorly.” These findings concurred with Safron et al (2001) study which outlined disruption to education by loss of time and concentration on education objectives as the detrimental effects of engagement in sexual activity and dating.

The study further established that there were intervention measures put in place to address the vice. These included guidance and counseling, pastoral care, teaching life skills, educating the parents/guardians on how to take care of their children, involvement of the parents in addressing the vice, and punishment. Despite employment of the intervention, persistence of the problem was noted and the schools continued to perform poorly as Table 4.2 indicates. This led to a conclusion that the measures employed to curb the vice were ineffective and need to be reviewed, strengthened and improved.

4.4.4: Religiosity/Spirituality of the Learners
Pupils’ involvement in religious activities was noted. These included participation in communal prayers, Bible reading, and singing hymns during the assemblies at the start or at the end of the day as reported by participants during the FGDs in all the schools. Pupils who attended catechism were often granted permission to attend too. The finding was also supported by the 110 (78.57%) participants who indicated involvement always, 24 (17.14%) sometimes, and 6 (4.29%) who indicated never as far as the questionnaire was concerned. However, the usual involvement in religious activities and attendance of learners at catechism did not reflect positive impact on behaviour change. This is evidenced in sub-section 4.4.2 and 4.4.3 where problems related to initiation such as disrespect to teachers, fights and harassment; and teenage sexual debut and its related problems are discussed respectively.
The study found that, despite involvement of pupils in religious activities and participation in catechism, most schools performed poorly in national examination as indicated in Table 4.2. This led the researcher to conclude that mere (usual) involvement of learners in religious activities does not necessarily (always) promote positive behaviour or improved academic performance. The study therefore refuted Walker and Dixon (2002, cited in Fukofuka, 2007) finding that spiritual beliefs and religious participation are positively related to academic performance.

4.4.5: Organized Gangs
The outlawed Mungiki Sect, an organized gang, was found to have a large network in Makuyu Division and penetration into its schools. This was evidenced by the 142 (67.62%) participants who acknowledged its presence while 68 (32.38%) didn’t. The findings were confirmed by the FGDs although most of the participants were reluctant to disclose the presence of the sect as they lived in constant fear of violence.

![Pie chart](image)

**Figure 4.9: Presence of the Outlawed Mungiki Sect in the Locality.**

Through the questionnaire, the study established the means through which pupils’ initiated into/associated with the Mungiki sect were recognized. Out of the total
participants, 109 (51.90%) indicated by their behaviour, 36 (17.14%) by their clothing, 41 (19.52%) by the language they use, and 72 (34.29%) by the items they carry. The findings were confirmed by FGDs as reported by a participant in one of the sampled schools:

Boys tend to wear more than one set of clothing mostly the short for camouflage purposes. The sect condemns underpantry as it considers it as imperial hence the idea of two shorts. The initiates were reported to wear multi-coloured necklaces ideally red, green and black borrowed from the Kenya National Flag, trying to feign patriotism; The associates / initiates tend to speak in ‘pure Gikuyu’ and with deep vocabularies, for instance, thiari meaning a friend, kirigu referring to one who has not undergone female genital mutilation (FGM), nduuri referring to someone who is older and njama meaning a group of young people; The group has got its own lingo/language which if not well acquainted with, one cannot understand, for instance, handshake is a language in itself used to recognize members; and the items they carry, for instance, tobacco which they sniff and clubs of different sizes depicting rank and status and which may also serve as weapons.

In another school, the researcher was informed in a focus group discussion about how the pupils who are initiated into/associated with the Mungiki sect are recognized as stated by one of the participants:

Support of African traditional trends, for instance, female genital mutilation where the uncircumcised are despised; Rejection of baptismal names whereby they identify themselves with their middle and surnames e.g. Kamau wa Njoroge showing apathy to foreign culture; Rejection of Christian Religious Education(CRE) subject and disregard to Christianity claiming that these are foreign and are there to erode the African culture; Associates, i.e. the people they relate with; Carrying out their activities clandestinely, for example, instilling fear; and Use of particular gestures and symbols as easy ways of communication.

Through the questionnaire, the study further established problems which schools experience due to the presence of the outlawed Mungiki sect in the locality. Out of the total number of respondents, 96 (45.71%) indicated increase of indiscipline cases, 136 (64.76%) living in fear of being attacked by the sect members, 53 (25.24%) frequent absenteeism from the sect families, and 67 (31.90%) indicated conflict between school goals and the sect goals. During a focus group discussion, the researcher
confirmed that there were numerous problems that schools experience due to the entrenchment of the sect in the region. Participants reported:

Pupils, teachers and school community live in fear of being attacked by the sect members or extortion of money; violence whereby the recruits/associates try to enforce rites and beliefs, for instance, female genital mutilation. They condemn some clothing practices such as women wearing trousers. These scare the female teachers away opting to live in urban centers far-away from their work stations where they believe there is security; Drugs and substance abuse, for example, tobacco sniffing; Recruitment of more members into the sect exacerbating the situation; Absenteeism as majority of the members have low perception of education; Increase of indiscipline cases as teachers cannot correct the errant pupils for fear of reprisal; and Rebellion, for example, against the non-sympathizers which is quite disturbing as some teachers belong to the sect making it very difficult to stem it out from the school and/or to enforce some of the school policies like speaking in English.

The low perception of education by the sect initiates was found to promote absenteeism in school which implied loss of instructional time. The recruits were less engaged in school or class activities due to their frequent absence without good reason. Parents might not send their children, especially girls to school quite early in the morning due to the fear of retrogressive cultures, for example, FGM. Some teachers reside far-away from their work stations due to fear of being attacked or extorted. This makes them arrive late for school and to always be in a hurry to leave implying lack and/or poor preparation for learning/teaching process.

The use of the native language (Gikuyu) impaired the mastery of English as the second language which is the medium of instruction in upper primary. Barely do the initiate practice the language due to low perception as espoused by the sect. This practice impacted negatively on learners’ construction of grammatically correct sentences, reading, comprehension, and writing skills. In addition, the use of the native language by the sect members and its associates promoted intrapersonal and interpersonal conflict. The learners initiated into the sect were reported to suffer
conflict whereby they are unable to make informed choices on the language to use. The use of either language implied conflict with authorities, school administration or Mungiki sect ideology. The emotional imbalance caused by the sect was a hindrance to the learning/teaching process. The researcher, therefore, concluded that the presence of the outlawed Mungiki sect in the region and its penetration into schools had a negative impact on the teaching and learning process. The findings concurred with Burnet (1994) study that presence of gangs play a significant role in the widespread increase of violence in schools. Due to the fear imposed, increased cases of indiscipline were observed. The study findings supported walker et al (2004) study which warned that violence and threats of it, is highly disruptive to the school environment and interferes significantly with the teaching-learning process.

4.4.6: Early Marriages
The study established through the questionnaire the influences of the practice of early marriages on education outcomes and in particular satisfactory completion of the primary level of education and academic achievement in the region. The participants were asked whether there had been cases of drop-out from school for early marriages and resumption to sit for KCPE examination. Out of the total number of the participants, 69 (32.86%) indicated yes while 141 (67.14%) indicated none. This was confirmed by the focus group discussions whereby majority of the participants reported that there had been few. The insignificant 32.86% implied that early marriages affect education outcomes. It sets a very poor precedent for the other pupils in school whereby they are tempted to forgo education for early marriage after registering with the KNEC to sit for the national examination.
When the learners get married at an early age, they are robbed opportunity for cognitive, creativity, values and emotional development for responsible citizenship. The practice is quite discouraging to the members of the instructional team and denotes lack of moral support at home whose end result is poor results as indicated in the Table 4.2. The researcher attributed early marriages to engagement in sex at relatively an early age, erosion of morals, parenting practices, initiation ceremony teachings, ignorance, and abject poverty. Teachers were also blamed for it due to lack of requisite knowledge in guidance and counseling which could help the learners have a sense of direction. It was also attributed to failure of teachers to teach in a proper way, life skills such as critical and creative thinking, decision making, assertiveness, self control and open-mindedness.
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1: Introduction
This chapter presents the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the objectives of the study. It ends with suggestions for further study.

5.2: Summary
Quality education reflected in the national examination performance is a key component of human characteristic essential for sustainable socio-economic development and poverty eradication. At independence in 1963, the Government of the Republic of Kenya recognized education as a basic human right and a powerful tool for human resource and national development. She committed herself to the provision of primary education of good quality. In spite of her efforts, the public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District have been performing dismally in the national examination (K.C.P.E.). This poses a serious threat to the socio-economic development of the region and the country at large. This study therefore sought to establish the factors influencing academic performance of the public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District in Murang’a County. The objectives of the study were:

i. To establish the school-based factors which influence academic performance of public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Muranga South District?

ii. To establish the socio-economic factors influencing academic performance of public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Muranga South District?

iii. To establish the socio-cultural factors which influence academic performance of public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Muranga South District?
The study adopted a descriptive survey design to collect quantitative and qualitative data. Three research instruments namely, pupils’ questionnaire, focus group discussion schedule for deputy head teachers and teachers and observation checklist were used to collect data. Fieldwork was done in March and April, 2011. The summary of the findings were presented according to the three independent variables (major themes) namely, the school based factors, socio-economic factors and socio-cultural factors influencing academic performance.

5.2.1: School-Based Factors Influencing Academic Performance
From the analysis of data, the researcher found that English language, the recommended medium of instruction in upper primary, was hardly used by pupil and teacher personnel. Instead, Mother tongue and sub-standard Kiswahili were mostly used indicating that the schools were having ineffective leadership and teachers lack mastery of the medium of instruction. It limits the second language (English) acquisition and vocabulary of the learners resulting to poor comprehension, analysis, application and expression of one’s ideas. Private studies were not properly organized and monitored as the role was left to the class prefects and teacher on duty, thus the pupils were often less engaged resulting to wastage of time.

Assessment of the effectiveness of the teaching/ learning strategies, suitability of teaching /learning resources and pupil achievement was inadequate. Recording and reporting of the pupils progress was ineffective as most schools had no pupils’ report forms and where found, it was not a common document to all pupils. This implied that head teachers who serve as the curriculum and instructional leaders do not effectively monitor the progress of individual learners leading to their laxity.
There were inadequate physical and material resources such as latrines. This implied that learners queue in the morning and at break-time to use them resulting to wastage of instructional time as they would go back to class late. Similarly, desks were found to be inadequate influencing their sitting manner, likewise the teaching/learning process. In some schools, classroom conditions were poor: some had smooth floors while others uneven. In most schools classroom intrusion was controlled: they had lockable doors while windows had shutters which implied that teaching/learning resources, for example, charts could be left in. However, this was not reflected in a number of schools and especially in upper primary.

5.2.2: Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Academic Performance

Little regard for education by the community and low education levels attained by the parents/guardians deter most pupils from completing their homework. They lack assistance and encouragement at home.

A large number of pupils could not carry out private studies at home. This was attributed to low income of the community: some parents and guardians reportedly work as casual labourers in the neighbourhood coffee plantations whereby they receive subsistence wage, while others are involved in quarrying the land for stones, sand harvesting and in peasant farming. Due to poor economic status (low earnings) some families live in overcrowded and/or poorly lit rooms. Moreover, they could not afford to buy essential furniture, essential textbooks that were not issued at school, engage their children in extra coaching after school, buy internet enabled mobile phones and computers from which important information for education purposes can be assessed.
Majority of the parents were found to be preoccupied with work. Their preoccupation denied them time to attend to school meetings/functions and observe behavior changes in their children. Absence of parents from homes was noted whereby some children were reportedly left on their own while others under the care of grandparents and house helps who are not keen on discipline and private studies.

5.2.3: Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Academic Performance
Parents and the community have low regard for education. A significant difference between the girl-child and boy-child parents who attend school meetings was noted as indicated in Table 4.6. The parent’s/guardian’s attendance at school meeting was poor. As low income earners, they consider attendance as wastage of valuable time and a threat to their livelihood. School meetings were found to be attended by the pupils’ aged grandparents and reserved siblings who are either standard eight graduates or school drop-outs as guardian’s or parent’s representatives.

Parents/guardians concern over homework was wanting. Majority of the parents show less concern. This was de-motivating to both the teacher and pupil personnel. Initiation rite of passage (circumcision and clitoridectomy) bred psychological, moral and social unrest in schools. There were increased cases of emotional disturbance and indiscipline in schools hindering teaching/learning process.

The impact of involvement in early teenage sex and dating was immense. The vice was blamed for poor concentration in class due to preoccupation with thoughts of sex partners; intrapersonal and interpersonal conflict; identity crisis; emotional imbalance; absenteeism; and disrespect to teachers ultimately resulting to low academic achievement.
Religiosity or spirituality was highly regarded in all the schools in the division since learners were involved in religious activities. These included communal prayers, bible reading and singing of hymns during the assemblies. In spite of the usual involvement in religious activities, pupils engage in early teenage sex and dating, fights over sex partners, disrespect teachers and schools continued to record alarming results. It was therefore concluded that usual involvement in religious activities does not necessarily produce positive behaviour change and improve academic performance.

The outlawed Mungiki sect was found to have a large network in Makuyu Division and penetration into school promoting absenteeism, hence loss of instructional time; instilling fear to the pupils, teaching personnel and school community, thus emotional imbalance; drug and substances abuse; and violence destroying self esteem and emotional well-being among pupils resulting to low academic achievement.

5.3: Conclusions
From the study, factors within the school and home environment which come into play and influence academic performance of the public primary schools in the division emerged. The school based factors included the use of Mother tongue and sub-standard Kiswahili and English in schools; ineffective monitoring of private studies and individual learners progress; inadequacies in assessment of the effectiveness of the teaching/learning strategies, suitability of the teaching/learning resources and pupil achievement; inefficiency in recording and reporting pupils progress; lack of shared vision and focused mission of the schools; and inadequate and poorly maintained physical and material resources. The socio-economic factors included low parental/guardian education level and regard for education; low income of the parents/guardians; and pre-occupation with work. The socio-cultural factors
which emerged include community/parent low regard for education; embracement of the initiation rite of passage; engagement in sexual activity and dating; and the entrenchment of the terrible outlawed Mungiki sect in the region.

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

1) The Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards (DQAS) of the Ministry of Education to build the capacity to improve the acquisition and mastery of the language of instruction, lay emphasis on formative evaluation as a key aspect of educational process, sensitize all stakeholders on the importance of provision of quality education, and plan and organize education management and administration courses for the school administrators so as to improve efficiency.

2) The Ministry of Education through the Kenya Institute of Education to embark on the task of reviewing, improving and strengthening of guidance and counseling in teacher education modules and planning, coordinating and organizing workshops for the practicing teachers in order to enhance acquisition of requisite knowledge and skills to handle emerging challenges.

3) Collaboration between the Ministry of Education; Gender, Children and Social Development; and Youth Affairs and Sports to educate all stakeholders in the societal beliefs, values and practices which hinder education outcomes.

4) Collaboration between the Government of the Republic of Kenya and development partners to work out, introduce and implement sustainable economic activities so as to alleviate poverty in the region.
5.5: Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings, the researcher suggested the following studies:

1) A similar study to be carried out in the whole Murang’a County.

2) A study on the impact of effective parenting practices on pupils’ academic performance.

3) A study on the influence of Mungiki sect menace on education outcomes.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX I
RESEARCH PERMIT

PAGE 2

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss....Robert...Njuguna...Njoroge
..........Kenyatta University

of (Address) .....P.O...Box...43844

..........NAIROBI

has been permitted to conduct research in

Public...Primary...Schools...Box...

...Murang'a...South...District,

...Central

......Province,

on the topic...factors...influencing...academic

..performance...of...public...primary...

...schools

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for a period ending...30th...June...2011...

PAGE 3

NCST/RRI/12/1/SS-011/278/5
Research Permit No...----------------------------------------

Date of issue...24th...March...2011...

Fee received...KShs...1000=

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

[Signature]

Applicant's
Signature

Secretary
National Council for
Science and Technology
APPENDIX II
LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Telegrams: "SCIENCETECH", Nairobi
Telephone: 254-020-241349, 2213102
254-020-310571, 2213123
Fax: 254-020-2213215, 318245, 318249
When replying please quote

Our Ref: NCST/RRI/12/1/SS-011/278/5

Date: 24th March 2011

Robert Njuguna Njoroge
Kenyatta University
P. O. Box 43844
NAIROBI

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on
"Factors influencing academic performance of public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District, Kenya" I am
pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake
research in Murang’a South District for a period ending 30th June 2011.

You are advised to report to the District Commissioner and the District
Education Officer, Murang’a South District before embarking on the
research project.

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

P. N. NYAKUNDI
FOR: SECRETARY/CEO

Copy to:

The District Commissioner
Murang’a South District

The District Education Officer
Murang’a South District
APPENDIX III
LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION FROM THE GRADUATE SCHOOL.

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: kubps@yahoo.com
dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke
Website: www.ku.ac.ke

P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 8710901 Ext. 57530

Our Ref: E55/11954/08
Date: 4th March, 2011

The Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Higher Education, Science & Technology,
P.O. Box 30040,

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR NJOROGE ROBERT NJUGUNA
REG.NO E55/11954/08

I write to introduce Njoroje Robert NJuguna who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. He is registered for a M.Ed degree programme in the Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies in the School of Education.

Mr. NJuguna intends to conduct research for a Project Proposal entitled, “Factors Influencing Academic Performance of Public Primary Schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District, Kenya”.

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN LODONGI
FOR DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

JMO/rm
APPENDIX IV
PUPILS’ QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is intended to collect crucial information in relation to the factors which influence academic performance of public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District. It is therefore not meant to be a test.

You are kindly requested to answer all the questions and not to write neither your name nor of your school on it.

1. Education Zone---------------------------------------------
   (a) Makuyu [ ] (b) Kamahuha [ ]

2. Indicate your sex
   (a) Male [ ] (b) Female [ ]

3. Tick your age bracket from the choices given below.
   (a) 12-13 years [ ] (c) 14-15 years [ ]
   (b) 13-14 years [ ] (d) 15-16 years [ ]

4. Indicate with a tick (✓) the K.C.P.E performance of your school for the last five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERFORMANCE</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very poor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. How do you view the quality of education in your school?
   a) Very Good  
   b) Good  
   c) Fair  
   d) Poor  
   e) Very Poor

6. What medium of communication do you use mostly amongst yourselves in school?
   a) Mother tongue  
   b) English  
   c) Kiswahili

7. (i) What impact does the language have on performance?
   a) Perform very well  
   b) Perform well  
   c) Perform poorly  
   d) Perform very poorly

   ii) How often do your teachers use English language as a medium of instruction except during Kiswahili lessons?
       a) Use always  
       b) Use sometimes  
       c) Use rarely

8. (i) Do you carry out private studies in your school?
   a) Yes  
   b) No

   ii) What measures has your school put in place to ensure that you utilize your prep time properly?
       a) Monitored by the teacher on duty  
       b) Monitored by class prefect  
       c) Given class assignments to do  
       d) Teachers check and mark the assignments

9. (i) Indicate with a tick the type of test that you are given in school.
   a) Class exercises  
   b) Continuous assessment tests
c) Mid-term test  

d) End of term examinations  

ii) How often do your teachers communicate the feedback to you?

a) Always  
b) Sometimes  
c) Never  

(iii) Does your head teacher go through, comment and sign your report forms?

a) Always  
b) Sometimes  
c) Never  

10. Are your parents/guardians concerned with classroom exercises and assignments?

a) Always  
b) Sometimes  
c) Never  

11. (i) How often are you given homework and fail to complete?

a) Complete always  
b) Complete sometimes  
(c) Never complete  

(ii) If sometimes/always, under what circumstances do you fail to complete?

a) Living in poorly lit rooms  
b) Lack of study area at home  
c) Lack of assistance at home  
d) Lack of textbooks to refer to  

12.(i) How often do parents/guardians avail themselves when required by teachers at school?  
a) Always  
b) Sometimes  
c) Never  

(ii) Under what circumstances do they fail to avail themselves?

a) Working to earn money  
b) Unfamiliar with language used at school  
c) Fear facing the teachers  
d) Lack interest in education matters  
e) Don’t have good clothing to put on  

iii) What measures do they take when they can’t be able to avail themselves?

a) Send apology
b) Send their sons and daughters to represent them
c) Find time later to visit the school
d) Not concerned at all

13.(i) Have you ever been absent from school this term?
(a) Yes  (b) No

(ii) If yes, tick against each factor that caused you to be absent from school from the list below?

(a) Lack of meals
(b) Lack of school fees
(c) Working to earn money
(d) Torn out school uniform

14. Do your colleagues who have undergone the initiation rite of passage create problems during teaching/learning process?

(a) Always  (b) Sometimes  (c) Never

15. How is the school attendance of the learners who have undergone the initiation rite of passage?

(a) Regular  (b) Irregular  (c) Not applicable

16. How do your colleagues who have undergone initiation rite of passage perform in examination?

(a) Very well  (b) Well  (c) Fairly  (d) Poorly  (e) Not Applicable

17. (i) Has there been some pupils in your school who have dropped out of school to get married and then come back to sit for the KCPE?
(a) Yes □ □ (b) No □ □

(ii) If yes, how has been their performance at the KCPE?
(a) Very Good □ □ (b) Good □ □ (c) Fair □ □ (d) Poor □ □

18(i) Do the pupils who engage themselves in sexual activities and dating create problems in class?
(a) Create always □ □ (b) Create Sometimes □ □ (c) Never create □ □

(ii) How do such pupils perform in examinations?
(a) Very well □ □ (b) Well □ □ (c) Poorly □ □

(iii) What measures has your school put in place to solve the problem?
(a) Guidance and counseling □ □ (b) Pastoral care □ □
(c) Giving pupils a lot of assignments □ □ (d) Punishment □ □
(e) None □ □

19. Does your school involve you in religious activities?
(a) Always □ □ (b) Sometimes □ □ (c) Never □ □

20. (i) Are there members of the outlawed Mungiki sect in your locality?
(a) Yes □ □ (b) No □ □

(ii) How do you recognize the pupils who are associated with the Mungiki sect?
(a) By their behaviour □ □ (c) Language they use □ □
(b) By their clothing □ □ (d) The items they carry □ □

(iii) What problem does your school experience due to the presence of the Mungiki sect in the locality?
(a) Increase of indiscipline cases □ □
(b) Living in fear of being attacked by the Mungiki sect members □ □
(c) Frequent absenteeism of children from Mungiki sect families

(d) Conflict between school goals and Mungiki sect goals

(iv). How is the academic performance of the pupils who have joined the sect or whose parents are its members?

(a) Very Good  

(b) Good  

(d) Poor  

Thank you very much for your cooperation.
APPENDIX V
FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE FOR DEPUTY HEADTEACHERS AND TEACHERS

This group discussion is meant to seek in depth information on the factors which influence academic performance of public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang’a South District. The information that is going to be obtained is primarily for academic purposes and will be treated with confidentiality.

1. Education Zone _____________________

2. What mean standard scores did your school attain in KCPE examination for the last five years?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>KCPE MEAN GRADE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
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<td>2007</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

3. How do you view the quality of education in your school?

4. (i) What medium of communication do your pupils use mostly among themselves in school?

   (ii) What impact does the language have on performance?

   (iii) Considering that there are learners with diversified needs in your school, what language do you use mostly as medium of instruction?
5. (i) At what time do your learners conduct their private studies?

(ii) What measures has your school put in place to ensure learners utilize their prep time properly?

6. (i) What kind of assessment do you have in your school?

(ii) How long does it take to communicate the feedback to the learners?

(iii) Does your head teacher scan, comment and sign pupil’s report forms?

7. How do parents/guardians show their concern over their children’s classroom exercises and homework?

8. (i) Do you have cases of learners who fail to complete their assignments or homework?

(ii) If yes, what reasons do they give?

9. (i) Do parents avail themselves when required by teachers at school to discuss academic issues?

(ii) Under what circumstances do they fail to avail themselves?

(iii) When they can’t be able to, what measures do they take?

10. (i) Does your school have cases of pupils’ absenteeism?

(ii) Under what circumstances do your learners fail to attend school?

11. What problems do you encounter while handling pupils who have undergone initiation rite of passage?

12. How is the attendance at school by those who have undergone the rite of passage?

13. What impact does initiation rite of passage have on academic performance of the learners?

14. (i) Has there been some learners in your school who have dropped-out of school to get married and then come back to sit for K.C.P.E?

(ii) If yes, how has been their performance at the K.C.P.E?
15. (i) What problems do you experience while handling pupils who are preoccupied with sexual activity and dating?

(ii) How do such pupils perform academically?

(iii) What measures have been put in place to curb the problem?

16. What religious activities are your pupils involved in?

17. (i) Are there members of the outlawed Mungiki sect in the school locality?

(ii) How do you recognize the pupils associated with or initiated into the sect?

(iii) What problems does your school experience due to the presence of the sect in the locality?

(iv) How do you rate the academic performance of learners who are recruited into the sect or whose parents are its members?

Thank you for your cooperation.
## APPENDIX V1
### OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

### 1. Facilities

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<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors and windows: lockable</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Desks:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilets / pit latrines:</td>
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### 2. Teaching / learning resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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### 3. Vision and Mission Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
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<th>Not displayed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Statements</td>
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</tbody>
</table>