

**VARIABLES CONTRIBUTING TO PUPILS' PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH  
IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KOMOTHAI ZONE, GITHUNGURI  
DISTRICT, KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA**

**BY**

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**E55/10552/04**

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MASTERS OF EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION OF  
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

**MAY 2013**

## DECLARATION

### Declaration by the student

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university

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This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as the university supervisors

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## **DEDICATION**

To the Almighty God who is our creator and gives us wisdom. Secondly the work is dedicated to my loving husband Patrick and children Linet and Karen who gave me moral support and encouragement to engage in educational research.

Thank you for standing by me.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                  |      |
|----------------------------------|------|
| TITLE .....                      | i    |
| DECLARATION.....                 | ii   |
| DEDICATION .....                 | iii  |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....            | iv   |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS.....           | v    |
| LIST OF TABLES.....              | x    |
| LIST OF FIGURES.....             | xii  |
| ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS ..... | xiii |
| ABSTRACT. ....                   | xiv  |

### **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1.1: Background to the Study.....   | 1 |
| 1.2: Statement of the Problem.....  | 4 |
| 1.3: Purpose of the Study .....     | 4 |
| 1.4: Objectives of the Study.....   | 4 |
| 1.5: Research Questions.....        | 5 |
| 1.6: Significance of the Study..... | 5 |
| 1.7: Limitations .....              | 6 |
| 1.8: Delimitations.....             | 6 |
| 1.9: Assumptions of the study.....  | 6 |
| 1.10: Theoretical Framework.....    | 6 |



|  |    |
|--|----|
| 1.11: Conceptual Framework.....                    | 8  |
| 1.12: Operational Definition of Central Terms..... | 11 |

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 2.1: Introduction .....  | 13 |
| 2.2: Teacher-Related Variables .....   | 13 |
| 2.2.1: Teachers Qualification and Experience .....                                       | 13 |
| 2.2.2: Methods of Instruction.....   | 15 |
| 2.3: Teaching/Learning Resources, Supervision of Teaching and<br>In-service Courses..... | 16 |
| 2.3.1: Teaching of English in Primary Schools .....                                      | 16 |
| 2.3.2: Examination Performance.....  | 17 |
| 2.3.3: Supervision of Teaching.....  | 19 |
| 2.3.4: Learning Resources.....   | 20 |
| 2.3.5: Teachers' In-service Courses.....   | 21 |
| 2.4: Pupils' –Related Variables.....   | 23 |
| 2.4.1: Pupils' Attitude Towards English.....   | 23 |
| 2.5: Home-Related Variables.....   | 25 |
| 2.5.1: Pupils' Home Environment.....   | 25 |
| 2.6: Summary of Literature Review.....   | 27 |

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 3.1: Introduction.....                   | 29 |
| 3.2: Research Design .....               | 29 |
| 3.3: Study Locale .....                  | 30 |
| 3.4: Study Population.....               | 30 |
| 3.5: Sample and Sampling Procedure ..... | 31 |
| 3.5.1: Sample Size .....                 | 31 |
| 3.5.2: Sampling Technique .....          | 32 |
| 3.6: Research Instruments.....           | 35 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 3.6.1: Questionnaire .....   | 35 |
| 3.6.1.1: Pupils Questionnaire.....                                   | 36 |
| 3.6.1.2: Teachers Questionnaire .....                                | 36 |
| 3.6.1.3: Headteachers Questionnaire .....                            | 36 |
| 3.6.1.4: Quality Assurance and Standards Officers Questionnaire..... | 36 |
| 3.6.2: Interview .....   | 36 |
| 3.7: Validity of the Instrument.....                                 | 37 |
| 3.8: Reliability of the Instrument .....                             | 38 |
| 3.9: Piloting .....  | 39 |
| 3.10: Data Collection .....  | 40 |
| 3.11: Methods of Data Analysis .....                                 | 40 |

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 4.1: Introduction.....  | 42 |
| 4.2: Academic Qualification and Pupils' Performance.....                        | 42 |
| 4.2.1: Teachers' Background and Qualification.....                              | 42 |
| 4.2.2: Teachers rating of pupils performance.....                               | 44 |
| 4.2.3: Pupils' Performance and Teachers' Years of Experience.....               | 45 |
| 4.2.4: Number of Pupils' per Class and Their Performance.....                   | 46 |
| 4.2.5: Remedial Classes and Pupils' Performance. ....                           | 47 |
| 4.2.6: Pupils' Performance and Assessment. ....                                 | 48 |
| 4.2.7: Pupils' Performance and Teachers Marking and Revising<br>Assignment..... | 50 |
| 4.2.8: Pupils' Interest Towards English and Their Performance. ....             | 50 |
| 4.2.9: Teachers' Attitude Towards English.....                                  | 50 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 4.3: Pupils' Performance and School Supervision .....                                | 53 |
| 4.3.1: Supervision of Teachers by Subject Heads. ....                                | 54 |
| 4.3.2: Supervision by Quality Assurance and Standards Officers.                      | 55 |
| 4.3.3: Access to Reference Books and Pupils' Performance.....                        | 57 |
| 4.3.4: Use of Schemes of Work, Lesson Plans and Records<br>of Work. ....             | 58 |
| 4.3.5: In- Service Courses and Pupils' Performance in English.....                   | 58 |
| 4.4: Pupils' Attitude and Academic Performance.....                                  | 60 |
| 4.4.1: Pupils' Attitude Towards English-based on Gender and Age.                     | 60 |
| 4.4.2: Pupils' Attitude Towards English and the<br>Parental Support.....             | 62 |
| 4.4.3: Pupils' Attitude Towards English and Parental Level<br>of Education.....      | 63 |
| 4.4.4: Parents Assistance in English Homework. ....                                  | 64 |
| 4.4.5: Parents Who Buy English Story Books.....                                      | 65 |
| 4.4.6: Pupils' Syllabus Completion, Extra Assignment and<br>Performance Reward. .... | 66 |
| 4.4.7: Frequency of Internal Examinations.....                                       | 67 |
| 4.4.8: School Library and Time Allocation to English... ..                           | 68 |
| 4.4.9: Time allocated to English studies.....  | 69 |
| 4.4.10: Homes that own a Radio.....  | 70 |
| 4.5: Pupils' Performance and Mother Tongue Interference. ....                        | 71 |
| 4.5.1: Gender of interviewed parents .....   | 72 |
| 4.5.2: Pupils' Academic Performance Based on Gender.....                             | 72 |
| 4.5.3: Classification of Pupils' Reading Habits.....                                 | 74 |
| 4.5.4: Child's Favourite Subject.....  | 75 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 4.5.5: Frequency of Academic Trips.....  | 78 |
| 4.5.6: Hobbies.....  | 78 |
| 4.5.7: Influence of Mother Tongue and Kiswahili on<br>English Performance..... | 79 |

**CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS  
AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 5.1: Summary.....                        | 81 |
| 5.2: Conclusion.....                     | 82 |
| 5.3: Recommendations.....                | 84 |
| 5.4 : Suggestions for further study..... | 85 |

|                        |           |
|------------------------|-----------|
| <b>REFERENCES.....</b> | <b>86</b> |
|------------------------|-----------|

**APPENDICES**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Appendix A : Introduction Letter.....  | 93  |
| Appendix B : Letter to Respondents.....  | 94  |
| Appendix C: Likerts attitude scale measuring pupils’ attitude<br>towards English.....  | 95  |
| Appendix D: Likerts attitude scale measuring teachers attitude<br>towards English..... | 101 |
| Appendix E: Headteachers Questionnaire .....   | 107 |
| Appendix F: Questionnaire for Quality Assurance and<br>Standards Officer.....          | 112 |
| Appendix G: Parents Interview Schedule.....  | 115 |
| Appendix H: Map Showing Komothai Zone in Githunguri District.....                      | 118 |
| Appendix I: Letter of Permit .....   | 119 |



## LIST OF TABLES

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table 3.1: Population and Sample Size .....  | 31 |
| Table 3.2: Schools Sample Based on Performance Levels.....   | 33 |
| Table 3.3: Overall Sample .....  | 35 |
| Table 4.1: Pupils’ performance and Teacher Qualification.....  | 43 |
| Table 4.2: Gender of interviewed teachers.....   | 44 |
| Table 4.3: Class Teachers Rating of Pupils’ performance.....   | 45 |
| Table 4.4: Pupils’ performance and teachers teaching experience....                                    | 46 |
| Table 4.5: Pupils’ Performance in relation to class size .....   | 47 |
| Table 4.6: Pupils’ performance in relation to remedial classes. ....                                   | 48 |
| Table 4.7: Pupils’ Performance based on assessment .....   | 49 |
| Table 4.8: Pupils’ Performance based on teachers marking and<br>Revising English Assignment.....       | 50 |
| Table 4.9: Pupils’ performance based on their interest<br>in English.....                              | 51 |
| Table 4.10: Teachers’ Attitude towards English. ....   | 53 |
| Table 4.11: Pupils’ performance in relation to teachers’<br>access to reference books. ....            | 57 |
| Table 4.12: Pupils’ performance based on in- services courses<br>attended by teachers of English ..... | 60 |
| Table 4.13: Pupils’ attitudes towards English based on gender. ....                                    | 61 |
| Table 4.14: Pupils’ attitudes to English based on age.....   | 62 |
| Table 4.15: Pupils’ attitudes to English and the parental support ..                                   | 62 |
| Table 4.16 Pupils’ attitude to English based on Parents level of<br>education.....                     | 64 |
| Table 4.17: Pupils’ attitudes to English based on parental assistance                                  |    |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| in English homework.....   | 65 |
| Table 4.18: Pupils’ attitudes to English in relation to parents who<br>buy story books .....                               | 66 |
| Table 4.19: Pupils’ attitudes to English by completion of<br>syllabus, extra assignment and performance<br>rewarding ..... | 67 |
| Table 4.20: Pupils’ performance in relation to frequency of<br>internal exams.....   | 68 |
| Table 4.21: Pupils’ attitudes to English based on availability of a<br>school library .....                                | 68 |
| Table 4.22: Homes that own a radio.....  | 70 |
| Table 4.23 Proportion of pupils’ from homes that own a radio and<br>tune to English.....                                   | 70 |
| Table 4.24: Pupils’ performance and parents rating.....  | 72 |
| Table 4.25: Gender of interviewed parents .....  | 72 |
| Table 4.26: Pupils’ gender.....  | 73 |
| Table 4.27: Pupils’ performance based on their enjoying English  | 73 |
| Table 4.28: Pupils’ performance based on their reading habits.....   | 75 |
| Table 4.29: Pupils’ performance in relation to their favourite<br>subjects.....  | 76 |
| Table 4.30: Pupils’ performance and most challenging subject.....  | 77 |
| Table 4.31: Pupils’ performance and frequency of academic trips...   | 78 |
| Table 4.32: pupils’ performance in relation to their Hobbies.....  | 79 |
| Table 4.33: Pupils’ performance and language spoken at home.....   | 80 |



## LIST OF FIGURES

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework on Factors Influencing Academic Performance.....          | 10 |
| Figure 4.1: Pupils’ performance and the frequency of supervision by subject heads.....     | 55 |
| Figure 4.2: Number of times teachers of English were supervised over the last 2 years..... | 56 |
| Figure 4.3: Proportion of teachers who use schemes of work.....                            | 58 |
| Figure 4.4: Overall Pupils’ attitudes towards English .....                                | 60 |
| Figure 4.5: Time allocated to English studies .....  | 69 |

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AEO – Area Education Officer

AT.S – Approved Teacher Status

BOG – Board of Governors

DEO – District Education Officer

EFA – Education for All

KACE – Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education

KCPE – Kenya Certificate of Primary Education

KCSE – Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education

KNEC – Kenya National Examinations Council

MoEST – Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

PTA – Parents Teachers Association

SPSS – Statistical Package for Social Sciences

TSC – Teachers Service Commission

TTC – Teachers Training College

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO – United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF – United Nations Children Education Fund

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the school-based variables contributing to pupils' performance in English in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in public primary schools in Komothai zone in Githunguri District, Kiambu County. The objectives of this study were to determine teachers' qualifications and experience, availability of learning resources, pupil's attitude to English, teaching methodology applied in teaching English in public primary schools in Komothai zone and their effects on pupils' performance in English. The study used correlational ex-post factor approach. The target population was composed of 14 public primary schools, 14 headteachers, 55 teachers of English, 724 class 8 pupils' and 724 parents from the schools neighbourhood .Seven public primary schools, 7 headteachers, 26 teachers of English, 126 class 8 pupils', 70 parents and one Quality Assurance and Standard Officer were sampled for the study using stratified and simple random sampling. The subjects of the study were 7 head teachers in the sample schools, 4 teachers of English in each school, a sample of 18 standard eight pupils', 10 parents from the neighbourhood of each sample school and Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. Pupils' from each of sample schools were selected using systematic random sampling. Data were collected by use of questionnaire and an interview schedule. The developed questionnaires were administered to one public primary school for piloting. Content validity of instruments was determined through expert judgment. The researcher used subject matter specialists such as university supervisors in the School of Education. They examined the instruments individually and provided feedback to the researcher. Data analysis was done using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) Version 17.0. Descriptive statistics including frequency counts, means and percentages were used to summarise the quantitative data collected. Thematic analysis was used to summarize the qualitative data obtained. The results of the data analysis were presented in frequency tables, histograms and pie charts. The study found that congestion in classes, laxity among teachers, teachers not taking report by Quality Assurance and Standards Officers seriously, localization in their home area makes them resistant to change. Lack of enough textbooks, equipment and library holdings affect pupils' performance in English in KCPE. Home environment was also found to be unsuitable for learning English in Komothai zone. This is because vernacular, sheng and Kiswahili were found to be the predominant languages spoken at home. Most parents did not buy reference materials for their children. The study concluded that laxity among teachers and localization of teachers in their home area affect pupils performance. Lack of enough desks, chairs, enough classrooms, library holdings, learning resources, home environment and lack of enough practice of English affects pupils' performance. The study recommended that teachers should take the reports by quality assurance and standards officers seriously and they should not be localized in their home areas. The study also recommended that the government should provide enough finances to public primary schools for them to be able to acquire enough learning resources to improve English performance in public primary schools. Teachers should vary their methodology to help improve English

performance. Parents should create a friendly atmosphere at home to improve English performance. Pupils' should practise speaking in English in order to improve their performance in it.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter describes the background of English as a subject in Kenya, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, research questions, and significance of the study, limitations, and delimitations, assumptions of the study, theoretical framework, conceptual framework and definition of key terms.

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

The language of instruction in primary and secondary schools in Kenya is English. The use of Kenyan languages in schools has diminished (Mutea, 2000). Even when Kenya attained her political independence in 1963, English was recognized as an official language of communication in the country. In 1964, the Kenya Education Commission, Republic of Kenya (1964), recommended localizing of curriculum and introduction of English as a medium of instruction from early years of education. Since then, English has continued to occupy a dominant position in both the school curriculum and public life in Kenya (Mutea, 2000).

In 1976, the report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (NCEOP), Republic of Kenya (1976), made certain recommendations concerning the teaching of languages. One of the recommendations was:

“To use as a language of instruction the predominant language spoken in the school’s catchment area for the first three years of primary education and to introduce English as a subject from primary 1 and make it supersede the predominant local language as medium of instruction in primary 4 (Republic of Kenya, 1976 pp 54-58).”

In 1999, similar sentiments were echoed by the report on Totally Integrated and Quality Education Technology Systems (TIQET) in Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 1999). Children would be taught in their mother tongue in rural areas to enhance concept formation and articulation in communication from primary 1 to 3. From primary 4-7, English and Kiswahili would then become the medium of instruction. English is a core subject and official medium of instruction in all subjects, except Kiswahili and foreign languages from upper primary to the university tier. Therefore, a student's mastery of English highly depends on his/her ability to use the language effectively, both written and spoken. This is by having a good command of its form (usage) and function (use).

The trend of poor performance in English has become so acute that it affects the performance in other subjects, especially those that require pupils to express themselves (Republic of Kenya, 1999), such as history, geography etc. Therefore, the lack of competence in English also affects performance in other subjects. Pupils need to be well trained in the English language to be able to listen to it, speak, read and write it well. The report also established that Teachers Resource Centres, the few community libraries and schools were either inadequately or not stocked at all (Republic of Kenya, 1999).

According to Kenya National Examinations Council (2003), English language papers test the candidates' knowledge of language. The Koech Report (Republic of Kenya, 1999), asserts that the primary school curriculum is viewed as the foundation upon which the mastery of formal learning skills must be based. In this regard, the skills of reading, writing and communication skills of listening and self-expression must be taught to satisfactory levels to provide smooth transition to secondary education.

Richards (1990), observes that writing is one of the foundational skills of educating people. It was essential to academic success and it was needed in many occupations and professions. However, the nature and significance of writing has traditionally been underestimated in language teaching. Richards (1990) observes that the teaching of second language writing has been equated to the teaching of grammar or sentence structure and yet there is more to writing than this.

Claessen and Stephen (1996), compiled the proceedings of a seminar in English for language teachers, policy-makers and syllabus designers into a resource book. They recommended that there was need for English language teachers to join their colleagues across the country and discuss the curriculum to provide their students with more and better opportunities for practical and meaningful opportunities in language. This was because they noted that English language was at the heart of every teaching and learning process in each of the subjects, except Kiswahili, French and German. This was observed to be true especially in non-linguistic subjects like mathematics.

Quality subject delivery by the educators in the classroom is the most important indispensable factor that can improve pupils' performance in English in primary schools. Active participation of parents in the education of their children is essential to improve the discipline of pupils in schools as well as their academic performance. Availability of necessary learning resources enhances the quality of teaching and learning of English as a subject. Pupils' performance in English has not been encouraging nationally. For example, in the year 2009 the mean score for English was 43.12. This also applied to Komothai zone in Githunguri District where the mean score in English was 43.71 (Githunguri District Education Office, 2010)

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The study looked at the results of English in KCPE between 2006 – 2009 in public primary schools in Komothai zone of Githunguri District. It is worrying that being a core subject and a medium of instruction, pupils' performance in English is below average in public primary schools in Komothai zone. The English mean scores for public primary schools in Komothai zone from 2006-2009 were 41.57, 42.73, 43.07 and 43.71 respectively (Githunguri District Education Office, 2010).

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to determine the school-based variables that contribute to pupil's performance in English at KCPE level in Komothai zone of Githunguri District. In this study, the researcher investigated the effect of various variables (pupil's commitment and attitudes, teachers' academic qualifications, teaching methods, syllabus coverage, availability of learning resources and class size) on the performance in English in order to help improve the performance in the subject in the future.

## **1.4 Specific Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. Determine how teachers' qualifications and class size affected pupils' performance in English in public primary schools in Komothai zone.
- ii. Find out how supervision, study resources and in service-courses affected pupils' performance in English in KCPE in public primary schools in Komothai zone.
- iii. Identify how pupils' attitudes towards English affected their performance in English in KCPE in public primary schools in Komothai zone.



- iv. Assess the influence of home environment, mother tongue and Kiswahili on pupils' performance in English in KCPE in public primary schools in Komothai zone.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- i. How does the academic qualifications of teachers and class size affect pupils' performance in English in public primary schools in Komothai zone of Githunguri District?
- ii. To what extent does supervision of teaching, learning resources and teachers in-service courses affect pupils' performance in English in KCPE in public primary schools in Komothai zone of Githunguri District?
- iii. How does pupils' attitudes towards English affect their performance in KCPE in public primary schools in Komothai zone of Githunguri District?
- iv. In which way do home environment, mother-tongue and Kiswahili interfere with pupils' performance in English in KCPE in public primary schools in Komothai zone.

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

The study's identification of the variables of pupils' performance in English in KCPE would be very useful in improving performance in Komothai zone in Githunguri District. The findings of the study would be useful to planners and policy-makers in resource allocation to public primary schools. The findings of the study would help the pupils to improve in English at primary school tier and create love for English and assist in the performance of English at higher tiers of education. The finding of the study would help teachers vary their methodology of teaching English at all levels of education. The findings of the study would benefit researchers and academicians as it

would provide recommendations on areas requiring further research with regard to English performance in KCPE.

### **1.7 Limitations**

Some of the parents were not willing to be interviewed and therefore, did not provide very accurate information for personal reasons. Due to financial constraints, the researcher limited the study to Komothai zone only.

### **1.8 Delimitations**

The scope of the study covered Komothai zone. The teachers, pupils and headteachers included in the sample were those in session in the respective institutions by the time of study. Those absent or who had completed examinations, and those who had transferred were not included in the sample even though they had much information.

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

The study assumed that the teachers teaching English in both lower and upper primary schools would be willing to disclose the grades they had in KCPE/CPE and KCSE/KACE in English. Supervision of teaching affected examination performance. Pupil's attitudes towards English would determine their performance in English.

### **1.10 Theoretical Framework**

There are many diverse theories of language learning. The one adopted in this study was that of second language acquisition proposed by Krashen, (1982). Under this theory, he had the monitor model which could be considered as sub-theory. It distinguished two distinct processes in second and foreign language development and use. One was called acquisition and the other learning.

Acquisition is the 'natural' way of paralleling first language development in children. It refers to unconscious process that involves naturalistic development of language proficiency through understanding language and through using it for meaningful

communication. Krashen (ibid) says that acquirers have a feel for correctness. Thus, structures either feel right or wrong even when the acquirer does not know what rule has been violated. He equates acquisition to: Implicit learning, informal learning and natural learning. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that schools create a situation in which the pupils acquire language while practising what they have been taught. ‘Learning’, he explains to mean a process in which conscious rules about the forms of language are learned and the ability to verbalize that knowledge. He sees formal teaching as necessary if learning was to occur. It thus follows that correction of errors helps with the development of learned rules.

Krashen (1988), argues that both acquisition and learning contribute to aspects of second language competence. They are therefore, complementary. There are two interrelated approaches to language teaching associated with this theory. One of them is the communicative approach of which Howatt (1984:279) says:

“The communicative approach has become more or less the standard practice in the last ten years and stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and characteristically attempts to integrate such activities into a wide programme of language teaching....”

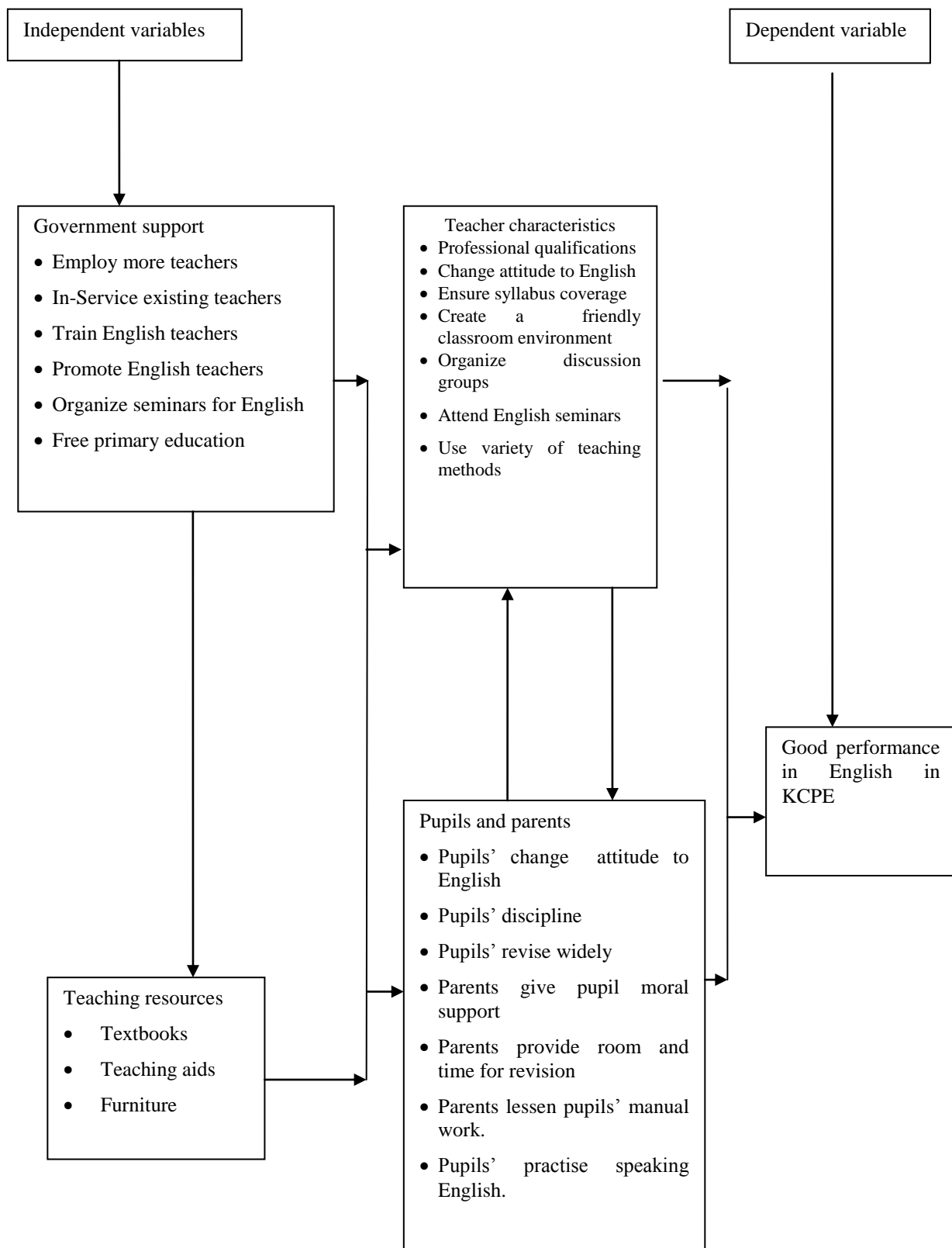
Krashen’s second language acquisition theory was considered relevant to this study because of its claim that using language communicatively leads to proficiency. The implication is that pupils who use English to communicate develop proficiency faster than those who do not communicate in English.

### **1.11 Conceptual Framework**

The importance of English is clear and indisputable and as such the subject needs to be monitored and improved at all levels of the education system. This is only possible if a participatory approach is adopted, which should include all the stakeholders of education who should include the government, teachers, the parents and the pupils.

The independent variables were those variables whose effects, the researcher assessed for example, teacher characteristics, school facilities, pupil characteristics, parental support and government support on pupils' performance in English in public primary schools. The dependent variables were those variables which the study used to measure the impact of the independent variables i.e. English performance in KCPE. For example, as the government provides free primary education and necessary facilities, enough teachers of English should be employed. Parents should also play a vital role in their children's performance in English. They could support their children by giving them moral support, time for revision and rewarding them when they do well in English. Pupils' effort also determines their performance in English. For example, if the pupils are disciplined, revise widely, have a good attitude towards English and practised speaking English, they would perform better than those without these qualities. Schools with enough English textbooks would perform better than those without English textbooks. A school with enough classrooms, enough experienced teachers, has a low teacher/pupil ratio would also perform better because the teacher can interact with the pupils at a personal level, move around and mark their works while working on their desks. All the stakeholders in education (the government, teachers, parents and pupils) should take a participatory approach in order to improve the standards of English in KCPE. To improve English performance in KCPE, it is necessary to train and in-service teachers, employ enough of them,

organize seminars, buy English textbooks and provide physical facilities. If the teachers have good attitude towards English, ensure English syllabus coverage, create a friendly classroom environment, organize discussion groups and attend English seminars, they will effectively improve English performance in KCPE. If parents gave pupils moral support, provided room and time for revision and lessened pupils' manual work, the pupils would be able to concentrate on their work and perform better in English. If the pupils had a good attitude towards English practised speaking English, were disciplined and revised English widely, they would have good performance in English in KCPE. as shown in Figure 1.1



**Figure 1.1: Conceptual frame work on factors influencing academic performance**

## 1.12 Operational Definition of Central Terms

- Academic performance:** Refers to grades representing the sample of achievement with respect to attained skills or knowledge.
- Academic qualification:** This refers to the educational standard achieved by the teacher (Kibui, 1995).
- Examination performance:** The term refers to performance of school in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) done at the end of eight years of primary education (Mulwa, 2004).
- Human resource:** The teaching staff, parents, and other stakeholders.
- Language proficiency:** Refers to degree of skill with which a person can use a language, such as how well a person can read, write, speak or understand a language ( Krashen, 1998).
- Learner:** Any person including an educator, who is actively engaged in the pursuit of knowledge and skill.
- Mean score:** An average point showing individual or group achievement in examination performance.
- Physical facilities:** Refers to classrooms, libraries and other facilities such as swimming pool and workshops.
- Poor academic performance:** Rated as the score below 49% of the pass mark.
- Primary school:** Refers to the first cycle of 8-4-4 system of education practised in Kenya. It ranges from standard 1-8.

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Public schools:</b>      | Schools that belong to the community and are funded by government of Kenya.  |
| <b>Quality of Teachers:</b> | Refers to the teacher's academic and professional qualifications and their morals ( Kibui, 1995).                                |
| <b>Teaching resources:</b>  | These refers to textbooks, dusters, chairs and other materials that facilitates teaching and learning (Mulwa, 2004).             |
| <b>Zone:</b>                | An area smaller than a division which comprises a number of schools where quality assurance and standard officers are in charge. |



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviewed literature under four subheadings: teacher-related variables i.e teachers of English and methods of instruction. Teaching/learning resources, supervision of teaching and in-service courses. Pupil- related factors i.e attitudes towards English and home- related variables. The literature also reviewed the teacher and pupil characteristics, study resources and home environment to establish their effect on the performance of pupils in English subject in Komothai zone which had been wanting.

#### **2.2 Teacher-Related Variables**

##### **2.2.1 Teachers' Qualification and Experience**

Mutua (2002) in a study of elements leading to poor performance in Nandi District of Kenya, states that each English teacher is supposed to have mastery over listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Only then could a teacher of English be said to be competent enough to improve knowledge pertaining to English to the students he/she was handling in class. Teachers need to have mastery of the material they are supposed to teach. Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) in a study of improving primary education in developing countries, posit that knowledge of the subject matter has a strong, positive effect on students, achievements.

According to Republic of Kenya (2003) report on sector review and development, the characteristics that shape the teachers' quality include formal educational attainment, experience gathered by the teachers, subject mastery and availability of the teachers. The report states that formal education and the teacher attainment are positively

correlated with the teacher knowledge and with their ability to impart knowledge to students. Cuttman in UNESCO, (2002) said that the quality of education would not improve without critical look at the teachers practices. The in-service training workshop gives teachers a personal and professional boost, allows them to use new materials and injects more life and participation in their classroom.

The research has indicated that the level of education of a teacher matters greatly in relation to school performance in examination. The intellectual ability of the teacher should directly influence that of the pupils. A teacher who is intelligent should be able to have a good mastery of his or her subject matter and pass this on to the pupils. The training of teachers has a bearing on pupils' performance in the examinations (Mworia, 1993). Research shows that the single most important determinant of school effectiveness is teacher quality. Teachers' effectiveness and commitment is measured in terms of frequency of assessment tests and homework, remedial teaching, extra help in revision, quality of lesson notes, use of professional documents and school attendance (Hess, 1999). However, research also shows that teachers' formal qualifications are not well-correlated with the effectiveness in the classrooms for two reasons;

- (i) Teacher pre-service training in many countries is of low quality and imparts only traditional frontal teaching methods and
- (ii) Classroom teachers enjoy a degree of isolation from performance feedback that leaves wide latitude of variations in behaviour and motivation (Hess, 1999).

According to Hess (1999) in education and social change, revitalizing teachers' pre-service training is important to attract high calibre individuals in to the profession, but it is time for impact to be felt throughout the system. Many low-income countries

need to achieve an immediate improvement of teachers' skills and motivation. This also applies to teachers of English whose skills and motivation need to be improved in order to realize good results in English. In summary, teacher-related factors would, therefore, seem to play an important role in what pupils learn. The study filled the gap by finding out if the academic and professional qualifications, of teachers as well as their dedication affected English performance in public primary schools in Komothai zone, Githunguri District.

### **2.2.2 Methods of Instruction**

Teacher and pupil interaction is very important in teaching English. Teachers with low pupil-teacher ratio are likely to give individual attention to the pupils, and therefore, increase the interaction. The teachers are able to cater for individual differences of the pupil in terms of ability and motivation. Kibui (1995) in a study of factors that influence examination performance of public and private schools in Nairobi Province of Kenya indicates that crowding in the class affects teaching and learning. Teachers in a situation whereby teacher-pupil ratios are high would be expected to be overworked and lack time to prepare their work. If children were crowded in their sitting positions, they found it difficult to write. Teachers also found it difficult to move round a crowded class. This meant that s/he would not be able to reach with ease all children in order to check their individual work as they sat working in their places. Inability to move freely in class means that the teacher can neither help the needy children nor can he mark the pupils' exercises as they continue working.

Wragg (1990) in the book of classroom management and control, states that the quality and quantity of teacher-pupil interaction is a critical dimension of effective classroom teaching since pupil-centred teaching is paramount to any kind of learning.

Learning should be through all senses such that the teachers should use teaching aids and encourage pupils to write their own. This may not be possible in cases where class size is big (Nceri, 2006). Republic of Kenya (1999) recommends the pupil-teacher ratio in primary school to be 40:1 and there be a minimum of one teacher per class plus headteacher. It further recommends that where there are fewer pupils in a class, multi grade teaching be applied, but in cases where there are more than 40 pupils in class, shift teaching should be applied.

In summary, the interaction between the teachers and pupils is paramount if pupil's performance in English is to improve. Learning of English should involve all the senses for the learners to be able to internalize all the concepts learned. The study filled the gap by establishing the methods of instruction in public primary schools in Komothai zone, Githunguri District, and how such methods of instruction affected English performance in KCPE.

## **2.3 Teaching/ Learning Resources and Support or Supervision of Teaching and In -Service Courses**

### **2.3.1 Teaching of English in Primary Schools**

In standard 1-3 English was allocated five lessons a week. In standard 4-8 English was allocated seven lessons in a week. However, this allocation could be adjusted according to the needs of the learner (KNEC, 2003). The importance of English as a subject could not be overemphasized. Mogoia (1998) in a study of the students poor performance in English language in KCSE in Kisii District of Kenya, notes that the little time allocated to English as a subject was insufficient to assist pupils practise its various aspects. With the increased workload for both teacher and students, there was hardly any spare time for extra practice outside the timetabled session. Yet it was

through study skills that the students acquired the appropriate study habits which in turn enhanced the learning of other subjects in the curriculum.

Ndiritu (1999) in a study of factors influencing performance in KCSE in selected public schools in Nairobi and Central provinces, observed that within limits, the more the hours allowed in instruction in a subject, the higher the achievement. The 1979 handbook of Kenya Institute of Education entitled 'language teaching and use in primary schools' has the following general objectives of teaching English . By the end of the course, the pupil will have:

- (i) Acquired speaking skills to enable him use correct pronunciation, stress and intonation so that his speech is understood.
- (ii) Acquired reading skills to enable him read and understand instructions and information and also read widely for pleasure.
- (iii) Acquired writing skills to enable him express his ideas, legibly and intelligently in written English.

To achieve these objectives, the students need maximum exposure to the language in the form of class readers and other story books, adequate and appropriate textbooks, broadcast programmes, inter-class and inter-school debates, trained teachers and a linguistically conducive situation where students use the English language for natural communication.

### **2.3.2 Examination Performance**

Learner achievement is used as an indicator of educational quality ( Michaelowa, 2001). Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) is a national examination that is offered at the end of eight years of primary education. According to Wasanga (2004) report on quality assurance in basic education, centrally administered national examinations for primary leavers in Kenya are stressed, the results of which are used

as indicators of educational quality. Republic of Kenya (2000), observes that performance in examinations is one indicator of educational effectiveness. It allows education stakeholders (including teachers) to assess whether a school is declining or improving in its own performance.

Mutea (2000) proposes seven assumptions that pertain to examinations. These could apply to KCPE as well as internal school examinations and they include:

- (i) That all candidates are given a task that they have not seen before and embark on it;
- (ii) All candidates work on a time limitation;
- (iii) All candidates should not consult sources of information while performing the task;
- (iv) Candidates do not consult one another;
- (v) The task is performed in the presence of an invigilator;
- (vi) The candidates are expected to experience some sense of stress and urgency when performing the task and
- (vii) The fact that the tasks are assessed by people who have no first hand knowledge of the candidates.

Mutua (2002) in a study of element leading to poor performance in English in Kapsabet, noted that poor English knowledge as the medium of instruction in schools had led to bad results in other subjects. Without proper command of the English language, many students were unable to comprehend and answer examination questions well. As such, poor command in the English language has been blamed for poor performance in other subjects.

### **2.3.3 Supervision of Teaching**

The Quality Assurance and Standards Department is a division in the Ministry of Education that deals largely with maintenance and improvements of standards of education in Kenyan schools and colleges. Being the custodian of standard, the inspectorate (now directorate of quality assurance and standards department), plays the role of a supervisor as well as advisor through assurance and quality development. As a supervisor, the department ensures that procedures are followed and maintained and national goals are achieved. In an advisory capacity, the department plays a professional role of liaising closely with classroom teachers for the purpose of attaining the required educational standards (Olembo, Wanga and Karagu, 1992).

Republic of Kenya (2000) hardbook for inspection of educational institutions, states that since inspection is a disciplined enquiry and those charged with it are assumed to be of high integrity, it is mandatory that the purpose of inspection be to ascertain whether an institution (teaching) has an added value to the education of the students. It continues to add that subject based inspections are specialized inspections carried out by quality assurance and standards officers in their fields of subject specialization. These are planned and prompted by:

- (i) Performance trends in a particular subject in the national examination.
- (ii) Inquiring into teachers' needs with a view to making suggestions for in-service training to be carried out by the quality development service.
- (iii) Monitoring visits to gather data and information about teaching and learning in the subject.

Okumbe (1999) in his book of educational management theory and practice, asserts that supervision can be divided into general supervision and instructional supervision. General supervision involves supervisory activities that take place principally outside

the classroom. Such activities include the writing and revision of curricula, preparation of units and materials of instruction, the development of processes and instrument for reporting to parents and such broad concerns as the evaluation of the total educational programme. Instructional supervision on the other hand is concerned with pupil learning in the classroom. All those activities which are undertaken to help teachers maintain and improve their effectiveness in the classroom characterise instructional supervision. It also includes all those activities by educational administrators that may express leadership in the improvement of learning and teaching such as observation of class instruction, conducting teachers meetings , conducting group and individual conferences and reorganizing curriculum ( Olemba et al.,1992). However, even with the above mandate given to quality assurance and standard officers, few subject supervisions are carried out. Teachers, on the other hand, view supervision in suspect as a process through which they would be victimized. Furthermore, teachers who have been in service for many years feel they were good enough teachers who do not require supervision of their work.

#### **2.3.4 Learning Resources**

According to Patel & Mukwa (1993) in design and use of media in education, instructional resources was a systematic way of designing, carrying out and evaluating the total process of learning and teaching in terms of specific objectives to bring about more effective instruction. Ndiritu (1999) in a study of factors influencing performance in KCSE in Nairobi and Central provinces showed that a school library has a significant effect on learners' academic performance. Mulwa (2004) carried out a study on the effects of a school's physical facilities on performance of pupils in examination in Kitui district. The study established that the availability of facilities has a direct link with the performance of pupils in examination. He found that the



simple presence of a school library was significantly related to achievement. The study also shows that the number of textbooks borrowed from the library was significantly related to learning achievements of pupils. The Republic of Kenya (2003), technical working group recognized that the availability of educational materials had a major bearing on educational outcomes. These materials included textbooks, equipment, furniture, library facilities and pupils writing materials.

Pupils with access to textbooks and other reading materials learn more than those who do not have access. Textbooks are the most important instructional materials and are particularly effective where teachers use teaching guides with them. Other learning materials such as papers and posters also facilitate pupil learning (Gathara, 2003).

Media education provides teachers of the existing subject with strategies for facing challenges in their own teaching. This means ways of dealing with films, television programme and photograph among others. Instructional media not only provide necessary concrete experiences but also help students integrate prior experiences. Twoli, Maundu, Muindi, Kiiro and Kithinji (2007), echo this by contending that teaching – learning resources are very useful as learners acquire information from them other than from the teacher alone.

### **2.3.5 Teachers In-Service Courses**

In-service training is an old concept that has continuously been modified to suit the dynamics of life. Terms such as professional development, staff development, in – service training, refresher courses, all refer to the same concept. All these terms are used to mean any experience designed to enhance teacher performance with ultimate goal of promoting student learning (Wanzate, 2000).

The quality of education will not improve without a critical look at the teachers' practices. The in-service training workshop gives teachers a personal and professional boost, allowing them to use new materials and inject more life and participation in the classroom (Cuttman in UNESCO, 2002).

Olembo, Wanga and Karagu (1992) in their research on management in education, states that the importance of in- service education programmes for the qualified teachers is supported by the fact that, they offer quickest way of introducing changes and improvements in primary schools. Shiundu and Omulando (1992) in their research on curriculum theory and practice in Kenya, posit that constant teacher in - service is very necessary, as it fills the gaps which were not filled during the times of teacher training.

Pawlas (1997) in management training defines staff development as a set of activities planned and carried out to promote the personal growth of teachers/ workers. Various organizations all over the world have adopted and embraced the concept of in- service training as a strategy of attaining the organizations' goals. According to UNESCO (1998), in some countries, the term continuing education is used to stress that teaching is 'learning' occupation in which practitioners should have opportunities for periodically updating and renewing their knowledge, skills and capabilities throughout their careers.

In - service training or continuing education is a sign of educational quality and career development and has to clearly be marked as a necessary element of improving the effectiveness of a school as part of the learning environment (ILO, 1996). Teachers who have undergone in-service training are expected to perform better than those who have not. This is true especially in view of the "aging phenomenon" of educational personnel and the simultaneously increasing speed of

technical and methodological progress and innovation. (Brandt & Rymenans, 2000). This study filled the gap by finding out if availability of study resources and supervision of teaching and in- service courses affected English performance in KCPE in Komothai zone Githunguri District.

## **2.4 Pupils - Related Variable**

### **2.4.1. Pupils' Attitudes Towards English**

The personal characteristics of pupils for example responsibility, commitment, persistence, determination and intellectual potential are significantly influenced by family members. These characteristics in most cases contribute to the degree that learners pursue and complete educational goals. Though pupils performance and study completion are usually associated with an individual pupil's own personal attributes, motivation and initiatives, one cannot ignore the influence that others have on pupils' decisions to pursue and complete their studies ( Kombo, 2005).

A child self-image, self-concept or expectation is critical for academic development because forecasts on the self, likely filter colour or even determine the child's experiences. If children think they will do poorly, they opt to hang back and avoid doing the very things that will help them learn. Low expectations are infectious. Persons who hold low expectations for themselves encourage others to hold low expectations also (Kombo, 2005). Mutea (2000) in an analysis of performance in English at KCSE in Kenya, notes that a pass in English is no longer a requirement for admission into national institutions of higher learning. A pass in either English or Kiswahili would do except for university admission for some specific courses. Students opt to be keener in Kiswahili over English.

Muthuku (2000) in an investigation of factors causing poor performance in English at Mugumo Girls in Kirinyaga District in Kenya, concludes that a learner's attitude

greatly determined his/her performance in school and more so in life. Learners who viewed English as difficult, a foreign language and not useful in their day-to-day life were most likely to do poorly in it. Whereas those who were optimistic and had a positive attitude, took pride in the language, showed meaningful interest and good performance in English examinations.

Orina (1998) in a study of factors causing poor performance in English in Nyamira District of Kenya, notes that pupils who were well-disciplined and knew how to spend their time in reading story books, practised exercises daily and communicated using English while in class and in games performed well in their examinations. Mworira (1993) said that a student's attitude towards education influenced his academic performance. A pupils' attitude towards English also influenced his or her performance in it. Thus, researchers believe that students' attitudes to language are of great importance because they influence the way students learn languages and written forms of languages.

The above assertions therefore, make the learning of English language important. In a second language situation, English is the language of the mass media, newspapers, radio and television. English is also the language of official institutions, law court, local and central government and education. It is also the language of large commercial and industrial organizations. Clearly, a good command of English in a second language situation is the passport of social and economic advancement and the successful user in the appropriate variety of English identifies himself as a successful, integrated member of that language community (Wauye, 2004).

Pupils need to have a positive attitude toward English and also to practice it in order to perform well in their Examinations. This study filled the gap by finding out how

pupils' attitudes towards English affected English performance in KCPE in public primary schools in Komothai zone, Githunguri District.

## **2.5 Home-Related Variables**

### **2.5.1 Pupils' Home Environment**

Orina (1998) in a study of factors affecting performance of English in KCSE in Nyamira District of Kenya, noted that some regional groups did not seem to attach any importance to education at all, hence, participation rates of children from such groups were low. Such groups included the Maasai, Turkana and Samburu. Children from such background might not value schooling hence may not perform. There were however, some children from such background that had attained high levels of academic achievement. Similarly, attitudes from the community had a bearing on the pupils' performance in education, the English subject being part of that performance.

Ndiritu (1999) in a study of factors influencing performance KCSE in Nairobi and Central provinces of Kenya, noted that, there was a positive and significant correlation between parental level of education and the student' achievement. The same could be said for English since such parents encouraged their children and helped them in schoolwork, for instance by buying them supplementary books. Parents whose incomes were low tended to be illiterate or semi-literate. Gathara (2003) in a study of factors influencing Kenya Certificate of Primary Education performance noted that parental involvement in homework and written policies improve school performance.

Wauye (2004) in a study of factors that affect student performance in English in Siaya District, states that parents send signals to the children about the level of education they expect their children to attain. One such signal is the willingness of parents to finance the schooling to the level they believe is sufficient to their children. Other

parents go to the extent of hiring teachers to teach their children after school hours expecting their children performance to improve. Sometimes it is the same teacher tutoring the pupils' after school hours. Pupils' performance in language also seems to depend on availability of materials coupled with parental encouragement for their utilization.

Mutea (2000) in an analysis of performance in English at KCSE in Kenya points out that children in rural areas have difficulties learning English because the language of communication in many homes is mainly mother tongue. Therefore, children in rural areas do not hear English often enough. Rural children entirely rely on their teachers for the extension of their vocabulary and sometimes construction. Muthwii (2002) in a case study carried out in Kenyan and Ugandan primary schools using interviews on perceptions of parents, pupils and teachers on the use of mother tongue , Kiswahili and English, revealed that most pupils in under privileged rural schools could not understand instructions in the curriculum due to unfamiliar vocabulary in the language of instruction. Many of the pupils in those schools experienced problems in communicating using English and were not able to express their ideas fully in English. Some blamed teachers for talking too fast and others had problems with spelling systems and pronunciation in English.

Mworia (1993), noted that home environment might enhance positive self-esteem which might improve academic performance. This included the house setup and the parents' relationship with the child. If the parents were able to offer a home environment conducive to learning, the student was bound to perform better. Lack of conducive home environment resulted in poor performance. This also applied to English as a subject.

Conclusively, the provision of warm and supportive environment that encourages the child will have a clear effect on language acquisition. This study filled the gap by finding out how the home environment, mother tongue and Kiswahili affected English performance in KCPE in public primary schools in Komothai zone, Githunguri District.

## **2.6. Summary of Reviewed Literature**

The literature revealed that the qualifications and experience of teachers, teacher-pupil ratio and teachers' attitudes are all related to achievement. There is a correlation between the use of various teaching methods and achievement. A good teacher is one who understands various teaching methods and is able to convert those methods in to productive teacher-pupil interactive process. School resources have an impact on the pupils' academic performance. These consist of learning materials, for example, textbooks, exercise books, papers, pens, pencils, maps etc. The quality of school buildings and equipment, availability of appropriate desks, chairs library holdings and laboratories also have an impact on the pupils' academic performance. The quality assurance and standard officers need to liaise closely with teachers of English to ensure that the required standards are attained. Teachers of English also need to attend in – service courses in order to keep abreast with the changes in the curriculum and methods of teaching.

The literature revealed that pupils who were disciplined and knew how to spend their time in reading story books, practised exercises daily and communicated using English while in class and in games performed well in their examinations. The review also indicated that learner's attitude greatly determined his/her performance through school and more so in life. Learners who viewed English as difficult, a foreign language and not useful in their day-to-day life are most likely to do poorly in it.

Whereas those who are optimistic took pride in the language, showed meaningful interest and good performance in English examinations. The home environment has been cited as one of the factors which influence academic performance. The review indicated that there was positive and significant correlation between parental level of education and students' achievement. The same could be said of English since such parents encouraged their children and helped them in school homework, for instance, by buying them English supplementary books.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the research methodology used to uncover the determinants of pupils performance in English in public primary schools in Komothai zone. The chapter gives the details of methodology of the study. The research methodology was discussed under the following sub-topics. Research design, location of the study, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments, validity and reliability of research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The study used a correlational Ex-post factor approach. The independent variables that were considered were pupils' background and attitudes, teacher qualifications, teaching methods, syllabus coverage, parental support and other factors. The dependent variable was English performance in KCPE.

The correlational method had some advantages. The technique permitted one to measure a great number of variables and their interrelations simultaneously. It also provided information concerning the degree of relationship between variables being studied (Orodho, 2009, Keppel, Sanfely & Tokunanga, 1992). In other words, the researcher did not manipulate the variables. Ex-post factor is a type of correlational research which aims at discovering relationships between two or a set of variables or data. There are different measures of relationships but the most commonly used is the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. (Orodho, 2009). The design was considered appropriate because the research did not attempt to exert an influence on a measured response. Since variables were not controlled, this approach did not attempt to

identify causal relations among variables but instead it aimed at identifying the variables that occurred together.

The researcher sought to find out whether there was a relationship between :

- i. Learning resources, supervision of teaching, teachers in – service courses and pupils performance in English in KCPE in Komothai zone in Githunguri District.
- ii. Pupil-related variables and pupils’ performance in English in KCPE in Komothai zone in Githunguri District.
- iii. Teachers’ qualifications and teaching methodology and pupils’ performance in English in KCPE.
- iv. Influence of mother tongue, Kiswahili and home environment and pupils’ performance in English in KCPE.

### **3.3. Study Locale**

This study was conducted in Komothai zone which is in Kiratina location in Gathugu Division, Githunguri District. Githunguri District is in Kiambu County. It neighbours Nairobi to the South, Kiambu East District to the West and Thika District to the East. Githunguri District is located between the longitude 369°E and latitude 028°S. The main source of livelihood in the District is dairy farming, coffee and tea growing. Small-scale famers grow food crops like maize, beans and potatoes for local consumption. This location was chosen because of its low grades in English in KCPE for the last ten years.

### **3.4. Study Population**

Komothai zone had 14 public primary schools by the year 2010. All the 14 public primary schools were mixed day schools. They had a total of 606 standard 8 pupils in 2008 and a total number of 566 standard 8 pupils by January 2009 and 724 standard 8

pupils in the year 2010. The study population included 14 headteachers, 55 teachers of English and 724 standard eight pupils from the Komothai zone. One Quality Assurance and Standards officer from Komothai zone and 724 parents from schools' neighbourhood were also included in the population. This was because the headteachers organized the teaching and learning process in their schools and were in a better position to provide general information about their schools. Teachers were in constant contact with the pupils on a daily basis. Standard eight pupils had been in school for many years and were preparing for KCPE examinations. Therefore, they were likely to be aware of the factors that influenced pupils' performance in English in KCPE and could, therefore, provide more reliable information on the same.

### **3.5. Samples and Sampling Procedure**

#### **3.5.1 Sample Size**

A sample is a representative subject of a population (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996).

The study sample was as shown in the table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Population and sample size**

| <b>Population type</b>    | <b>Population size</b> | <b>Sample size</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Schools                   | 14                     | 7                  |
| Pupils                    | 724                    | 126                |
| Headteachers              | 14                     | 7                  |
| English teachers          | 55                     | 26                 |
| Parents                   | 724                    | 70                 |
| Quality assurance officer | 1                      | 1                  |

Best and Kahn (1998) in research in education, said that the larger the sample, the smaller the magnitude of sampling error and the greater the likelihood that the sample was representative of population. They said that the minimum percentage required to ensure representativeness of a sample is 10 %. Orodho (2009: P.150) in elements of education and social science research methods noted that “While 2000-3000 is the extreme upper limit of the sample size, the extreme lower limit is generally 30 cases for statistical data analysis, although most social researchers would probably recommend at least 100 cases.” Gay (1992) in educational research, recommends that a sample size of at least 10-20% of the target population is adequate for research in social sciences. Huha (2003) concurs with this in quoting the central limit theorem that states that if the sample size increases, the shape of sampling distribution of means increases like the normal size.

### **3.5.2 Sampling Technique**

The study covered a total of 7 public primary schools. This represented 50% of the 14 public primary schools, which is higher than the minimum sample of 10% as recommended by Gay (1992). The 7 (50%) headteachers in the 7 public primary schools were purposively selected to be involved in the study. In purposive sampling, the researcher relies on his/her expertise or expert judgement to select units that are representative or typical of the population. It is handpicking the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of one’s judgement of their typicality (Orodho, 2009). The researcher purposively selected all the teachers of English in the sample who were 26 (47.3%). The objective of the researcher was to select at least 10% of the teachers in line with Gay’s (1992) recommendation. One Quality Assurance and Standards Officer was purposively selected for the study (a zone has only one quality assurance and standards officer). Then, the researcher stratified the selected schools. In a stratified sample, the sampling frame is divided into non-overlapping groups or strata,

e.g. gender, performance levels etc. A sample is taken from each stratum, and when this sample is a simple random sample, it is referred to as stratified random sampling (Orodho, 2008). Stratified random sampling was applied to arrive at school's performance levels. The percentages of schools with English mean scores of between 30-39, 40-49, and 50-59 and the number of schools to be selected from each category were stratified.

**Table 3.2: Schools' Sample Based on Performance Levels.**

| <b>N=14</b>               |          |          |          |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>Performance levels</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>n</b> |
| 30-39                     | 4        | 29       | 2        |
| 40-49                     | 7        | 50       | 4        |
| 50-59                     | 3        | 21       | 1        |

Simple random sampling was then used to select the schools to be included in the study. The names of schools with English mean scores of between 30 – 39 were written on different pieces of paper folded and then put in a box. The box was shuffled and the researcher picked 2 pieces of paper and these schools were included in the study. The same procedure was followed for the category of 40 – 49 English mean scores and 4 schools were selected for study while those with mean score of 50 - 59, 1 school was selected for the study.

### **Pupils sample**

There were 724 pupils in the target population. In this study, a sample size of 126 pupils was deemed satisfactory given cost and time constraints. The objective of the researcher was to select at least 10% of the pupils in line with the Gay's (1992)

recommendation. The use of stratified sampling also increases precision for any given sample size (Orodho, 2008). Therefore, the researcher selected 126 pupils for the study which is 17.4% of the target population. Stratified random sampling was used to determine the pupils to be included in the study in terms of gender. Out of 724 pupils, 404 were females and 320 were males.

Simple random sampling was then used to select standard 18 pupils in each of the sample schools. The names of all standard eight girls were written down on different pieces of paper.

They were then folded and put in a box. The box was shuffled and the researcher picked 10 pieces of paper from this box and the names of girls on these pieces of paper were selected for the study. The same procedure was repeated for boys in each of the sample schools to select 8 boys.

### **Parents Sample**

The parents were selected using simple random sampling with the help of the headteacher of each sample school. The headteacher had some knowledge of some parents with standard 8 pupils and he therefore, guided the researcher in selecting 10 parents from the neighbourhood. The sample from headteachers, teachers of English, standard 8 pupils, Quality Assurance and Standards Officer and parents gave a total of 230 respondents. This is shown in table 3.3.

**Table 3.3: Overall Sample**

| <b>Respondents</b>        | <b>N</b> | <b>n<sub>1</sub></b> | <b>%</b> | <b>n<sub>2</sub></b> | <b>%</b> |
|---------------------------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|----------|
| Pupils (female)           | 404      | 71                   | 56       | 10                   | 56       |
| Pupils (male)             | 320      | 55                   | 44       | 8                    | 44       |
| Headteachers              | 14       | 7                    | 50       | 1                    | 50       |
| Teachers of English       | 55       | 26                   | 47.3     | 4                    | 47.3     |
| Parents                   | 724      | 70                   | 10       | 10                   | 10       |
| Quality assurance officer | 1        | 1                    | 100      | -                    | -        |

n<sub>1</sub>=total number of respondents

n<sub>2</sub>= number of respondents from each school

### **3.6. Research Instruments**

The research instruments which were used in this study to collect data were questionnaires and interview schedule.

#### **3.6.1. Questionnaire**

There were four sets of questionnaires. Pupils questionnaire, teachers questionnaire and headteachers questionnaire and Quality Assurance and Standards Officer questionnaire. Questionnaire was used because it was the most commonly used method when respondents could be reached and were willing to cooperate. Questionnaire could reach a large number of subjects who were able to read and write independently (Orodho, 2008).

The questionnaire could be completed at the informant's own time. The required information can be extracted from the answers given by the respondents (Kibuuka & Karuga, 2003). Questionnaires covered a wider scope. Likert scale was used to

measure the attitude of teachers and pupils. Likert scale was the most commonly used rating scale. It was used to measure perception, attitude, values and behaviour (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

#### **3.6.1.1 Pupils Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was meant for pupils and was divided in two parts, sections A and B. Section A had Likert attitude scale for measuring attitude of the pupils. Section B gathered information about the pupils' background curriculum and instruction coverage.

#### **3.6.1.2 Teachers Questionnaire**

This was also divided into two sections, section A had Likert attitude scale for measuring attitude of the teachers. Section B gathered information about teachers' backgrounds, availability of school facilities and resources, teachers' benefits and motivation, curriculum and instruction coverage.

#### **3.6.1.3 Headteachers Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was similarly divided into two sections. Section A dealt with the headteachers' academic and professional qualifications as well as administrative qualifications. Section B sought to gain information on the availability of physical facilities like library, workshops, teacher/pupil ratio, examination performance, policies and socio-economic background of the pupils and their catchment area.

#### **3.6.1.1 Quality Assurance and Standards Officer Questionnaire**

This gathered information about the number of teachers and pupils in the zone and also the performance of the schools.

### **3.6.2 Interview**

**Parents interview schedule:** There was an interview schedule that gathered information about their children's attitude towards English. Kombo & Tromp (2006)



in proposal and thesis writing define interviews as questions asked orally. Interview schedule is among the best methods in that it involves direct verbal interaction between individuals. It provides in-depth data which are not possible to get using a questionnaire (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). The researcher interacts with the respondents face-to-face and can observe non-verbal expressions which would not be observed in other techniques (Cohen & Manion, 1995). The interview permits the researcher to obtain greater clarity of information being sought e.g. questions might be modified if it appears that they are being misunderstood. Control over the research is also provided through judicious use of probes. The interviewer can collect supplementary information about the respondent's personal characteristics and environment which is often of great value in interpreting results.

Personal information can be obtained easily under this method and non-response remains low. The interviewer may catch the informant off-guard and thus secure the most spontaneous reactions that would not be the case if a mailed questionnaire were used (Kothari, 2004). Miriam & Wamahiu, (1995) in issues in educational research in Africa, point out that each interviewing sessions may last a few minutes as in a casual conversation or take several hours and the duration of the sessions would depend upon the degree of rapport between the researcher and informant. Ghosh (1992) in scientific methods and social research, says that an interview is done to secure information from the person who alone knew the subject matter.

### **3.7 Validity of the Instrument**

Content validity of the instrument was determined through expert judgement. Content validity is the degree to which the sample of the test represents the content that the test is designed to measure (Orodho, 2008). The researcher used subject matter specialists like university supervisors to evaluate validity of test items. Experts also

made suggestions on the effectiveness of the questionnaire by checking whether it was related to the research questions or not and gave feedback. Their recommendations were incorporated in the final questionnaire.

### **3.8. Reliability of the Instrument**

Reliability is defined as the degree of consistency that the instrument procedure demonstrates. Reliability measurement concerns the degree to which a particular measuring procedure gives similar results over repeated trials (Orodho, 2008). In research, however, reliability might be influenced by random error. As the random error increases, reliability decreases. Therefore, as the researcher designs and administers the chosen instruments, he/she takes care of these errors, which would arise due to inaccurate coding and ambiguous instructions.

The items in the questionnaire addressed the objectives and research questions of the study, which were related to the research topic. The reliability of the instruments were reflected on the items that were structured in simple English to enable the respondents to easily read and understand. To determine reliability of the instrument, the standard 8 pupils, teachers of English and headteachers questionnaire were given to one public primary school (not the ones in the main study). The same questionnaires were administered to the same subjects after a period of two weeks. The responses from the two administrations were then scored manually and a comparison between answers obtained in the two sets was made.

A Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula for the test-retest was employed to compute the correlations coefficient in order to establish the extent to which the contents of the questionnaire were consistent in eliciting the same responses every time the instrument was administered. A correlation coefficient of about 0.75 was

considered high enough to judge the instrument as reliable for the study (Orodho, 2009).

The Quality Assurance and Standards Officer questionnaire was also given to one officer from Githunguri District who was randomly selected (not the one in the main study). The same questionnaire was administered to the same officer after a period of two weeks. The responses from the two administrations were then scored manually and a comparison between answers obtained in the two sets was made.

A Pearson Product Moment Correlation Formula for test-retest was employed to compute the correlation coefficient, to establish the consistency of the questionnaire in eliciting the same responses every time, the instrument was administered. A correlation coefficient of about 0.75 was considered high enough to judge the instrument as reliable for the study (Orodho, 2009).

### **3.9 Piloting**

To enhance the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, a pre-test was conducted on a population similar to the target. This was done before the main study. The research instruments were piloted in one public primary school in Komothai zone which was selected through random sampling. This school was not among the schools sampled for study.

The pilot study was carried out to assess the suitability of the questionnaire for the study. It was necessary to carry out the pre-test exercise to check whether the items were relevant to the study, the wording of the items was clear to the respondents, the items were logically arranged to facilitate responding and whether there was need to delete or add some items. According to Orodho (2008), the main objective of the activity was to enhance the validity of the instruments.

### **3.10 Data Collection Procedure**

The administration of research instruments was done by the researcher both at the pilot and main study. A research permit was obtained from the Ministry of Education and the District Education Officer of Githunguri District.

The researcher visited each school and met the headteacher for introduction and arrangements were made to meet teachers of English and pupils. After this, the schools were visited to administer questionnaires. The headteachers were given their own questionnaires to fill. The teachers of English were also given their questionnaires to fill after introduction to the researcher. The standard eight pupils were assembled in class and sampled. They were then issued with questionnaires to fill and these were collected on the same day. Due to problems of time, money and transport, the researcher intended to administer and collect questionnaires on the same day from each school if it was possible.

If it was not possible, arrangements were made for the deputy headteacher to collect the questionnaires from teachers and pupils and the researcher collected them after one week.

Arrangements were made to visit the zonal office to meet the Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. Introduction was done and he was issued with the questionnaire to fill. Arrangements for a second visit to collect the questionnaire were done as it was not possible to collect it immediately.

Parents from each sample school's neighborhood were also sampled and interviewed. Only those who had standard 8 children in public primary schools were interviewed.

### **3.11 Methods of Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics including frequency counts, means and percentages were used to analyze quantitative data obtained. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) asserts that the

purpose of descriptive statistics is to enable the researcher to meaningfully describe the distribution of scores or measurements using a low indices of statistics. Qualitative analysis refers to methods for examining social research data without converting them to numerical format (Babbie, 2001). It is the non-numerical assessment of observations made through participant observation, content analysis and in-depth interviews and other qualitative research techniques. Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data in line with the objectives of the study. Qualitative data were organized into themes e.g. pupils' academic performance, pupils reading habits, favourite and challenging subjects, and academic trips, influence of mother tongue and Kiswahili and hobbies. This enabled rich description of findings. Quantitative data collected from the field were edited, classified and coded for entry into the computer for analysis using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) Version 17.0. The results of data analysis were presented in frequency tables, histograms, percentages, median and means.

As Onyango (2001), observes statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was known for its ability to handle large amounts of data and given its wide spectrum of statistical procedures purposefully designed for social sciences, it was also quite efficient. Bell (1993), maintains that when making the results known to a variety of readers, percentages have a considerable advantage over more complex statistics. Data were presented in tables of frequency distributions, percentages, pie charts and bar graphs.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents results and statistical analysis of data collected from 26 teachers, 7 headteachers, 126 pupils, 1 Quality Assurance and Standards Officer and 69 parents from 7 public primary schools in Komothai zone in Githunguri District. The purpose of the study was to determine school-based variables that contributed to pupils' performance in English in KCPE in Komothai zone in Githunguri District. Data were presented, analyzed and findings stated under the themes from the objectives of the study.

#### **4.2 Academic Qualification of teachers and Students' Performance**

The first objective was to determine how teachers' qualifications and class size affected pupils' performance in English.

This study sought information on the teacher's academic qualifications, teaching experience, class size, frequency of remedial classes, pupils assessment attitude of teachers towards English. The data were summarized and presented in percentages, means and medians.

##### **4.2.1 Teachers' Background and Qualifications**

This study sought views from teachers on pupils' performance based on teachers' academic and professional qualifications. The results were presented in table 4.1

**Table 4.1: Pupils' Performance and teachers qualification**

N = 25

| <b>Qualification</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Average%</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Bright%</b> |
|----------------------|----------|-----------------|----------|----------------|
| KCE                  | 5        | 100.00          | 0        | 0.00           |
| KCSE                 | 11       | 84.60           | 2        | 15.40          |
| KACE                 | 4        | 83.60           | 2        | 16.70          |
| BACHELOR             | 1        | 100.00          | 0        | 0.00           |
| TOTAL                | 21       | 88.00           | 4        | 12.00          |

Table 4.1 gives a breakdown of class performance by teachers' qualification. Teachers with KCSE had 2 (15.40%) bright pupils and KACE qualification 2 (16.70%) bright pupils than teachers with KCE and bachelors degree who had none. Teachers with KCSE and KACE qualifications had some bright pupils in their classes. Perhaps, this was because of their hard work. Those with KCE and bachelors degree had none. The percentage of bright pupils was low while many pupils were average. Research has indicated that the intellectual ability of teachers should directly influence that of the pupils. A teacher who is intelligent should be able to have a good mastery of his or her subject matter and to pass this on to the students (Mworia, 1993). Research shows that the single most important determinant of school effectiveness is teacher quality. However, research also shows that teachers' formal qualifications are not well-correlated with their effectiveness in classroom for two reasons;

- (i) Teacher pre-service training in many countries is of low quality and imparts only traditional frontal teaching methods and

- (ii) Classroom teachers enjoy a degree of isolation from sonority performance feedback that leaves wide latitude for variations in behaviour and motivation (Hess, 1999).

Revitalizing teachers' pre-service training is important to attract high calibre individuals into the profession.

**Table 4.2: Gender of interviewed teachers**

N =26

| <b>Gender</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---------------|----------|----------------|
| Male          | 5        | 19.2           |
| Female        | 21       | 80.8           |
| Total         | 26       | 100.0          |

The number of interviewed teachers was 5 (19.2%) males and 21 (80.8%) were females.

#### **4.2.2: Teachers rating of pupils' performance**

The study sought views from teachers about their rating of pupils performance. The results were presented in Table 4.3.



**Table 4.3: Class teachers rating of pupil's performance**

N = 26

| <b>Performance rating</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---------------------------|----------|----------------|
| Average                   | 23       | 88.5           |
| Bright                    | 3        | 11.5           |
| Total                     | 26       | 100.0          |

None of the teachers rated their pupil below average, all of them were either average 23 (88.5%) or bright 3 (11.5%) as shown in table 4.3. The teacher rating was based on school evaluation tests, District examinations and the end-of-term records. The pupils had not done mock examinations as they were abolished. A random check on the pupils' report cards was carried to validate the teachers' rating of their pupils. On average the pupils with mean mark of 50-69% was rated average while those above 70% were rated as bright. Further analysis was thus carried on the teachers rating of their class performance.

The teachers rated their pupils as above average. Since the pupils were above average, they were not supposed to get a mean score of below average in KCPE. However, the pupils mean score in English between 2006-2009 was below average. This showed that the teachers were not taking their work seriously to improve pupils' performance in English because if pupils' were disciplined and were properly guided, they would be able to perform well in English.

#### **4.2.3 Pupils' Performance and Teachers' Years of Teaching Experience**

The teachers were asked to rate their pupils basing on the number of years of teaching experience. This was summarized and presented in table 4.4. An interesting

observation on the teachers' background is the years of experience, where fresh graduates with less 3 years teaching experience had about 1 (33%) of the teachers whose pupils were classified as bright. Fresh graduates are from the school locality and they tend to be more enthusiastic with their job and are therefore more dedicated to their work. Those with 4 to 11 years teaching experience had 0% bright pupils.

This can be attributed to localization of teachers to their home areas. The teachers tended to relax in their schoolwork as they got used to the school and attended to other matters. This also made them resistant to change.

**Table 4.4: Pupils' performance and teachers teaching experience**

N = 26

| <b>Teaching experience</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Average%</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Bright%</b> |
|----------------------------|----------|-----------------|----------|----------------|
| 0 – 3 Years                | 2        | 66.70           | 1        | 33.30          |
| 4 – 7 years                | 4        | 100.00          | 0        | 0.00           |
| 8 – 11 years               | 5        | 100.00          | 0        | 0.00           |
| > 12years                  | 12       | 85.70           | 2        | 14.30          |

#### **4.2.4 Number of Pupils per Class and Their Performance**

The teachers were asked to rate the pupils performance in relation to number of pupils per class. The results were presented in Table 4.5. The number of pupils per class showed a difference in terms of classification of pupils as either bright or average. The teachers with more than 40 pupils recorded a low proportion of bright pupils 2 (14.3%). The small percentage of bright pupils is perhaps because of congestion in class. Most pupils are average.

The observations indicated that there were very few bright pupils as most of the pupils were average. This was mainly because of congestion in classes. Teachers were not able to have good interaction with the pupils. They were also not able to give and mark many exercises because of the large number of pupils. Wragg (1990), states that the quality and quantity of teacher pupil interaction is a critical dimension of effective classroom teaching since pupil centred teaching is paramount to any kind of learning. Learning should be through all senses such that the teachers should use teaching aids and encourage pupils to use their own. This may not be possible in cases where class size is big (Nceri, 2006).

**Table 4.5: Pupils’ performance in relation to class size**

N=26

| <b>Pupils per class</b> | <b>n</b>  | <b>Average %</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Bright%</b> |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------------|----------|----------------|
| 20-30                   | 8         | 88.90            | 1        | 11.10          |
| 30-40                   | 3         | 100.00           | 0        | 0.00           |
| Over 40                 | 12        | 85.70            | 2        | 14.30          |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>23</b> | <b>88.50</b>     | <b>3</b> | <b>11.50</b>   |

#### **4.2.5 Remedial Classes and Pupils’ Performance**

Teachers were asked to rate their pupils’ performance in relation to remedial classes that were given. The results were presented in table 4.6. Teachers who always organized remedial classes for their pupils had about 1(16.7%) who were bright in their classes while those who often organized remedial classes had about 1 (6.3%) who were bright.

Observations indicated that very few teachers organized remedial classes for their pupils. As such, most of the pupils were average. Pupils need the help and guidance of their teachers for them to perform well. Teachers were expected to help the weak students even if it means having extra time with them until they understand the concepts involved in learning English. Ndiritu (1999), observed that within limits, the more the hours allowed in instruction in a subject, the higher the achievement.

**Table 4.6: Pupils’ performance in relation to frequencies of remedial classes**

N = 26

| <b>Remedial classes</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Average %</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Bright %</b> |
|-------------------------|----------|------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Always                  | 5        | 83.30            | 1        | 16.70           |
| Rarely                  | 3        | 75.00            | 1        | 25.00           |
| Often                   | 15       | 93.80            | 1        | 6.30            |
| Total                   | 23       | 88.50            | 3        | 11.50           |

#### **4.2.6 Pupils’ Performance and Assessment**

The study sought views from teachers on pupils’ performance based on the assessment they gave to their pupils. The result on the pupil’s performance by assessment frequency were presented in table 4.7. Teachers who carried out daily and termly assessment had 0, (0%) bright pupils in their classes. Perhaps when pupils were assessed daily, they became tired and took it just like a routine, hence they were not serious. By the end of the term, they were also overworked. Teachers who carried out weekly and monthly assessment had about 2 (16.70%) and 1 (14.30%) bright pupils in their classes respectively. Perhaps weekly and monthly examinations were

better ways of assessing pupils. Majority of the teachers about 12 (46%) carried out weekly assessment and only 1 (4%) of them carried out termly assessment.

According to Hess (1999), teachers effectiveness and commitment is measured in terms of frequency of assessment tests and homework, remedial teaching, extra help in revision, quality of lesson notes, professional documents, use of teaching aids and school attendance.

Assessment helps the teacher to know how well the pupils have understood a certain topic or area. Daily assessment may lose meaning because even the work covered in a day may be minimal. Observations showed that weekly and monthly assessment were the best because substantial amount of work would already be covered and it would help the teachers to know whether pupils had understood a certain topic or whether there was need of repeating. When assessment was carried out only at the end of the term, pupils tended to relax and only revised at the end of the term and hence did not perform well.

**Table 4.7: Pupils' performance based on assessment**

N = 26

| <b>Assessment</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>Average %</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Bright %</b> |
|-------------------|----------|------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Daily             | 6        | 100.00           | 0        | 0.00            |
| Weekly            | 10       | 83.30            | 2        | 16.70           |
| Monthly           | 6        | 85.70            | 1        | 14.30           |
| Termly            | 1        | 100.00           | 0        | 0.00            |

#### 4.2.7 Pupils' Performance and Teachers' Marking and Revising Assignment

Teachers were asked to rate their pupils performance based on their marking and revising assignment. The results were presented in table 4.8 where it can be seen that 3 (11.5%) of teachers who did not mark and revise their assignments had 2 (66.70%) who had bright pupils. On the other hand teachers who marked and revised assignments were 23 (88.5%). Twenty two (95.7%) of these teachers had their pupils rated as average.

Marking of assignment helps to give feedback to the teachers and pupils of how well a topic had been understood. Hess (1999), noted that teachers effectiveness and commitment is measured in terms of frequency and assessment tests and homework, remedial teaching, extra help in revision, quality of lesson notes, use of professional documents and school attendance. Observations showed that majority of the teachers marked and revised the assignments given to the pupils. However, there was a low percentage of bright pupils. Comprehensive assignments should be given in order to evaluate the learning process.

**Table 4.8: Pupils' performance based on teacher's markings and revising assignments**

N =26

| Assessments | n  | Average % | n | Bright % |
|-------------|----|-----------|---|----------|
| Yes         | 22 | 95.70     | 1 | 4.30     |
| No          | 1  | 33.30     | 2 | 66.70    |

#### 4.2.8. Pupils' Interest Towards English and Their Performance

Teachers were asked to rate their pupils' performance based on pupils' interest towards English. This was presented in table 4.9. All the teachers said their pupils

showed interest in English with 24 (92.3%) giving a firm “yes” and only 2 (7.7%) saying “sometimes”. Those who said yes had 2, (8.30%) teachers with bright pupils in their classes and 22 (91.70%) teachers with average pupils.

Observations showed that all the pupils showed interest towards English. The role of pupils in the school is to learn and learning involves several activities which include participation in class, doing assignment, revising the work done, among others. For this to be accomplished, the pupils need to be present in the school and be of good discipline.

**Table 4.9: Pupils’ performance based on their interest towards English**

N = 26

| <b>Pupils</b>    | <b>n</b> | <b>Average %</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Bright %</b> |
|------------------|----------|------------------|----------|-----------------|
| <b>interests</b> |          |                  |          |                 |
| Yes              | 22       | 91.70            | 2        | 8.30            |
| Sometimes        | 1        | 50.00            | 1        | 50.00           |

#### **4.2.9 Teacher’s Attitude Towards English**

The study sought views from teachers about their attitudes towards English. The results were presented in Table 4.10. In overall, teachers had a positive attitude towards English with a mean score of 3.7 on a Likert attitude scale of 1 to 5. Two outstanding observations were that the teachers thought that pupils had to do much of the work in order to succeed, which had a mean score of 4.6 with a median of 5 and the second highly rated attitude was that teachers had learnt more during their teaching time than what they learnt at the teacher training colleges.

The study showed that teachers seemed to have positive attitude towards English. For teachers to be effective in teaching English, they should have positive attitude towards

it and this would also enhance the attitude of the pupils. For pupils to perform well in English, they need to do many English exercises and also practise speaking English. Teachers gain experience in the field as they teach. This is when they become conversant with the English syllabus and they also get a chance to mark national examinations and are therefore, able to guide their pupils as far as examination techniques are concerned.

UNESCO (1998), noted that in some countries the term continuing education is used to stress that teaching is “learning” occupation in which practitioners should have opportunities for periodically updating and renewing their knowledge, skills and capabilities throughout their careers.



**Table 4.10: Teachers' attitudes towards English**

N = 26

| <b>Factor</b>   | <b>n</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Median</b> |
|---|----------|-------------|---------------|
| English syllabus is relevant                            | 26       | 4.192       | 4.000         |
| Syllabus is too broad                                   | 26       | 3.808       | 4.000         |
| Pupils have to do much of the work                      | 26       | 4.560       | 5.000         |
| Syllabus is easy to teach                               | 26       | 2.115       | 2.000         |
| Syllabus cannot be covered in allocated time            | 25       | 3.240       | 4.000         |
| I enjoy teaching English                                | 26       | 3.885       | 4.000         |
| Marking papers is taxing                                | 25       | 4.280       | 4.000         |
| Significant for academic advancement                    | 26       | 4.423       | 4.500         |
| English is a difficult task                             | 25       | 3.560       | 4.000         |
| Most pupils are able to read at end of prim. Education  | 25       | 4.077       | 4.000         |
| Most pupils are able to write at end of prim. Education | 25       | 3.500       | 4.000         |
| More comfortable teaching English than other subjects   | 26       | 3.000       | 2.500         |
| Teachers often converse in English                      | 26       | 2.885       | 2.500         |
| Learned more during teaching than at the training       | 25       | 4.520       | 5.000         |
| Pupils have enough textbooks                            | 24       | 3.042       | 2.500         |
| Pupils should be compelled to speak only English        | 26       | 3.652       | 4.000         |
| Overall   | 26       | 3.671       |               |

### **4.3 Pupils' Performance and School Supervision**

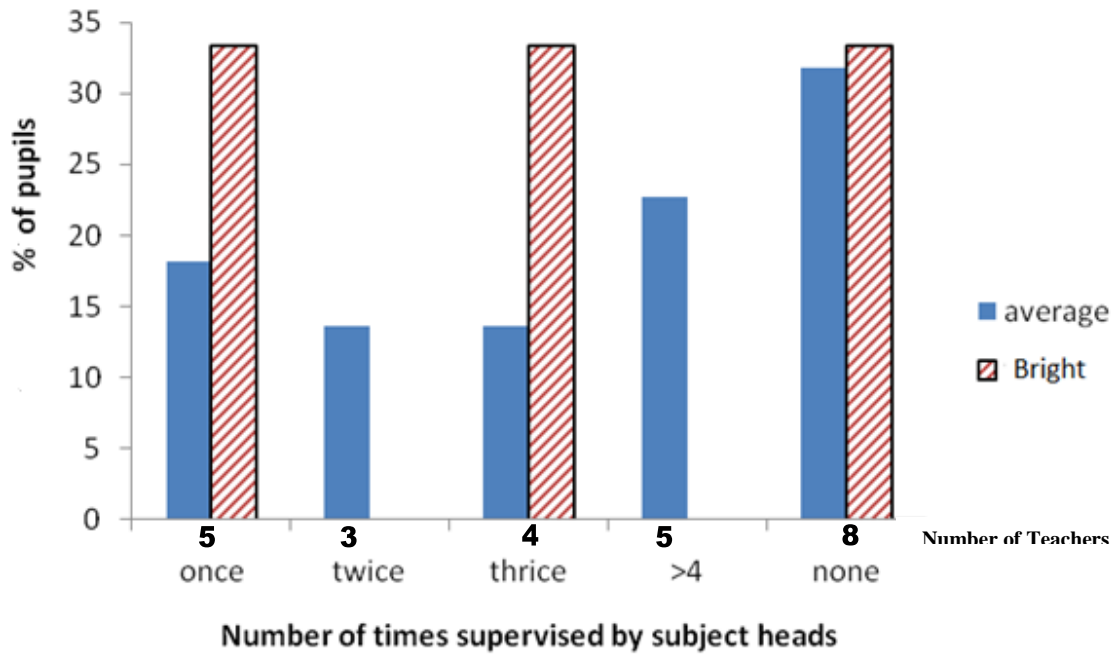
The second objective was to find out how supervision, study resources and in-service courses affected pupils' performance in English. In this section, supervision of teaching, availability of study resources and in-service courses attended were presented.

### **4.3.1 Supervision of Teachers by Subject Heads**

The study sought views from teachers about their supervision by subject heads. Eight (32%) of the respondents only said that they were never supervised by the subject heads as shown in Figure 4.1.

The teachers who were not supervised by subject heads had brighter pupils and more average pupils than those supervised (Fig. 4.1). The subject heads being the immediate supervisors carried out very limited assessment and supervision functions. This could be attributed to the many lessons the subject heads were teaching which left them with inadequate time to assess teachers and provide them with feedback on supervision. Those supervised twice and more than four times had no bright pupils. This could mean that subject heads did not take supervision seriously and did not give feedback to the teachers to help them improve in their weak areas. It could also be attributed to the fact that teachers had a negative attitude towards supervision, Olembo, Wanga and Karagu (1992), said that supervision in primary schools can be assumed to be a professional service involving the relevant educational administrators for the purpose of interacting with teachers, in such a way as to maintain change and improve the provision and actualization of learning opportunities for pupils.

Despite the role played by supervision in evaluating the learning process the subject heads seemed to be lacking supervisory skills and techniques.



**Figure 4.1: Pupils’ performance and the frequency of supervision by subject heads**

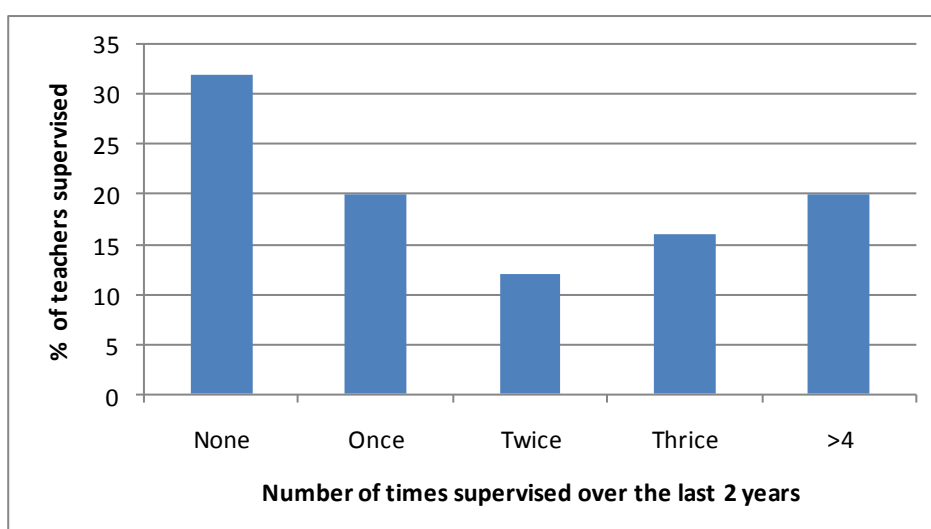
#### **4.3.2 Supervision by Quality Assurance and Standards Officers**

Teachers were asked about their being supervised by quality assurance and standards officers. The results were presented in figure 4.2. A similar trend of supervision by subject heads was observed on the supervision by quality assurance and standards officers. Nine (33%) of the respondents were never supervised by the school quality assurance and standards officers. Those who were supervised did not show considerable change in performance.

The findings indicated that teachers had a negative attitude towards supervision. Teachers viewed supervision in suspect as a process through which they would be victimized. Furthermore, teachers who had been in service for many years felt that they were good enough not to require supervision. As such, they did not seem to take the quality assurance and standard officer’s report seriously and therefore, they did not implement their recommendations. Teachers should take the advice and report by

quality assurance and standard officer seriously and implement their recommendations. Supervisors should also create an amicable environment for the teachers when carrying out the assessment.

Additionally, they should handle the suggestions that the teachers give, to make them feel their opinions are taken into account. Feedback should be given to those who have been assessed to help them have a better understanding of their areas of weakness that need improvement. This should also be coupled with holding discussions after assessment sessions to debrief. Olembo, Wanga and Karagu (1992), said that being the custodian of standards, the inspectorate (now directorate of quality assurance and standards department) plays the role of a supervisor as well as the advisory through assurance and quality development. As a supervisor, the department ensures that procedures are followed and maintained and national goals are achieved. In an advisory capacity, the department plays the professional role of liaising closely with classroom teachers for the purpose of attaining the required educational standards.



**Figure 4.2: Number of times supervised by quality assurance and standards officers over the last 2 years**

### 4.3.3 Access to Reference Books and Pupils' Performance in English

Teachers were asked about their access to reference books in relation to pupils' performance. The results were presented in table 4.11. Less than half of the teachers 12 (46.2%) had access to reference books and it didn't show any relation with the pupils' performance because those who didn't have access to reference books performed equally well. Perhaps those who had access to reference books do not make good use of them.

The reference books were supposed to help the teachers to be updated on the content they were teaching. This was also supposed to help the learner to be thorough in their syllabus coverage and therefore, to improve in their English performance. Republic of Kenya (2003) technical working group recognized that the availability of educational materials had a major bearing on educational outcomes. These materials include the textbooks, equipment, furniture, library facilities and pupils' writing materials.

**Table 4.11: Pupils' performance in relation to teachers' access to reference books**

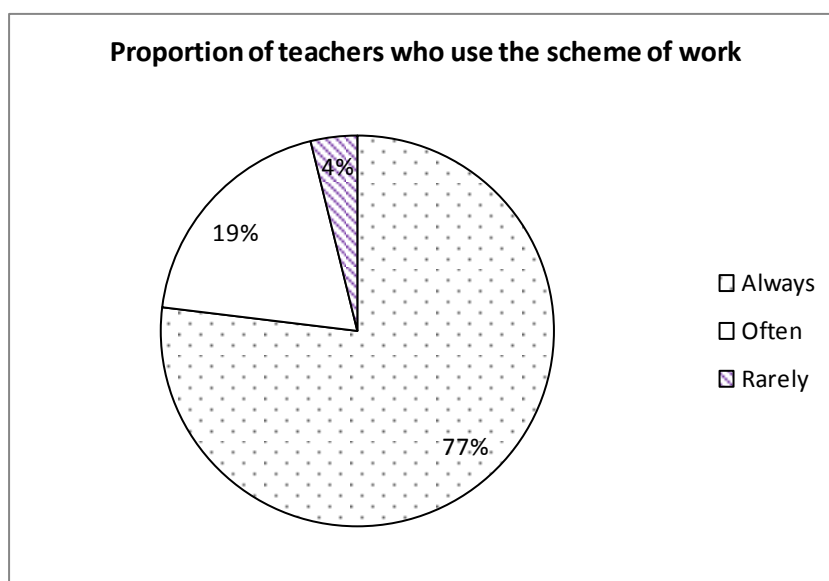
N = 26

| <b>Reference books</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>% of teachers</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Average %</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Bright %</b> |
|------------------------|----------|----------------------|----------|------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Yes                    | 12       | 46.2                 | 12       | 100.00           | 0        | 0.00            |
| No                     | 14       | 53.8                 | 11       | 78.60            | 3        | 21.40           |

#### 4.3.4. Use of Schemes of Work, Lesson Plans and Records of Work

The study sought to establish whether the teachers used schemes of work, lesson plans and records of work. This was presented in figure 4.3. One (4%) of the teachers did not use their schemes of work, lesson plans and records of work. Those who used them always were 5 (19%). All those who used these documents appreciated their usefulness in teaching English.

Observations showed that schemes of work and lesson plans helped the teachers to plan their work and ensured syllabus coverage. Lesson plans enabled the teachers to deliver the content to the learner effectively. As such they are important professional documents which all teachers should have.



**Figure 4.3: Proportion of teachers who use schemes of work, lesson plans and records of work**

#### 4.3.5. Teachers In-Service Courses and Pupils' Performance in English

Teachers were asked the in-service courses they had attended in relation to pupils' performance. The results were presented in table 4.12. Over 17 (65%) of the teachers had not attended any in-service course. Those who attended in-service courses once

and less than four times had 0 (0%) bright pupils in their classes. Perhaps this was because their pupils were average performers or because of working conditions. Those who attended in-service courses twice were 4 (15.4%) and 1 (25%) had bright pupils in their classes. This could be attributed to their being able to use the knowledge they acquired as they taught English.

Observations indicated that most of the teachers did not attend in-service courses. More in-service courses needed to be organized to give teachers a personal and professional boost and allow them to use more material and inject more life and participation in their classrooms. Olembo, Wanga and Karagu (1992) stated that the importance of in-service education programmes for qualified teachers is supported by the fact that, they offer the quickest way of introducing changes and improvements in primary schools. This is due to the fact that demands on the teacher change considerably during their career due to demands of new curricula and methods of teaching. Consequently, in-service teacher education is necessary to enable teachers to face challenges of these changing needs. Shiundu and Omulando (1992) add that constant teacher in-service is necessary as it fills the gaps which were not filled during the times of teacher training.

**Table 4.12: Pupils’ performance based on in-service courses attended by teachers of English**

N = 26

| In-service course | n  | % of teachers | n  | Average % | n | Bright % |
|-------------------|----|---------------|----|-----------|---|----------|
| Once              | 2  | 7.7           | 2  | 100.00    | 0 | 0.00     |
| Twice             | 4  | 15.4          | 3  | 75.00     | 1 | 25.00    |
| < four            | 3  | 11.5          | 3  | 100.00    | 0 | 0.00     |
| None              | 17 | 65.4          | 15 | 88.24     | 2 | 11.76    |

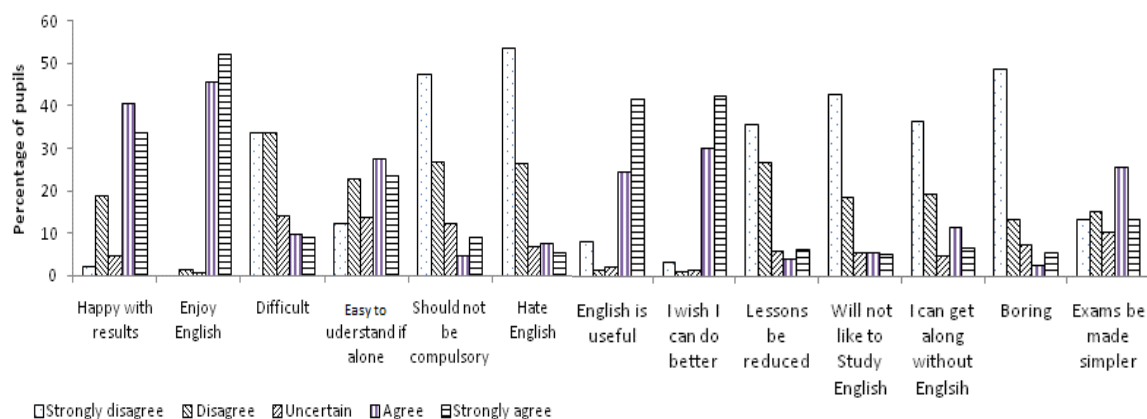
#### 4.4 Pupils’ Attitudes and Academic Performance

The third objective was to identify how pupils’ attitudes towards English affected their performance in English. In this section, pupils’ attitudes towards English, parental support, commitment, and study resources were presented.

##### 4.4.1 Pupils’ Attitudes Towards English Based on Gender and Age

The study sought views from pupils about their attitude towards English. The results were presented in figure 4.4 while tables 4.13 and 4.14 present pupils’ attitudes towards English by gender and age categories.

The graph below give the overall pupil’s attitudes towards English.



**Figure 4.4: Overall pupils’ attitudes towards English**



Most of the pupils interviewed had a positive attitude towards English, (fig 4.4). Asked about whether they enjoyed English, 70 (55%) said they enjoyed English and that English was useful. There were no major differences in gender, both males and females had over 80, (70%) positive score (table 4.13).

Observations showed that it was very important for learners to have a positive attitude towards English in order for them to improve their performance in it. Pupil's performance is usually associated with an individual pupil's own personal attributes, motivation and initiatives. Muthuku (2000), agrees with this when he says that a learner's attitude greatly determines his/her performance in school and more so in life. Learners who viewed English as difficult, a foreign language and not useful in their day-to-day life, are most likely to do poorly in it. Whereas, those who are optimistic and had positive attitude took pride in the language, showed meaningful interest and good performance in English examinations (Muthuku, 2000).

**Table 4.13: Pupils' attitude towards English based on gender**

N = 126

| <b>Gender</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Pupils%</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Positive%</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Negative%</b> |
|---------------|----------|----------------|----------|------------------|----------|------------------|
| Male          | 55       | 43.65          | 42       | 76.36            | 13       | 23.64            |
| Female        | 71       | 56.35          | 51       | 71.80            | 20       | 28.20            |
| Total         | 128      | 100.00         | 93       | 73.40            | 34       | 26.60            |

The same observation was made on age distribution where those aged between 10-14 years and those aged between 15-17 years both had over 93 (73%) positive attitude (Table 4.14).

This observation indicated that the pupils were well-motivated to learn English. A student's attitude towards education influenced his academic performance in it. (Mworia, 1993). Consequently, a pupils' attitude towards English also influenced his or her performance in it.

**Table 4.14: Pupils' Attitudes Towards English Based on Age**

N = 128

| Age          | n          | Pupils%       | n         | Positive%    | n         | Negative%    |
|--------------|------------|---------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| 10-14 yrs    | 105        | 82.03         | <b>77</b> | 73.33        | 28        | 26.67        |
| 15-17 yrs    | 23         | 17.97         | <b>17</b> | 73.91        | 6         | 26.09        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>128</b> | <b>100.00</b> | <b>94</b> | <b>73.44</b> | <b>34</b> | <b>26.56</b> |

#### 4.4.2 Pupils' Attitude Towards English and Parental Support

Pupils were asked about their attitude towards English and parental support. The results were presented in Table 4.15.

**Table 4.15: Pupils' attitudes towards English and parental support**

N = 127

| parent             | n          | Pupils %      | n         | Positive%    | n         | Negative%    |
|--------------------|------------|---------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Father &<br>mother | 105        | 82.6          | 75        | 71.40        | 30        | 28.60        |
| Father             | 1          | 0.8           | 1         | 100.00       | 0         | 0.00         |
| Mother             | 18         | 14.2          | 14        | 77.80        | 4         | 22.20        |
| None               | 3          | 2.4           | 3         | 100.00       | 0         | 0.00         |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>127</b> | <b>100.00</b> | <b>93</b> | <b>73.20</b> | <b>34</b> | <b>26.80</b> |

Among the interviewed pupils, 105 (82.6%) had both parents, followed by single mothers 18 (14%). Interestingly, pupils of single mothers showed a more positive attitude towards English than those with both parents. This showed that single mothers were more keen with the performance of their children.

The findings of the study indicated that parents send signals to the children about the level of education they expect their children to attain. One such signal is the willingness of parents to finance schooling to the level they believe is sufficient to their children. Other parents go to the extent of hiring teachers to teach their children after school hours expecting their children's performance to improve. Sometimes it is the same teacher tutoring the pupils after school hours. Pupils performance in language seems to depend on availability of materials coupled with parental encouragement for their utilization (Wauye, 2004).

#### **4.4.3 Pupils' Attitudes Towards English and Parental Level of Education**

The pupils were asked about their attitudes towards English and their parental level of education. The results were presented in table 4.16. An interesting observation was the distribution by education level of the parent, only 17 (13.3%) of pupils whose parents had university degrees recorded 10 (58.8%) positive attitude as compared to 84 (77%) for parents with primary to diploma level of education.

This could be attributed to the fact that those with primary to diploma level of education encouraged their children to attain high levels of education than they had. Observations showed that the personal characteristics of pupils for example responsibility, commitment, persistence, determination and intellectual potential were significantly influenced by family members. These characteristics in most cases contributed to the degree that learners pursued and completed educational goals (Kombo, 2005).

**Table 4.16: Pupils' attitude towards English and their parental level of education**

N =128

| Education             | n          | Pupils        |           | Positive     |           | Negative     |   |
|-----------------------|------------|---------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|---|
|                       |            | n             | %         | n            | %         | n            | % |
| Primary certificate   | 14         | 10.9          | 11        | 78.60        | 3         | 21.40        |   |
| Secondary certificate | 67         | 52.3          | 49        | 73.10        | 18        | 26.90        |   |
| College diploma       | 30         | 23.4          | 24        | 80.00        | 6         | 20.00        |   |
| University graduate   | 17         | 13.3          | 10        | 58.80        | 7         | 41.20        |   |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>128</b> | <b>100.00</b> | <b>94</b> | <b>73.20</b> | <b>34</b> | <b>26.60</b> |   |

#### 4.4.4 Parental Assistance in English Homework

Pupils were asked about their parent assistance in English at home and their attitude towards English. The results were presented in table 4.17. Pupils whose parents/guardians assisted in English at home everyday tended to have more positive attitude 53 (71.62%). Those who were never assisted registered only 13 (59.09%) positive attitude. Most parents assisted their children in doing homework.

Observations showed that parents should assist their children in doing homework or encourage them to finish their homework. They should also buy supplementary books for their children. Gathara (2003), noted that parental involvement in homework and written policies improves school performance.

**Table 4.17: Pupils' attitude towards English based on parental assistance in English homework**

N = 126

| <b>Homework</b>  | <b>n</b> | <b>Pupils%</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Positive%</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Negative%</b> |
|------------------|----------|----------------|----------|------------------|----------|------------------|
| Everyday         | 74       | 58.7           | 53       | 71.62            | 21       | 28.38            |
| 2/3 times a week | 17       | 13.5           | 15       | 88.24            | 2        | 11.76            |
| Once a week      | 13       | 10.3           | 11       | 84.62            | 2        | 15.38            |
| Never            | 22       | 17.5           | 13       | 59.09            | 9        | 40.91            |

#### **4.4.5. Parents Who Buy English Story Books.**

Pupils' were asked about their attitude towards English based on their parents assistance in buying English story books. The results were presented in table 4.18. Majority of the parents 104 (82.8%) bought English story books for their children out of which 76 (73.08%) had positive attitude towards English while 28 (26.92%) parents said pupils had a negative attitude towards English.

The study showed that reading of story books was important as it helped the learner to improve their writing skills. Children with access to reading materials learn more than those who do not have access (Gathara, 2003).

**Table 4.18: Pupils' attitudes towards English in relation to parents who buy English story books**

N = 126

| Story books | n  | Positive% | n  | Negative% |
|-------------|----|-----------|----|-----------|
| No          | 17 | 77.27     | 5  | 22.73     |
| Yes         | 76 | 73.08     | 28 | 26.92     |

#### **4.4.6. Pupils' Syllabus Completion, Extra Assignment and Performance Reward**

Pupils were asked about completion of syllabus, extra assignment, performance rewarding and their attitude to English. The results were presented in table 4.19. The completion of the teaching syllabus, extra assignment and performance rewarding recorded encouraging responses on the pupils attitude towards English.

Observations showed that the role of students in the school was to learn and learning involved several activities which included participation in class, doing assignments, revising the work done among others. Completion of syllabus helped the pupils to have some confidence as they revised for their examinations. Performance rewarding motivated the learners to work hard to achieve good grades.

**Table 4.19: Pupils’ attitude towards English based on completion of syllabus, extra assignment and performance rewarding**

N = 126

|                     | N   | Pupils<br>% | n  | Positive<br>% | n  | Negative<br>% |
|---------------------|-----|-------------|----|---------------|----|---------------|
| Syllabus completion | 107 | 83.6        | 81 | 75.70         | 26 | 24.30         |
| Extra assignments   | 111 | 86.7        | 82 | 73.90         | 29 | 26.10         |
| Rewarding           | 91  | 71.1        | 65 | 71.40         | 26 | 28.60         |

*\*The pupils % is greater than 100% because this was a multiple response questions where pupils ticked more than one option.*

#### **4.4.7. Frequency of internal examinations**

From the responses, it seems monthly and termly examinations were viewed more favourably by all pupils than weekly or annual examinations which recorded 12 (100%) and 1 (100%) respectively among pupils with positive attitude towards English as shown in Table 4.20.

Observations showed that examinations were important for both teachers and pupils as they helped to give feedback on how well a topic had been covered. When pupils had positive attitude towards English examination, it helped them to focus on their weak areas and hence improve on their performance. Examination was one indicator of educational effectiveness. It allowed education stakeholders (including teachers) to assess whether a school was declining or improving in its own performance (Republic of Kenya, 2000).

**Table 4.20: Pupils' performance in relation to frequency of internal examinations**

N =126

| <b>Internal exams</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Pupils %</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Positive%</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Negative%</b> |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------------|----------|------------------|----------|------------------|
| Weekly                | 12       | 9.52            | 12       | 100.00           | 0        | 0                |
| Monthly               | 43       | 34.13           | 30       | 69.80            | 13       | 30.20            |
| Termly                | 70       | 55.56           | 59       | 84.30            | 11       | 15.70            |
| Yearly                | 1        | 0.79            | 1        | 100.00           | 0        | 0                |

#### **4.4.8. School Library and Time Allocation to English**

Pupils were asked about the availability of a school library and their attitudes towards English. The results were presented in table 4.21.

**Table 4.21: Pupils' attitudes towards English based on availability of a school library**

N =128

| <b>Library</b> | <b>n</b>   | <b>Pupils%</b> | <b>n</b>  | <b>Positive%</b> | <b>n</b>  | <b>Negative%</b> |
|----------------|------------|----------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|------------------|
| No             | 112        | 87.5           | 82        | 73.21            | 30        | 26.79            |
| Yes            | 16         | 12.5           | 12        | 75.00            | 4         | 25.00            |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>128</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>94</b> | <b>73.40</b>     | <b>34</b> | <b>26.60</b>     |

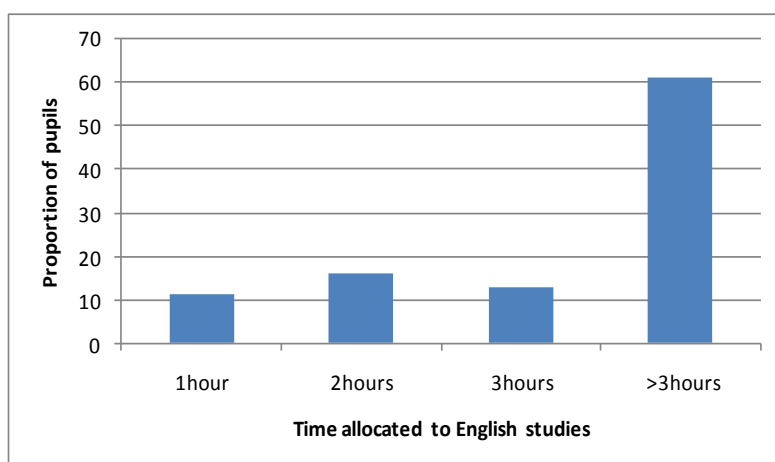
Among the respondents, 112 (87.5%) said their school did not have a library; however, there was a slight difference in the distribution of pupils by attitude between schools with and those without a library. Those with a library did not know its importance and hence did not make good use of it.



The findings of the study indicated that pupils needed to be shown the importance of using reference books and other reading materials in order to improve their performance in English. Reference books were the most important instructional materials and were particularly effective where teachers used teaching guides with them. Other learning materials such as newspapers and posters also facilitate pupil learning. Ndiritu (1999) agreed with this when she said that a school library had a significant effect on learners' academic performance.

#### 4.4.9 Time allocated to English Studies

Pupils were asked about the time allocated to English and their attitudes towards English. The results were presented in figure 4.5. The allocation of time to English studies seemed to contribute a lot towards English with 3 and above hours recording about 77(60%) positive attitude towards English. Pupils need to have ample time with their teachers. Teacher-pupil interaction encouraged pupils to have a positive attitude towards English. The quality and quantity of teacher-pupil interactions are a critical dimension of effective classroom teaching since pupil-centred teaching is paramount to any kind of learning (Wragg, 1990).



**Figure 4.5: Pupils' attitudes towards English based on time allocated to English**

#### 4.4.10 Pupils' Homes that Own a Radio and buy Newspapers

Pupils were asked about the availability of a radio in their homes. The results were presented in table 4.22, which show that 122 (96.83%) of pupils comes from homes that own a radio and 95 (75.40%) of pupils come from homes whose parents buy newspapers.

**Table 4.22: Homes that own a radio**

N = 126

|                            | n  | No %  | n   | Yes % |
|----------------------------|----|-------|-----|-------|
| Own Radio (%)              | 4  | 3.17  | 122 | 96.83 |
| Parents buy newspapers (%) | 31 | 24.60 | 95  | 75.40 |

A further analysis was done to assess the frequency at which pupils listen to the English broadcasting station and the results were presented in table 4.23.

**Table 4.23: Pupils' attitude towards English and tuning to English broadcast**

N = 125

| <b>Frequency of tuning to English</b> | n  | Negative % | n  | Positive% |
|---------------------------------------|----|------------|----|-----------|
| Everyday, all the time                | 7  | 31.8       | 15 | 68.2      |
| Everyday part of the time             | 9  | 17         | 44 | 83.0      |
| Once a week                           | 12 | 42.9       | 16 | 57.1      |
| Never                                 | 6  | 27.3       | 16 | 72.7      |

About 59 (78.7%) of pupils who had positive attitude came from homes that tuned to English broadcasting station every day.

Observations showed that learning should be through all the senses and teachers should use various learning resources such as newspapers and encourage their pupils

to listen to English radio programmes. Learning resources like newspapers, posters, English radio programmes, and filmstrips also facilitate pupils learning (Gathara, 2003).

Republic of Kenya (2003), technical working group recognized that the availability of educational materials had a major bearing on educational outcomes. These materials included textbooks, equipment, furniture, library facilities and pupil's writing materials.

#### **4.5. Pupils' Performance and home environment**

The fourth objective of the study was to assess the influence of home environment, mother tongue and Kiswahili on pupil's performance in English. The analysis of the mother tongue, Kiswahili and family home environment on a child's performance was done based on the standard eight parent's rating of his/her child's class performance. To validate the parents rating of their children a follow-up was made to establish their basis of rating. All the contacted standard eight parents said that they based their rating on the child's termly reports cards. A child was rated bright if she/he came among the top ten in their class. The follow-up was necessary because the survey instrument did not include a question on the child's academic rating basis. About 17 (24.6%) of parents rated their children as bright while 52 (75.4%) rated their children as average (Table 4.24).

This study showed that most of the pupils were average and hence their mean score was supposed to be at least average. This was not reflected in the English mean scores which were below average as indicated earlier.

**Table 4.24: Pupils' performance and parents rating**

(N=69)

| Academic performance | N  | Percent |
|----------------------|----|---------|
| Bright               | 17 | 24.6    |
| Average              | 52 | 75.4    |
| Total                | 69 | 100.0   |

**4.5.1: Gender of interviewed parents**

Out of a total of 69 standards eight parent respondents to the questionnaires, 49 (71%) were female respondents while male respondents accounted for only 20 (29%) (Table 4. 25). All interviewed parents sent their children to public schools and they all said their children enjoyed schoolwork.

**Table 4.25: Gender of interviewed parents**

N=69

| Gender | N  | Percent |
|--------|----|---------|
| Male   | 20 | 29.0    |
| Female | 49 | 71.0    |
| Total  | 69 | 100.0   |

**4.5.2: Pupils' Academic Performance - Based on Gender.**

Parents were asked about their child's performance based on gender. The results were presented on table 4.26.

**Table 4.26: Pupils' gender (child rating by parent)**

N =69

| Gender | N  | Bright% | n  | Average% |
|--------|----|---------|----|----------|
| Male   | 7  | 41.20   | 27 | 51.90    |
| Female | 10 | 58.80   | 25 | 48.10    |

According to the parents rating of pupils by gender there was a positive distribution with a bigger proportion of the bright pupils being girls 10 (58.8%). This observation indicated that girls performed better than boys in English examinations.

This could be attributed to the fact that girls were more keen in reading story books and speaking English than boys. Pupils who are well-disciplined and knew how to spend their time reading story books, practised English exercises daily and communicated using English performed well in English examinations (Orina, 1998).

**Table 4.27: Pupils' performance based on their enjoying English (Child rating by parent)**

N = 69

| Enjoy English | N  | Bright (%) | n  | Average (%) |
|---------------|----|------------|----|-------------|
| Yes           | 16 | 94.10      | 38 | 73.10       |
| No            | 1  | 5.90       | 14 | 26.90       |

According to the parents rating 16 (94.1%) of the bright pupils enjoyed their English lessons as compared to 38 (73.1%) from the average pupils but in overall, more pupils enjoyed their English lessons.

Observations showed that pupils have to enjoy their schoolwork and also remain focused for them to perform well in English examinations. They also need to have good knowledge of English as it is the language used to answer many examinations except Kiswahili and other languages. Mutua, (2002), notes that poor knowledge of English, the medium of instruction in schools, had led to bad results in other subjects. Without proper command of the English language, many students were unable to comprehend and answer examination questions well. As such, poor command in the English language had been blamed for poor performance in other subjects.

The fact that pupils enjoyed English lessons showed that they had a positive attitude towards English, when learners enjoy their lessons they become more keen and focused. Students' attitudes to language are of great importance because they influence the way students learn languages and written forms of languages. (Wauye, 2004).

#### **4.5.3. Classification of Pupils' Reading Habits**

Parents were asked about their children reading habits and their performance in English. The results were presented in table 4.28.

**Table 4.28: Pupils' performance based on their reading habits (Child rating by parent)**

N = 67

| <b>Reading habits</b>                   | <b>n</b> | <b>Bright (%)</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Average (%)</b> |
|---|----------|-------------------|----------|--------------------|
| Study with friends, sisters or brothers | 2        | 11.80             | 23       | 44.00              |
| Reads on her own                        | 12       | 70.60             | 26       | 50.00              |
| Enjoys reading novels                   | 3        | 17.60             | 3        | 6.00               |

From the above table, majority of bright pupils 12 (70.60%) enjoy reading on their own while 26 (50%) from the average children do the same. The average students had 23 (44%) of them preferring to study with friends, sisters or brothers. This study showed that pupils should use various study methods to improve their performance in English. Some include private studies and discussion with friends, brothers or sisters, teachers, etc. Discussions help in the clarification of points or concepts that are not clear to an individual. The individual is able to ask questions from friends or teachers to understand better and therefore, improve on their performance in English.

#### **4.5.4 Child's favourite and challenging subjects in relation to performance**

Parents were asked about their children's favourite and challenging subjects and their performance. The results were presented in table 4.29 and 4.30.

**Table 4.29: Pupils' performance in relation to their favourite subjects (Child rating by parent)**

N = 69

| <b>Favourite subject</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Bright(%)</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Average (%)</b> |
|--------------------------|----------|------------------|----------|--------------------|
| CRE                      | 0        | 0.00             | 2        | 3.80               |
| English                  | 7        | 41.20            | 13       | 25.00              |
| Kiswahili                | 1        | 5.90             | 2        | 3.80               |
| Mathematics              | 8        | 47.10            | 18       | 34.60              |
| Science                  | 1        | 5.90             | 10       | 19.20              |
| Social studies           | 0        | 0.00             | 7        | 13.50              |

In overall 20 (29.0%) of the children choose English as their favourite subject with bright ones having a higher proportion of 7 (41.2%) compared to 13 (25%) from the average pupils. This observation indicated that love of a subject enables the learner to perform well in it as he/she develops a positive attitude towards it. Learners attitude greatly determines his/her performance in school and more so in life. Learners who are optimistic and had a positive attitude towards English showed good performance in English examinations (Muthuku, 2000).



**Table 4.30: Pupils' performance and most challenging subject (Child rating by parent)**

N = 68

| Most challenging subject | n  | Parents % | n | Bright (%) | Average (%) |
|--------------------------|----|-----------|---|------------|-------------|
| CRE                      | 1  | 11.50     | 1 | 5.90       | 0 0.00      |
| English                  | 11 | 16.20     | 0 | 0.00       | 11 21.60    |
| Kiswahili                | 11 | 16.20     | 4 | 23.50      | 7 13.70     |
| Mathematics              | 22 | 32.20     | 4 | 23.50      | 18 35.30    |
| Science                  | 10 | 14.70     | 2 | 11.80      | 8 15.70     |
| social studies           | 13 | 19.10     | 6 | 35.30      | 7 13.70     |

Mathematics was mentioned as the most challenging subject at 22 (32.20%) and English and Kiswahili were at 11(16.20%) each. Social studies had a higher proportion at 6 (35.3%) of the bright pupils while English and Mathematics had a proportion of 11(21.60%) and 18 (35.30%) from the average pupils respectively.

The study showed that a child's self-image, self- concept or expectations are critical for academic development. This is because forecasts for the self, likely filter colour or even determine the child's experiences. If children think they will do poorly, they opt to hang back and avoid doing the very things that will help them learn. Low expectations are infectious. Persons who hold low expectations for themselves encourage others to hold low expectations also (Kombo, 2005). Pupils should endeavour to influence one another positively to improve on their academic performance.

#### 4.5.5. Frequency of Academic Trips

Parents were asked about their children’s education trips and their performance. The results were presented in table 4.31.

**Table 4.31: Pupils’ performance in relation to frequency of academic trips (Child rating by parent)**

N = 67

| Frequency | n | Bright (%) | n  | Average (%) |
|-----------|---|------------|----|-------------|
| Often     | 7 | 41.20      | 5  | 10.00       |
| Sometimes | 8 | 47.10      | 24 | 48.00       |
| Rarely    | 2 | 11.70      | 21 | 42.00       |

Majority of the bright children were taken for educational trips either “often” 7 (41.2%) or “sometimes” 8 (47.1%) as compared to the average pupils who had the majority of them on the “rarely” or “sometimes” responses. Observations showed that academic trips helped the pupils to familiarize themselves with what they learned in class and helped them to keep in touch with reality. For example, when pupils visit media stations, some may aspire to become journalists.

#### 4.5.6. Hobbies

Parents were asked about their child’s hobbies and their performance. The results were presented in table 4.32.

**Table 4.32: Pupils' performance in relation to their hobbies** (Child rating by parent)

N = 62

| Hobbies             | n | Bright (%) | n  | Average (%) |
|---------------------|---|------------|----|-------------|
| Reading story books | 9 | 52.90      | 9  | 20.00       |
| Telling stories     | 3 | 17.60      | 7  | 15.60       |
| Sports              | 5 | 29.50      | 29 | 64.40       |

About 9 (52.90%) of bright pupils enjoyed reading story books while 3 (17.60%) enjoyed telling stories. Nine (20%) of average pupils enjoyed reading story books and 7 (15.60%) telling stories. A large proportion of average pupils 29 (64.40%) enjoyed sports.

These observations indicated that to be able to speak well in English one has to spend time reading story books, telling stories, practise English exercises daily and communicate using English language. Orina (1998), noted that pupils who were well-disciplined and knew how to spend their time in reading story books, practised English exercises daily, and communicated using English performed well in English examinations.

#### **4.5.7 Influence of Mother Tongue and Kiswahili on English Performance**

Parents were asked about the language they use in communicating at home and pupils' performance. The results were presented in table 4.33

**Table 4.33: Pupils’ performance and language spoken at home** (Child rating by parent)

N =69

| <b>Often spoken language at home</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Bright (%)</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Average (%)</b> |
|--------------------------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|--------------------|
| Non-response                         | 1        | 5.8               | 3        | 5.8                |
| Kiswahili                            | 1        | 5.9               | 1        | 1.9                |
| Kiswahili, English, Kikuyu           | 0        | 0                 | 1        | 1.9                |
| Mother tongue                        | 15       | 88.3              | 47       | 90.4               |

What can be deduced from the above table is that mother tongue was the most predominantly used language at home, 15 (88.3%) among bright pupils and 47 (90.4%) among average pupils. It was followed by Kiswahili at 1(5.9%) among bright pupils. Kiswahili and English were the least spoken languages at home. Almost all parents, 62(90%) said that they mostly use mother tongue for communicating at home.

The study showed that for one to perform well in a language, one has to practise speaking it. Lack of speaking in English was one of the causes of poor performance in English. Children in rural areas have difficulties learning English because the language of communication in many homes is mainly mother tongue (Mutea, 2002). Vernacular and Kiswahili were found to be the predominant languages spoken at home.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary by Research Objectives

The purpose of the study was to investigate the major determinants that contributed to pupils' performance in English in KCPE in Komothai zone in Githunguri District. It involved getting information through questionnaires from 7 headteachers, 26 teachers of English and 126 pupils from 7 public primary schools in Komothai zone of Githunguri District. The study also interviewed 69 parents and 1 quality assurance and standards officer from Komothai zone. The data obtained was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences.

The first objective of the study was to find out how teachers academic qualifications and class size affected pupils' performance in English. The study found out that congestion in classes and localization of teachers in their home areas affects pupil's performance in English. The teachers were trained and had relevant teaching experience, however, revitalizing teacher's pre-service training is important to attract high calibre individuals into the profession. The study also found that there was laxity among teachers and they did not organize remedial classes for pupils to improve their performance in English. The teachers gave daily, weekly, monthly and termly examinations.

Teachers should give weekly and monthly examinations and also mark them to get feedback on pupils' performance.

The second objective of the study was to find out how supervision, study resources and teachers in-service courses affected pupils performance in English. The study was able to prove that although some schools had reference books, they were not enough to cater for the large number of pupils. The study found that the subject heads did not

take supervision seriously and teachers had a negative attitude towards supervisors. The teachers did not take the recommendations by subject heads and quality assurance and standards officers seriously. The study also found that the teachers had the necessary professional documents, for example, schemes of work, lesson plans and records of work. The schools on the other hand lacked enough textbooks, equipment and library. In-service courses for teachers were also inadequate.

The third objective of the study was to find out how pupils' attitudes towards English affected pupils' performance in English. The study was able to prove that pupils whose parents assisted in English at home tended to have more positive attitude towards English. The study found that majority of pupils had positive attitude towards English. Therefore, attitude was discounted as a factor that limited the pupils performance in English. Most parents supported their children in learning English by assisting in homework, rewarding their performance, buying story books and newspapers. However, the schools on the other hand lacked enough text books, equipments and a library.

The fourth objective of the study was to find out how home environment, mother-tongue and Kiswahili interfered with pupils' performance in English. The study found that home environment was unsuitable for learning English. This was because vernacular and Kiswahili were found to be the predominant languages spoken at home.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

The following conclusions were drawn from the study based on the research objectives:

The first objective of the study was to find out how teachers academic qualifications and class size affected pupils performance in English. The study concluded that:-

Congestion in classes, laxity among teachers and localization of teachers in their home areas affects pupils' performance in English. However, the teachers were trained and had the necessary teaching experience.

All the teachers appeared to incorporate various teaching strategies in their work. This included class discussions, group discussions, and question and answer methods. Giving of assignments and marking of pupils work were done on a regular basis.

Revitalizing teachers pre-service training is important in order to keep abreast with the changing world in terms of technology. Teachers were not enough to cater for the large number of pupils.

The second objective of the study was to find out how supervision, study resources and teachers in-service courses affected pupils' performance in English. The research study concluded that:-

Teachers did not take supervision by subject heads and quality assurance and standards officers seriously and therefore, they did not implement their recommendations. Schools lacked enough textbooks, equipment and library. Eighty seven point five percent of the respondents said that their schools did not have a library. Most schools did not have enough textbooks and reference books for pupils and teachers. In-service courses for teachers were not adequate.

The third objective of the study was to find out how pupils' attitudes towards English affected their performance in English. The research study concluded that:

Pupils expressed positive attitude towards English. This directed what they did. Most pupils enjoyed learning English and found it useful. A good performance in English elicited a lot of positive responses from pupils. Most parents supported their children

in learning English by assisting them in homework, rewarding their performance, buying story books and newspapers.

The fourth objective of the study was to find out how home environment, mother tongue and Kiswahili interfered with pupils' performance in English. The research study concluded that:

Home environment came out as a strong factor in limiting pupils' performance in English. The environment was not conducive for promoting the learning of English because English was hardly spoken at home.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study.

They are directed to teachers, parents, government, community and researchers.

- i. The government needs to employ enough teachers and they should not be localized to their home areas for them to be effective in order to improve English performance in public primary schools.
- ii. Parents and the community should provide enough physical facilities in public primary schools while the government needs to provide enough learning resources.
- iii. The government should revitalize teachers pre-service training by embracing modern technology and providing more in-service courses for teachers of English to keep them updated on changes in curricula and methods of teaching.
- iv. Teachers should take the reports and advise by quality assurance and standards officers seriously and implement their recommendations.



- v. Parents need to provide a conducive home environment for learning English and they should encourage their children to speak in English in order to improve its performance.

**5.4 Suggestions for further study. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher suggests that:**

- (i) This study needs to be carried out on a large scale with larger population sample that involves many pupils. The research may need to be expanded to various Districts.
- (ii) Another research needs to be carried out to determine the effect of supervision by quality assurance and standards officers on teachers' performance in public primary schools.
- (iii) A further study needs to be done to find out the effect of teachers' localization in their home areas and their performance in schools.

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## **APPENDIX A: INTRODUCTION LETTER**

Kamau Jane Kirangari

Dept. of Educ. Admin. Planning

& Curriculum.

P.O. Box 43844

Nairobi.

Dear Headteacher,

### **RE: INVOLVEMENT OF YOUR SCHOOL IN RESEARCH**

I am a postgraduate student at Kenyatta University. I am currently undertaking educational research aimed at finding the factors that influence English performance in KCPE in public Primary schools in Komothai zone, Githunguri District. Yours school has been identified to participate in this study.

There is a questionnaire for you to fill. Your assistance in answering the questions will enable this study to come up with accurate findings. The responses you give will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for academic purposes only.

Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Kirangari J.

## **APPENDIX B : LETTER TO RESPONDENTS**

Kamau Jane Kirangari

Dept. of Educ. Admin. Planning

& Curriculum.

P.O. Box 43844

Nairobi.

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER**

I am a postgraduate student at Kenyatta University. I am currently undertaking education research aimed at finding the factors that influence English performance in KCPE in public primary schools in Komothai zone, Githunguri District. Your school has been identified to participate in this study.

There is a questionnaire for you to fill. Your assistance in answering the questions will enable this study to come up with accurate findings. The responses you give will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for academic purposes only.

Please do not write your name or institution.

Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Kirangari. J.

## **APPENDIX C: SECTION A**

### **Likert attitude scale for measuring attitude of pupils towards English**

Please indicate how far you agree or disagree with the statements given below by encircling the letter which best indicates how closely you agree or disagree with the feelings expressed in each statement.

#### **Codes to use;**

SA - Strong Agree

A - Agree

U - Uncertain (or not sure)

D - Disagree

SD - Strongly Disagree

1. I enjoy learning English as a subject (SA, A, U, D SD)
2. I am happy with my results in English (SA, A, U, D SD)
3. English is one of the most difficult subjects to study (SA, A, U, D SD)
4. When you work on your own, it is easy to understand English (SA, A, U, D SD)
5. English as a subject should not be made compulsory (SA, A, U, D SD)
6. The subject I hate most is English (SA, A, U, D SD)
7. English is useful in life (SA, A, U, D SD)
8. I wish I could do better in English (SA, A, U, D SD)
9. English lessons should be reduced to be less than what they are as of now (SA, A, U, D SD)
10. I would not like to study English or any related career after my form four Education (SA, A, U, D SD)

11. I can get along perfectly well in everyday life without English (SA, A, U, D SD)
12. English is very boring (SA, A, U, D SD)
13. English examination should be made simpler (SA, A, U, D SD)
14. The English language course helps me in my study and understanding of other subjects (SA, A, U, D SD)
15. Too much is expected of pupils in the study of English (SA, A, U, D SD)

### **SECTION B: PUPILS QUESTIONNAIRE**

Kindly, provide answers to these questions as honestly and precisely as possible. Response to these questions will be treated as confidential. Please do not write your name or that of your school anywhere on this questionnaire. Please tick () where appropriate or fill in the required information on the spaces provided.

1. What is your gender?  
 Male  
 Female
2. Age in years?  
 10 – 14 years  
 15 – 17 years  
 Above 18 years
3. Indicate the parent available  
 Both Mother and Father  
 Father  
 Mother

- None
4. What is your parent's highest level of Education?
- Primary Certificate
- Secondary Certificate
- College Diploma
- University Graduate
5. Where is your home? .....
6. What language do you speak at home? .....
7. Between English and Kiswahili, which one do you prefer? .....
8. Do you complete the respective year's syllabus in every class?
- Yes
- No
9. Does your teacher give you extra assignments in English when you do not perform well?
- Yes
- No
10. Does your teacher reward you when you perform well in English?
- Yes
- No
11. How often do you have internal examination?
- Weekly                       Termly
- Monthly                       Yearly

12. Does your teacher revise these tests with you

Yes

No

13. Do you consult teachers after classes for assistance in English?

Yes

No

If No, why?.....

14. Does your school have a library?

Yes

No

15. How often do you use it?

Always             often

rarely             Never

16. What is your attitude towards English?

Very Positive     Positive

Low             Negative

17. How much time of your study time do you allocate to English in a week?

1 hour             2 hours

3 hours             more than three hours

18. How often does your parents/Guardian help you in doing English homework?

Everyday

Two/three times a week

Once a week

Never

19. About how much time do you spend speaking various languages outside the classroom everyday?

|                  | <b>Vernacular</b>        | <b>Kiswahili</b>         | <b>English</b>           |
|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| None             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Very little      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Occasionally     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Most of the time | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

20. Is there a radio in your home?

Yes

No

21. If yes, how often is it tuned to English services?

Everyday, all the time

Everyday part of the time

Once a week

Never

22. Do your parents buy Newspaper?

Yes

No

23. Do your parents buy you English story books?

Yes

[ ] No

24. In your view, what causes poor performance in English in your school?

25. What do you suggest to be done to remedy the above situation?

.....

Thank you for your cooperation and participation.



## **APPENDIX D: SECTION A**

### **LIKERTS ATTITUDE SCALE FOR MEASURING ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TOWARDS ENGLISH.**

**Please indicate how far you agree or disagree with the statements given below by encircling the letter which best indicates how closely you agree or disagree with the feelings expressed in each statement.**

#### **Codes to use;-**

SA - Strong agree

A - Agree

U - Uncertain (or not sure)

D - Disagree

SD - Strongly Disagree

1. The content of the English syllabus is relevant to the pupils (SA, A, U, D, SD)
2. The English syllabus is too broad (SA, A, U, D, SD)
3. To teach the English syllabus effectively pupils have to do much of the work (SA, A, U, D, SD)
4. The English syllabus is easier to teach (SA, A, U, D, SD)
5. The English syllabus cannot be covered in the time allocated (SA, A, U, D, SD)
6. I enjoy teaching English (SA, A, U, D, SD)
7. Marking of English papers is quite taxing (SA, A, U, D, SD)
8. English is significant for academic advancement (SA, A, U, D, SD)
9. Learning English is a difficult task (SA, A, U, D, SD)

10. At the end of primary education most pupils will be able to read well in English  
(SA, A, U, D, SD)
11. At the end of primary education most pupils will be able to write well in English  
(SA, A, U, D, SD)
12. I am more comfortable teaching English than other subjects (SA, A, U, D, SD)
13. Very often teachers converse in English in this school (SA, A, U, D, SD)
14. I have discovered that I have learnt more about teaching English while teaching it  
rather than the training I received at the teachers college (SA, A, U, D, SD)
15. The pupils have enough text books to study English comfortable (SA, A, U, D,  
SD)
16. In order to improve the standard of English in the school children are compelled to  
speak only English out of class (SA, A, U, D, SD)

## **SECTION B: TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE**

You are kindly requested to fill the questionnaire. Your response will be used for the purpose of the study only. To ensure complete confidentiality please do not write your name or the name of your school anywhere in the questionnaire. Please tick where necessary.

1. What is your gender?

Male

Female

2. What is your academic qualification

CPE

KCE

KCSE

KACE

Bachelors degree

Masters

Others (specify) .....

3. What is your professional qualification?

P1

S1

Bed

Diploma

ATS

PGDE

Others (specify).....

4. How long have you been an English teacher

0 – 3 years

4 – 7 years

8 – 11 years

over 12 years

5. How many pupils are in class eight?

less than 20

20 – 30

30 – 40

over 40

6. What kind of performance do pupils have?

Bright

Average

Weak

7. How often do you plan remedial work for weak pupils

Always

Rarely

Often

Never

Others (specify) .....

8. How often do you assess your pupils?

Daily

Weekly

Monthly

Termly

9. Do you mark and revise all the assignments you give?

Yes

No

10. How do you reward your pupils when they do well?

.....

11. Do your pupils show interest in your work?

yes

No

Sometimes

Why .....

12. Does the subject head or head of department supervise your work?

yes

No

Sometimes

13. How often do you use schemes of work, lesson plans and records of work?

Always

Often

Rarely

Never

14. In your opinion, do these documents serve any good purpose

Yes

No

Sometimes

15. Do you have enough reference books for English

Yes

No

16. What teachings methods do you often use?

Give reasons?.....

17. How many English lessons do you have in a week?

18. In your view is this a fair load?.....

Give reasons .....

19. Do you cover the prescribed syllabus?

Yes

No

If no give reasons .....

20. How many times have you been supervised by subject inspectors in the last two years?

Once

Twice

Three times

More than four

None

21. How many times have you attended an in-service course in the last two years?

Once

Twice

Three times

More than four

None

22. What do you suggest to be done to remedy the above situation?

.....  
.....

Thank you for your cooperation and participation.

## APPENDIX E: HEADTEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

This research is meant for academic purpose. Kindly, you are requested to provide answers to these questions as honest and precisely as possible. Responses to these questions will be treated as confidential. Please do not write your name or that of your school anywhere on this questionnaire. Please tick (✓) where appropriate or fill in the required information on the spaces provided.

### SECTION A

**Please tick (✓) in the appropriate brackets.**

1. Please indicate your gender?

Male

Female

2. What is your age in years?

Under 25 years

35 – 44 Years

45 – 54 Years

Above 55 years

3. What is your highest academic qualification?

EACE/KCSE/ 'O' Level

KACE 'A' Level

B.Ed

Others (specify) .....

.....

4. What is your professional qualifications/

P 1

ATS

S1

B. Ed

Others (specify).....  
.....

5. How long have you been a headteacher?

.....

6. How long have you been a Headteacher?

.....

7. How long have you headed this school?

.....

## **SECTION B**

8. Please indicate the number of pupils in your school?

.....

9. What is the number of teachers in your school?

.....

10. Who are your sponsors?

.....

11. What in your opinion is the relevance of English as a subject?



.....

12. Are there any challenges that have been reported in the learning of English

Yes

No

If yes, what remedial measures has your office put in place to address the same?

.....

.....

13. What are the financial implications involved in the teaching and learning of English in your school in terms of

a. Text books .....

b. Training of your personnel .....

c. Any other area .....

14. Does your institution have a sizeable library

Yes

No

15. What is your assessment of its stocking?

Well stocked

Poorly stocked

Partially stocked

Yet to be stocked

16. Among the available items in the library include (tick as appropriate)

Text books

Reference materials

Story books

Newspapers

Journals

Others (specify).....  
.....

17. How do you rate the training of your members to handle English as a subject

Excellent

Very good

Good

Fair

Poor

18. Do you have any recommendations to offer for the effective implementation of English syllabus?

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

19. How many teachers are in English department?

Males  Qualification .....

Females  Qualification .....

20. What is the student/textbook ratio in standard 4 .....

5 ..... 6.....

7 ..... 8 .....

21. Comment on the attitude of the teachers with special reference to handling

English .....

.....

22. What can be done to enhance English performance in KCPE in your school?

.....

.....

Thank you for cooperation and participation.

**APPENDIX F: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AND  
STANDARDS OFFICER**

Kindly, you are requested to provide answers to these questions as honest and precisely as possible. Responses to these questions will be treated as confidential. Please do not write your name or that of your school anywhere on this questionnaire. Please tick (✓) where appropriate or fill in the required information on the spaces provided.

1. What is your gender?

Male

Female

2. Name of division and zone .....

.....

3. What is the number of primary teachers in the zone?

a. S 1 .....

b. P1 .....

c. P2 .....

d. P3 .....

e. P4 .....

f. UT .....

g. Others .....

h. Total .....

4. Indicate the gender of the teachers in primary school

Male .....

Female .....

5. What is the number of pupils

Std 1 ..... Std 5 .....

Std 2 ..... Std 6.....

Std 3 ..... Std 7.....

Std 4 ..... Std 8.....

6. Give 3 best public primary school in English in KCPE in 2009.

a. ....

b. ....

c. ....

7. Give 3 worst public primary school in English in KCPE in 2009.

a. ....

b. ....

c. ....

8. Give three average primary school in English in KCPE in 2009

a. ....

b. ....

c. ....

9. Give three best equipped primary school

a. ....

b. ....

c. ....

10. Give three best staffed primary school

a. ....

b. ....

c. ....

11. What is the average share per school in terms of finances in free primary Education?

.....

.....

12. How are text books and reference books distributed to primary school?

.....

Thank you for your cooperation and participation.

## APPENDIX G: PARENTS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

This research is meant for academic purpose. Responses to these questions will be treated as confidential.

1. Gender of parent

Male

Female

2. Name of child in standard eight .....

3. Child's gender.

Male

Female

4. Type of school where children attend .....

5. How do you rate your child academically

Brilliant

Very good

Average

Weak/ poor

6. Do you think your child enjoys school work?

Yes

No

7. Do you think your child enjoys English?

Yes

No

8. While at home, what educational activities does your child engage in?

Prefers to study with friends, sisters or brothers

Reads a lot on her own

Enjoys reading novels

Enjoys outings, trips to museum

Others (specify) .....

.....

9. Which is your child's favorite subject? .....

10. Which is your child's most challenging subject? .....

Why? .....

11. Do you take your son/daughter on trips/speeches/drama etc.

Often

Sometimes

Always

Rarely

12. Which language do you often speak at home? .....

.....

13. What is your child's hobby?

Reading story books

Telling stories

Sports

Others (specify) .....



.....  
14. Does your child attend school regularly

Always

Sometimes

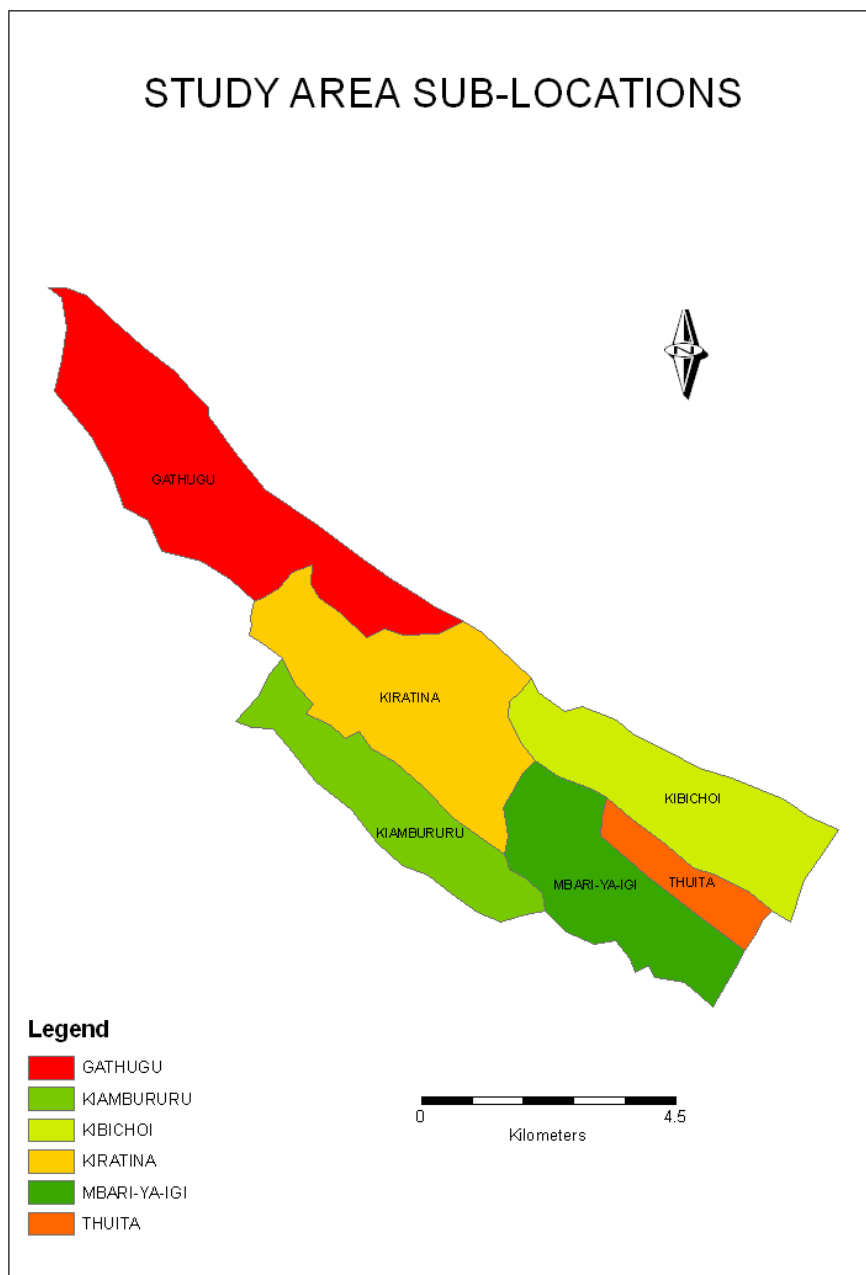
Often

Rarely

Thank you for your cooperation and participation.

## APPENDIX H

Map of the study area (Komothai) zone in Githunguri District.




## APPENDIX I

### Letter of Permit

CONDITIONS

1. You must report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit
2. Government Officers will not be interviewed with-out prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least two(2)/four (4) bound copies of your final report for Kenyans and non-Kenyans respectively.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice.

  
REPUBLIC OF KENYA  
RESEARCH CLEARANCE  
PERMIT

GPK60553mt10/2010 (CONDITIONS—see back page)

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

Prof./ Dr./ Mr./ Mrs./ Miss..... KAMAU

JANE KIRANGARI

of (Address)..... KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

P.O. BOX 43844, NBI

has been permitted to conduct research in .....

..... Location,

..... GITHUNGURI District,

..... CENTRAL Province,

on the topic..... Determinants of pupils

performance in English in national

examinations in Public Primary

Schools in Komothai Zone in Githunguri

District, Kenya.

for a period ending 31ST JULY, 20 11

Research Permit No. NCST/RRI/12/1/SS/575

Date of issue. 24/06/2010

Fee received SHS 1,000



Applicant's Signature

Secretary National Council for Science and Technology