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**A STUDY OF SOME FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR  
KCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS IN LAMU DISTRICT AS  
PERCEIVED BY STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND PARENTS.**

**BY**

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<A> study of some  
factors contributing




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## DECLARATION

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

Signed  Date 24.08.05

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**This research project has been submitted by my approval as the university supervisor.**

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dear parents Gregory and Rose for their love and support.

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed at establishing some factors contributing to poor KCSE results in Lamu District as perceived by students, teachers and parents.

Lamu District in coast Province consists of seven divisions. The district was selected due to its long record of poor KCSE results.

The sample for the study consisted of three hundred and six people, among them two hundred students from three sampled schools; fifty parents, forty seven teachers and six ministry of education officers from divisional and district levels.

Data was collected by use of students' and parents' questionnaires, focused group discussions with teachers, interview schedule for head teachers and ministry of education officers and observation of records.

Data was coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive and qualitative statistics was used to describe and summarize the data. Pearson product moment correlation was used to enable comparison and analysis of relationships between variables.

The findings showed different causes and emphasis by different groups as per the core causes of poor performance. There were issues that all the groups pointed out unanimously.

The students, teachers and parents observed that student indiscipline is a problem in many schools. Other issues noted included rampant use of vernacular language, lack of foresight on the importance of education and; passive participation in the learning process by students.

Time management by students and teachers, inadequate resources and learning materials, student absenteeism, and lack of motivation among teachers and students were strongly cited as causes of poor performance in KCSE examination. The local community was seen as carrying little weight on education matters, while some cultural practices such as attending "madrassa "exhausts students because of the rigorous nature of the classes.

In brief the researcher concludes that the manner in which the students use time, the group and activities he or she engage in and the seriousness with which he take education play a great role in determining examination results. However, left on his own, the student cannot achieve much. He relies on the indispensable guidance, commitment and active participation of their subject teachers and good administration. The material support, encouragement and active participation of parents in all school matters is crucial in contributing toward the creation of conducive learning environment.

The researcher recommends that students need to be sensitized by their teachers and parents on the importance of education and the need to prepare continuously for national examinations. This should lead them to take personal responsibility in academic matters. Parents and teachers should step up efforts and commitment in all student academic endeavors.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

Student assessment forms an essential part for effective education because it is the basis for most educational decisions concerning the student. This explains why knowledge of the factors that affect academic performance is vital to educationists, parents, teachers, as well as students themselves.

The importance and value with which students hold academic performance cannot be overstated. In June 1999, for example, Kagumo high school students went on strike to protest the institutions poor performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E).

K.C.S.E performance in Lamu district has slumped to its lowest levels especially for the last ten years. This has jolted stakeholders and the public into asking what has gone wrong within the schools. If the trend is not checked, as some have warned, it may result in the district being relegated to academic oblivion.

This paper seeks to investigate what students, teachers, and parents perceived to be the contributing factors to the poor performance. From the study it might be possible to know the causes and propose solutions

### 1.1 Background to the problem of study.

Education, world over, is considered a priceless asset of fundamental importance to the individual and to society. The value of education, and thus good performance, lies

in more than economic returns. It makes individuals more valuable to both themselves and the society. Koffi Annan, the present Secretary General of the United Nations, strongly emphasized this when he remarked that; "every child should receive quality education and have the opportunity to develop his or her potential and contribute to the society in meaningful ways" (Unicef 2001).

Realizing the importance of education and the need to enhance individual abilities, the Japanese National Council on Education Reform, August 1984, recommended that students who demonstrated outstanding academic abilities be allowed to attend courses or participate in research at University level.

In Kenya, performance in examination greatly determines the individual's advancement or further training and the general development of the nation. Performance in an examination is determined by many factors, among them are the individual's level of motivation, intellectual or mental abilities, teachers, parents' efforts and the interacting social and cultural forces among others.

The review of teaching and learning in Kenya reveals that there are replete complains from the public that general performance in education is still wanting. This is very apt for most schools in Lamu District whose performance especially in KCSE has been below average.

The 8-4-4 system of education, however, has received a lot of criticism ranging from having over-loaded curricula (Wangai report 2001), to poor performance in national examination. For example, the East Africa Standard (February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1996) reported the then Kenya National Examination Council chairman as saying that performance

notably in English, Biology and Chemistry among others had dropped. The case became even dismal in 1998 as observed by the Ministry of Education.

There is, however variation in the performance of pupils at any level of education. Many pupils perform poorly despite following a common syllabus. Even when pupils are of comparable abilities, and have studied together, they still perform at different levels. It is therefore imperative to establish the underlying factors for such performance.

KCSE is taken at the end of the fourth year of secondary education in Kenya. It is a very important examination because it is a gateway to many avenues. Poor performance at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E) means that a pupil will miss the opportunity for higher education, training or employment. Many Kenyan students who sit for KCSE annually do not go to the university. This is partly due to their poor performance and partly because of high competition for few places in the existing universities.

The poor performance of pupils especially at secondary level has drawn the attention of the government, educationists, teachers, administrators, researchers, parents, and even pupils. They have sought to know the factors that lead to poor performance. An example is the Joint Committee of Education Officers and Head Teachers that was formed in Nairobi (Muchungu 1986) to investigate the cause of poor performance in the KCPE and KCSE examinations. They identified the following as the main factors: Lack of houses for teachers, poor discipline, lack of adequate lunch and unfavorable home environments.

While these factors have been recognized as possible contributors to the variation in academic performance, little research has been done to show the role played by any one of them in Lamu District.

In the year 2003, for example, 305 candidates in Lamu District sat for KCSE. Those who scored B minus and above were 29 (9.5%). Students' performance in the district still remains low as seen in table 1.1 below.

SCHOOL	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998
MPEKETONI SEC.	5.013	6.3659	6.3944	6.05	6.0746	4.9286	4.9322
LAMU GIRLS	4.459	4.9655	5.1094	4.85	4.2881	4.6145	5.1304
LAMU BOYS	4.000	4.0746	3.9054	4.16	4.2131	3.6716	3.6866
WITU SEC.	3.609	3.5536	3.400	3.47	3.222	3.2500	3.9167
FAZA SEC.	4.000	2.950	2.7931	4.11	2.000	3.6552	3.6429
DISTRICT SUMMARY	4.3819	4.3819	4.3204	4.53	4.2844	4.1322	4.2617

**Table: 1.1 Lamu District Schools Performance in the last seven years**

**Mean Grade Summary**

Year	Ent	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	X	Y	MS	MG	Index
2004	296	0	1	2	3	2	10	32	65	89	65	21	1	3	2	4.216	D+	-0.1656
2003	305	0	1	8	3	17	19	41	53	65	51	44	1	2	0	4.3819	D+	+0.0619
2002	284	0	2	6	2	13	22	37	44	67	56	34	0	1	1	4.3204	D+	-0.1296
2001	260	0	2	0	0	18	20	36	42	54	49	31	0	7	1	4.53	D+	+0.170

*Source: District Examination Analyses File.*

The present research specifically attempts to establish what student, teachers and parents perceive to be the contributing factors to poor KCSE performance.

This research assumes that pupils have different mental abilities, are influenced by different social-cultural experiences, and differ in their motivation to excel in academics. Research has shown that there is significant variation in the home environment, depending on factors such as the educational standards of parents, parents' involvement in the child's education, occupational level, social-economic status, family size, and the community's practices among many others. Pupils are continually affected by the above factors, consequently their performance.

Different studies on the relationship between motivation and academic performance have reported positive relationship (e.g. Atkinson, 1964). In other cases, research findings have shown absence or negative relationship. Examples being Heckhausen, 1967, and Maundu, 1980.

From the foregoing discussion, there has been inconsistencies and lack of consensus in research findings on the effect of motivation and home environmental factors on academic performance. This research makes a contribution in this area by investigating students, teachers and parents perception of poor performance in Lamu District.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

There has been heated debate from the education offices, teachers, and students and within public circles in Lamu District trying to establish the root causes of the persistent poor performance at KCSE. Compared to other districts, Lamu is always

among the poor performing Districts in the country. The assumption among the lay is that the teacher is fully responsible and accountable for his learners' performance in the national examinations. While this may be partly true, many variables that influence performance.

There has been accusations and counter accusations. Teachers put the blame on the type of students they admit in their schools at form one intake, lack of adequate teaching materials, poor discipline among students and absenteeism due to poor payment of fees by parents. Parents on the other hand, accuse teachers whom they believe are responsible for the pathetic performance, inspectors and ministry officers as well have refused to shoulder the blame for the poor KCSE results.

Hitherto, no research on the issue of academic performance among secondary schools in Lamu has been done, although the topic has been widely researched on in other parts of the country. And even if it had been carried out, reasons explaining the causes and implications of poor performance would vary from year to year as changes and adjustments occur in the curriculum.

In spite of the strategies and efforts such as tuition and administration of district Mocks, KCSE performance in the district leaves a lot to be desired. It is within this scenario that the researcher decided to investigate what students, teachers and parents perceive to be the contributing factors to poor K. C. S. E performance in Lamu District. From the study, it is possible to know the causes and propose solutions to the continuous poor performance in the national examinations.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate some factors contributing to poor KCSE examination in Lamu District. It specifically aimed to study poor K.C.S.E performance as perceived by students, teachers, and parents. It investigated students', teachers and parents' suggestions for better academic performance and finally made recommendations that may improve K.C.S.E performance in Lamu District.

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

The objectives of the study were:

1. To identify what students perceive to be the contributing factors to poor KCSE performance in Lamu District.
2. To establish teachers views on poor KCSE performance in the District.
3. To investigate parents perception of the poor performance.
4. Observe school records to establish patterns in KCSE performance.
5. Observe Ministry of Education records on KCSE examination analyses in Lamu district.
6. To make recommendations that may improve academic performance in Lamu District.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

In order to investigate fully the statement of the problem, the following questions were generated.

1. What role does the students' entry behavior play in academic performance?
2. What problems do students experience in their academic pursuit?

3. From the teachers experience and observation, what are the major obstacles in the teaching learning process?
4. To find out parents involvement and implications on the learning of their children.
5. What reasons do parents give for the poor KCSE performance in the district.
6. What suggestions do students, teachers, and parents have for better academic performance in the District?

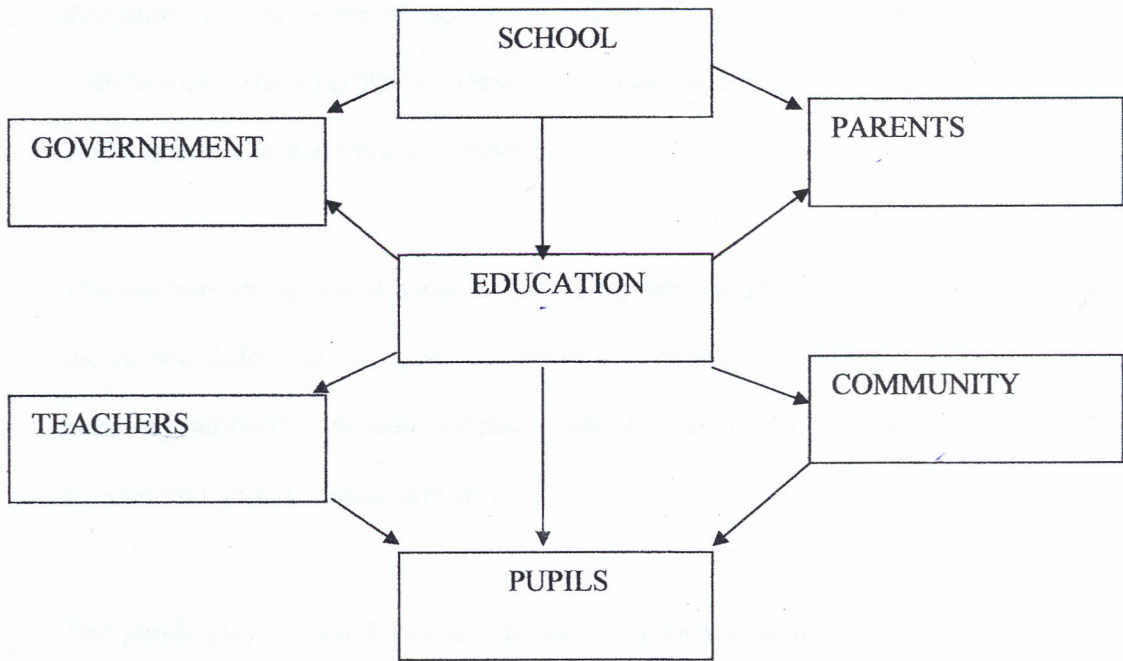
### **1.6 Significance of the study**

In all levels of schooling, the assessment of pupil's progress is essential for effective and quality education. It serves as a basis for most educational decisions concerning the pupil. Therefore, this study is important in that the findings may:

1. Help students participate actively in their education or learning for better academic performance.
2. Help schools in the District to take a concerted effort towards improvement of performance.
3. Create awareness among all stakeholders who include parents, teachers, local ministry officials, community leaders, so that all can participate towards the improvement of the educational standards in the District.
4. Encourage teachers in their noble job of helping students exploit their intellectual potentials
5. Should motivate students to be high achievers, to rise above the normal and bring out their hidden potentials through learning.

## 1.7 Conceptual Framework

**Fig. 1 Protagonists of education and how they are interrelated.**



In the context of the above conceptual framework, the conceptual underpinning of the study is that good results are obtained through a concerted effort by all stakeholders of education. The above encompass the major protagonists and their possible patterns of influence on each other and eventually on students' academic performance.

This study, however, did not focus on all the protagonists of education as shown in the conceptual framework. It centered mainly on the students, teachers and parents perception of poor KCSE results.

The school is made up of people (pupils, teachers and workers), and the physical facilities. It is important that the school environment is conducive and attractive to learning if students are to be successful. According to the Sociological theory,

socialization is the process whereby individuals acquire habits, attitudes, dispositions, skills, values, cognitive structures, languages and standards current in that society. Socialization according to this understanding may be more or less effective depending on the nature of agents the individual is exposed to and the amount of socialization. The interplay of these forces contributes to the success or failure of students and school academic endeavors.

The teachers are agents of socialization. They are entrusted by the government with the responsibility of educating the youth in a responsible way. Pupils on the other hand depend on the teachers' guidance, teaching and evaluation and on their parents for material, moral support and security.

The pupils play a central role in achieving worthwhile performance. The quality of this interaction with peers and how well they adjust to the indispensable developmental changes, contributes either positively or negatively to their academic performance. In his psychological theory of development, Erickson observed that the adolescent is faced with the challenge of developing a sense of ego identity at the positive and with a sense of confusion on the negative end. The major emphasis at this stage is placed upon the ego and the way it is affected by the society and in particular by the peer group. It is within the peer group that the adolescent experiences a sense of stimulation, belongingness, empathy and identification. Through peer group activity, the adolescent gets the opportunity for role-playing and for sharing their guilt, anxieties, and hopes about the future. During such interactions, students who may have low motivations for academic achievement may discourage

their friends from studying and instead encourage them to engage in non-academic activities.

The school derives educational goals and objectives from the government. The students depends o the government's sound policies and fair distribution of materials and human personnel.

The school exists within and for the community. It serves as a launching board to students' values and attitudes. It is therefore important that the community be a model of academic excellence and of sound values, attitudes, and high ideals.

### **1.8 Assumptions**

This study assumed that:

- (1) There were some factors in Lamu district that negatively affects performance in KCSE examinations.
- (2) That, secondary school teachers followed the same prescribed syllabus by the K.I.E and thus content is the same in all schools.
- (3) Some factors enhance good performance, while some militate against school effort to produce quality performance.

### **1.9 Scope**

There were various factors and forces that affected student performance in KCSE in Lamu District. This study, however, focused on what students, teachers and parents perceived to be the contributing factors to poor KCSE performance.

This research was done within Lamu district. Thus the findings cannot be generalized to the whole country.

#### **1.10 Limitations**

This research was entirely restricted to the study of three secondary schools in Lamu district from different divisions.

Owing to the broad nature of the topic, the researcher only tackled some factors contributing to poor KCSE examination in Lamu district as perceived by students, teachers and parents.

#### **1.11 Definition of terms and abbreviations.**

**Achievement Motivation-** The drive or the need to succeed.

**ASAL –** Arid and semi-arid lands

**FGD –** Focused Group Discussions

**KCPE-** Kenya Certificate of Primary Education

**KNEC-** Kenya National Examination Council

**KCSE –** Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education.

**K.I.E-** Kenya Institute of Education.

**Locus of control-** Belief among students as to whether hard work (internal control) or luck (external control) control performance.

**Macro system -** The attitudes, mores, values beliefs and ideologies of a community.

**Poor Performance –** Score that do not meet the minimum entry to the University (C+)

**8-4-4 -**Eight years of primary education, four years of secondary education and four years of university education.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the existing literature on factors influencing academic performance. The chapter includes information on what other authors say about the factors that influence student performance in academics. This forms a basis for the present study. It links but also show the purpose and importance of the study, which is to fill in the gaps left by previous researchers. It would also guide in methodology.

#### 2.1 Importance of Education and Examination Results

Education has been an important part of human life throughout the history of humankind. Taba (1962), summarizes the function of education as being a process of preservation and transmission of the cultural heritage, an instrument for transforming culture and a means for individual development! It is from this context that parents, teachers, members of the public and even students themselves feel anxious about examination performance. Results form the basis for most education decision concerning the student and consequently shape his future.

It goes without say that Kenyan education system is highly results-oriented, hereby the acquisition of knowledge, skill of candidates and employees are judged by grades on their certificates (Okumbe 1998). This implies that good performance is necessary for selection and placement of students in institutions of higher learning and in the job market.

## 2.2 Learning Situation

It refers to any factor or situation that affects the learner and the entire learning process. The most significant factors involve people. The attitudes and behavior of the teacher, the morale of the class and the emotional climate of the school are all important in setting conducive environment for learning. Still other significant factors are more elusive. The general attitude of the community towards education is one of the elusive but significant factors. If education and schools do not rate very high on the community's scale of values, it may act as a powerful deterrent to classroom learning and consequently pupils' performance. Even though the attitude exists in the macro system, it is part of the learning situation because of its effect on the learner and on the learning process in the school. The learning situation therefore extends beyond the classroom and the school, into the community and the world outside.

### 2.2.1 Student Characteristics and peer influence

Many secondary students go through their education while undergoing adolescent turmoil. During this time of development, the major concern according to Erikson's psychosocial theory is placed upon the ego identity and the way it is affected by the society and in particular, the peer group.

Peer pressure is a social-psychological concept having emotional implications for the student behavior. It affects the adolescent's behavior pattern including academic pursuit. Adequate resolution of the ego identity Vs role confusion crisis brings about a sense of fidelity. This impels the adolescent to sustain loyalties he freely pledges in spite of inevitable contradictions of different value systems. It enables the adolescent to understand and follow social norms, ethics, and ideologies of his society.

Peer conformity is used to describe the individual adherence to the standards and norms put forward by peers. Peer influence is used to refer to the control that age mates have over an individual's attitudes and ideas. Therefore peer influences have emerged in several studies not only as an important determinant of educational ambitions, but also as an intervening variable between the social origins of the individual, his scholastic performance and his aspirations for higher education (Picou and Carter, 1976).

Research on adolescent peer influence has considered many issues ranging from the use of alcohol and illegal drugs, to pre-marital sex and other forms of problem behavior; standards of social conduct, religious observances, school achievement and career aspirations. With few exceptions, each of these studies has concentrated on a single issue or behavior.

Many studies carried out about student locus of control and academic performance has shown a strong positive relationship. In a survey of equality of educational opportunity, Coleman (1966) found that black children in the United States believed more than white children that luck rather than hard work caused success in examinations. Those who believed in hard work had performed better than those who believed in luck.

In Nigeria, Muhammad (1980) examined the relationship between internal versus external orientation and academic achievement of male secondary school students. He used the Nowicki-Strickland locus of control scale for children as a measure of their control. The findings were that the more externally oriented students were rated higher in anti-social behavior and tended to under achieve while students of internal

control are characterized as seeking challenge and by being persistent in the face of difficulty. They are more likely to thrive even with poor instruction.

### **2.2.2 The Teacher**

Perhaps the most important factor in the school as noted above is the teacher. His dedication and commitment to his work play a central role in the performance of his students. The number of hours of learning an individual child receives per year is an important variable in education. Eshiwani (1983), quotes Comber and Keeves (1973) who observed that within limits, the hours allowed to instruction in a subject, the higher the achievement. Similarly, at the end of secondary school, the more the homework given and corrected, the better the student performance in examinations. This implies good time management by the teacher and a sense of responsibility in dispensing ones duties.

The teachers' professional qualifications, philosophy and personality, no doubt can greatly influence pupils' attitudes and performance in examinations. However, teachers too require external assistance from school administration, school committees, inspectors, and cooperation from pupils for better academic performance in the school.

Kathuri (1993) holds that the most significant factors that determine performance is to be found in an efficient teaching staff (he includes moral), efficient teaching methods and a good administrative set up. He adds the previous academic record of students as an important determinant of examination performance. Like Eshiwani, Kathuri settles for a more equitable distribution of school facilities.

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### 2.2.3 The Community Influence

Global experience shows that the community involvement in the school governance can be a positive force for school improvement even when parents are illiterate (Unesco 2003). Bett (1986) carried out a study in Kericho District on performance and concluded that poor support from the local community in the provision of resources such as learning materials contributed to poor academic performance.

The community involvement through Parents Teacher Associations can be an instrumental force in bringing out the best in schools. Their cooperation in maintaining school discipline, initiating projects, offering moral support to both students and teachers can lead to smooth running of school. Olembo et al (1992) notes that cooperation through the recognition of each teacher's contribution to improved instructions results in improved performance.

Research findings from America and Britain and a few done in Africa have shown that a variety of factors contribute to the achievement and aspiration's of students or of the youth. Many studies have been done in such areas as the social and economic background, peer group influence, which encompasses such issues as religion, friendship patterns, sex and dating, school attitudes, smoking and drug use, music, grooming styles, athletic and sports activities. Such studies have been undertaken by researchers such as Sewell, *et al*, 1957, Duncan, *et al*, 1972, Sewell, and Hauser, 1975, and Kerckhoff, 1976. Aspirations of the youth are not only molded by structures of society, but also by means of particular socio-psychological mechanisms. Keeves (1972) and Anderson *et al* (1980) have highlighted the social

milieu in which the individual is reared as representing a major constraint upon both educational achievement and aspirations of students.

The social and cultural practices within the community exert some influence on school performance. Schools are established by the society, exist within and for the society. The social and cultural practices within the society have an impact on the school either positively or negatively or both through the process of socialization and interaction. Freud, in his fondness of physical metaphors wrote of socialization as "internalization" or "incorporation" most directly of the parental superego, indirectly, of the culture. \*

The mature persons, with whom students interact, behave in accordance with such systems of norms or rules as are called logic, language, cultural practices (e.g. religion), morality and philosophy of life. The adults whose behavior is governed by them may not have explicitly formulated these aspects and the student who acquires them will not explicitly formulate them. The student processes what he perceives of the behavior of mature members of his society in such a way as to extract the rule systems implicit in it. Consequently, teachers and parents values and priorities can either enhance student performance or jeopardize student and school efforts.

The above studies on performance reveal different perspective and emphasis. It is therefore imperative to be clear about how much weight is to be attached to any of the above discussed factors in relation to student's performance relative to others. It is also essential to establish if there is situation- specific influence on student performance. Of great importance is to highlight what in these factors make a difference.

#### **2.2.4 Educational Facilities**

It is generally held that better facilities in a school lead to better performance in an examination. The Ministry of Education Science and Technology (2003) technical Working group recognized the fact that the availability of educational materials has a major bearing on educational outcomes. The survey for example showed that there was a critical shortage of textbooks, equipment and physical facilities directly contributing to poor performance in national assessments. The group pointed out clearly the fact that the shortage of these materials is the most constraining factor in educational quality especially in the rural schools in Kenya.

#### **2.2.5 Syllabus Coverage, instruction and curriculum**

Syllabus coverage contributes significantly to good examination results. The Daily Nation of October 8<sup>th</sup> 2001, quoting the Kenya National Examination Council (K.N.E.C) report of 2001 cited poor coverage of syllabus, failure to understand questions and poor teaching methods as some of the weaknesses noted in many schools.

Syllabus coverage depends on many factors, among them proper management of time by the school, the teachers and the students. It presupposes that students report on time during opening and activities organized in such a way that they do not interfere with learning.

According to Olemba, Wanga and Karagu (1992), curriculum and instruction involves setting objectives, formulating of instructional program and evaluating it. The success of the school therefore, will mainly be judged on how well the school

curriculum has been carried out by the school administration in collaboration with the teachers.

Campbell (1986) observes that effective and efficient management of curriculum and instruction in educational institution is basic prerequisite for stability and improvement of academic performance.

#### **2.2.6 School Administration**

A sound and efficient leadership is vital in any organization, School inclusive. The then Minister for higher education was quoted by the Standard, 29th March 1982, when he said that,

“The basic reason why some schools performed better than others in examinations was that while some Head Teachers organized the learning process for their pupils, others leave it to chance”

Griffins (1983) echo this sentiment. In his book, “School Mastery” he argues that school administration has a direct bearing on the achievements of learners because it plays a role of co-coordinating, directing, and facilitating the learning process. He maintains that poor management has run down many schools in Kenya.

Sifuna (1988) states that lack of communication, poor relationship between head teachers and teachers and students, inefficient instructional policies and practices, and leaving parents out of school activities are significant factors in contributing to poor performance in high school.

According to Mwangi, D.T (1986) in his study on factors influencing performance of mathematics and science among secondary students, the following were found to significantly influence the student's achievement:

1. Student's family background:
2. The sex of student makes students perform better in favor of boys.
3. The educational level of parents is important. Students whose parents were in more prestigious occupation had the largest proportion among the good performance category.
4. Parents' place of residence is significantly related to performance in favor of students whose parents reside in urban centers.
5. Influence of significant others: there are significant influences exhibited by male and female science teachers and the peer group.
6. Student's educational aspirations and expectations featuring more prominently in the "good" or average performance category. Those who aspired to be a doctor nurse chemist tended to do well in sciences. Attitude is noted as factors that influence learning.

Other factors that have been identified by researchers (e.g. Fraser 1959; Atkinson 1964; Maundu 1980; Bali *et al* 1984 etc) as possible causes for the variation in academic performance among pupils include the following:

- a) The intelligence of the pupil
- b) The pupil's need to achieve.
- c) Anxiety level of the pupil

- d) Discipline
- e) Home environmental factors
- f) Learning facilities in the school
- g) Teachers qualifications
- h) Nature of the test.

Opondo Longilus (1984) looks at attitude as being an emotional feeling towards an object, a social institution or subject. Attitudes come about from day to day encounters and experiences that the students go through during the course of time in school and the cumulative effect of the activities results in a pre-disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably towards a particular person, group ideas, events subjects and objects. According to Johnson and Rising (1972), "attitudes are fundamental to the dynamic of behavior: They determine what students learn."

Achievement motivation is a significant factor in influencing performance. Achievement motivation is made up of the words "achieve" and "motive". To achieve means to succeed in reaching a particular goal, status or standard especially by effort, skills or courage. Motive refers to that force which causes somebody to act in a particular way.

According to Heckhausen (1967), achievement motivation means the striving to increase or keep as high as possible ones' own capacities in all activities in which a standard of excellence is thought to apply and where the execution of such activities can therefore either succeed or fail. From this understanding, an achievement-oriented student always anticipates success or failure at the same time. Atkinson (1964) says

that achievement behavior reflects the combined influence of hope of success and the fear of failure. In his model, the motive to achieve success is the individual stable personality trait that does not vary from situation to situation whereas the probability of success and the incentive value of success are specific to situational influences on a particular activity. Atkinson's theory holds that the achievement motive and the expectancy of success produce positive interest and pursuit of success while the motive to avoid failure and the expectancy of failure function to steer one way from any achievement related activities. The theory assumes that all individuals have some capacity for interest in achievement and anxiety about failure.

According to Eshiwani (1982) poor examination results (based in western province) is attributed to a widening gap between the "better" and "poorer" students, large class sizes inadequate library and other school facilities, inadequate time for homework, poor administration, a large proportion of untrained teachers, frequent teachers transfers and poor inspection.

### **2.3 Summary of literature review**

Based literature review:

1. Poor performance is due to student factors such as indiscipline, low levels of aspiration, negative peer influence and poor time management.
2. Students previous academic record; those who entered form one with low marks perform poorly.
3. Interaction with peers influences the youth either positively or negatively or both.

4. When peer group influences does extend heavily on adolescent lives, it usually reflects a lack of attention, concern and ignorance at home or lack of parental guidance rather than the attractiveness of the peer group.
5. There is gender difference with boys performing better than girls. No convincing explanation has been made.
6. School factors such as poor administration, inefficient staff, teacher turnover and inadequate facilities affect student performance.
7. There is significant impact of parents' interest, and support on student performance.
8. There are significant differences between community supportive and cordial relations and lack of support on student performance.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter concentrates on the methodology used and a detailed description of the data collection procedures. It highlighted the rationale for the choice of instruments and finally presents an outline of methods used in the data analysis and presentation.

The study was based in secondary schools in Lamu district. It sought to investigate the factors that influence student's performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). Information was obtained from two hundred and thirty nine people. One hundred and forty six students (146), other people, head teachers, teachers, ministry of education officers and local leaders inclusively were involved in this study.

The researcher adopted a descriptive survey to establish what students, teachers and parents perceive to be the contributing factors to poor KCSE performance in Lamu District. The summary of the findings and related discussions were given later, after which recommendations and a conclusion were made.

#### **3.1 Research Design and location of study .**

In order to ensure that the research questions are answered, the researcher adopted an exploratory approach using a descriptive survey design to study the causes of poor KCSE results in Lamu District as perceived by students, teachers, and parents. Information on how to tackle the problem of poor results was sought in efforts to ensure that the education system adequately address the pupils needs and so to tap their potential for individual and national development.

This study was based in Lamu District, coast province, Kenya. Lamu is located 300 kilometers north of Mombasa. The people engage in various economic activities such as farming, fishing and tourism. The District consists of seven divisions namely Kiunga, Faza, Amu, Kisingitini, Hindi Mpeketoni and Witu, See Appendix J.

The District was selected for the purposes of this study because of its long tradition of poor performance in National examinations particularly in KCPE and KCSE.

The study employed a descriptive survey research to investigate the current situation in Lamu District as far as overall KCSE performance is concerned.

### **3.2.1 Population**

There are seven secondary schools in Lamu District of which two are owned by religious organizations and the rest are government schools. The two private schools have not reached form four levels as they were started recently. The entire student population is approximately two thousand two hundred. Among the five public schools, one is a provincial school while the rest are district schools. The target population was secondary school students, teachers and parents in Lamu.

Owing to the large number of the students and other informants, it was not possible for the researcher to cover the entire population. A representative sample of one hundred and forty six students, thirty-seven parents, forty-seven teachers, three head teachers, and six ministry of education officers were selected. Students were drawn from a mixed school, a girl's school and a boy's school to ensure gender representation. Boarding and day school students were in the sample. To supplement students', teachers and parents information and for an authentic information, six

ministry of education officers were interviewed. Information was obtained from forty seven teachers through FGD sessions.

### **3.2.2 Sample and sampling procedure**

A sample of three participating schools was selected by convenient sampling. This avoided selection of the young up-coming schools and ensured the selection of both boarding and day school students. The students were drawn from forms three and four because of their long experience in school. In single sex schools, students were selected by random sampling while in mixed schools they were first put in strata and then randomly selected

Data was also collected from forty-seven teachers, and three heads of department, two forms three and four class teachers conveniently selected while the rest were selected randomly. Seventeen parents from each district school and sixteen from provincial school were randomly selected by lottery system. Finally, additional information was obtained from the District Education Officer, District Examination Officer, the District inspector of schools and three from the divisional level conveniently selected.

The researcher, with the assistance of the deputy head teacher of each school administered a questionnaire to one hundred fifty (150) students in the District School category and fifty (50) students in the provincial school. One hundred and forty six (146) students responded to the questionnaires. Thirty-seven parents (37) responded to a questionnaire administered by the researcher with the assistance of the head teacher at different times. The three head teachers from the sampled schools and six

ministry of education officers from the District were also interviewed by the researcher.

FGD's were organized among teachers. Three FGD sessions were conducted on different occasions in the district school category and two in the provincial school making a total of five FGD sessions. The sampling data and procedure is summarized in Appendix C.

Finally, the researcher observed official school records and school performance. Documentary information about District performance KCSE was sought from the District Education Office for more information.

### **3.3 Research Methods /Instruments.**

Four research instruments were utilized in obtaining information from respondents. These include questionnaires, focused group discussions (FGD), in-depth interviews and observation of records and documents.

#### **3.3.1 Questionnaire**

Questionnaires (Appendix D and G) were administered to students and parents respectively. Section one of student questionnaire is based on general information. Items one to six in section II seek information on student factors.

Section III require brief explanation for more details and clarification. Items 1 and 2 are based on student factors, items 3 and 4 are school factors. Item 5 is on parents' contribution while item 6 is about community influence. Item 7 seeks student suggestion on how to improve KCSE performance. Parents questionnaire section I

deal with individual parent responsibility while section 2 deal with community influences of which the parent is also part of it.

The target sample to respond to the questionnaire was 150 but 300 questionnaires were administered to make up for those who did not return them. The assistance of school deputy teacher of each school was sought to administer the questionnaire to the students while parents' questionnaires were administered by the researcher with the assistance of the head teacher of each school. The questionnaires were then collected by the researcher upon completion.

### **3.3.2 The Focused Group Discussions**

FGD consisted of about six to twelve members who were interviewed collectively. The interview was more like a guided discussion among participating members, with the researcher acting as the facilitator. The researcher facilitated FGD sessions in each school at different times agreed upon by the respondents. Issues to be addressed during FGD sessions are note in appendix E.

### **3.3.3 Observation**

Observation in research can either be non-participant in which the researcher is detached from what or whom he or she is observing. It could also be participant where the researcher is involved in the object of study and uses all the four senses (sight, smell, touch and hearing) to collect data.

In this study participant mode of observation was adopted. Observation focused on the school routine, school records and student files and facilities available. District

reports and documents especially those that relate to KCSE performance were observed and minutes of educational meetings.

Observation of records supplemented and served to clarify data collected through the above stated instruments. Observation was conducted in the three selected schools and in the District Education Office on different days.

### **3.4 Data Collection Procedure**

Data for this research was collected in two phases; the pilot study and the main study phase. The pilot study took one month while the main study phase took two months.

### **3.5 The Pilot Study report**

During the pilot study, the research instruments were tested, their reliability established and validated. According to Gay 1987, content validity is established by expert judgment. Therefore, the researcher's university supervisor and colleagues were consulted upon on the content representation and the items.

Results from the pilots study showed that the instruments were valid for the present study and that most of the items in the questionnaires, interview guide elicited responses anticipated by the researcher. However, the pilot study revealed that the questionnaires were too long and some items repeated. For this reason, the researcher left some items. This was done carefully to leave the questionnaire and interview schedule unchanged.

The responses given by the respondents on some items revealed ambiguities, repetition and misunderstanding on the side of the subjects. The researcher, therefore,

found it necessary to rephrase some of the items or changed the language in some of them.

The pilot findings revealed that most parents preferred to respond in Kiswahili. The researcher therefore gave the parents an option the use of language especially when answering the structured questionnaire.

In summary, although the results of the pilot study revealed the suitability of the instruments to the study, they called for some minor adjustment and refinement of the questionnaire and interview guide for final use in the main study.

### **3.5 The Main Study**

The researcher obtained an official letter from the University, which was used to get permission from the school administrators, and from those who were involved in the course of research. The researcher then arranged with the selected students and individuals the convenient time when she conducted the research.

The researcher arranged formalization visit to the schools to acquaint her with the setting that put the teachers and the administrators at ease. She sought the head teachers' assistance to meet and familiarize with some parents who were involved in an in-depth interview. She also visited the District Education Office with the same intent. Once all the preliminaries were completed the researcher then undertook her main study.

The student questionnaire were issued to the deputy head teacher of each school to administer and were collected personally by the researcher after two weeks. Parents' questionnaire were administered by the researcher with the help of the head teacher.

The FGD and interview sessions, the verbal response of the informants were captured verbatim. Short points were taken with the permission of the informants. Research findings were recorded and compiled for analysis

### **3.6 Data Presentation and Analysis**

The data thus gathered, was coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Both descriptive and qualitative statistics were used to describe and summarize data on the factors perceived to be contributing to poor KCSE results in the District. Pearson Product Moment Correlation will be used to enable comparison between variables of interest. A statistical analysis was carried out. The findings were then discussed. Based on the findings, conclusions and necessary recommendations are made.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the collected data and the analysis. First descriptive statistics for the variables under study are presented. A discussion of focused group discussion results and interview guide findings are presented. This is followed by the inter-correlation analysis results to show the relationships between different variables under study.

#### 4.1 The students response

##### 4.1.1 General information about students

Both male and female respondents were sampled. The male students were 77 (52.7%) and the female were 69 (47.3% of the respondents). A total of 146 students formed the sample as shown by the results in table 4.1

**Table 4.1: Gender composition of student respondents**

	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Male</b>	77	52.7
<b>Female</b>	69	47.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.2 School category for the respondents**

	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents</b>
<b>Day school</b>	23	15.8
<b>Boarding school</b>	73	50
<b>Mixed Day and Boarding school</b>	50	34.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100</b>

Results in Table 4.2 show that 23 (15.8%) of the respondents attend a day school, 73 (50%) attend a boarding school while 50 (34.2%) of respondents attend a mixed day and boarding school.

The school entry behavior of the students was also assessed. The assessment was done according to the points attained in KCPE. The respondents were clustered as below average, (50%), average (50%-60%), and 60% and above as shown in table 4.3

**Table 4.3: Respondents entry behavior**

	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Below 50% (30 out of 60 Points)</b>	37	25.3
<b>Between 50% and 60% (30-36 points out of 60 Points)</b>	44	30.2
<b>Above 60% (above 36 points out of 60 Points)</b>	65	44.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100</b>

Results in table 4.3 show that 37 (25.3%) of respondents entered into secondary school with performance below average 30 (50%) points out of 60 in KCPE. Results also show that 44 (30.2% of the respondents performed averagely (between 50% and 60%, 30-36 points out of 60 points) in KCPE to enter secondary school, while 65 (44.5 %) of the respondents performed above average, scoring above 36 (60%) points out of 60 points.

#### **4.1.2 Whether students have set an academic target and chosen a career to pursue in future**

Results show that 140 of the 146 students interviewed had set up an academic target.

This forms 96% of the students interviewed. Only 6 (4%) respondents had not set an academic target as shown in the table 4.4.

**Table 4.4: Whether students have set academic target**

	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Had set academic target</b>	140	96
<b>Had not set academic target</b>	6	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100</b>

The result also show that most of the students had also set a career to pursue in future. Of the respondents, 140 (96%) had set up a career to pursue in the future. Only 6 (4%) of the respondents had not set a career to pursue in the future. This is shown in table 4.5.

**Table 4.5. Whether students have set up a career to pursue in the future.**

	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Had set academic target</b>	140	96
<b>Had not set academic target</b>	6	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.2.3: How students rate themselves in class participation

Students are rate themselves as either very active, active or not active.

**Table 4.6: How students rate themselves in class participation**

	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Very active</b>	42	28.8
<b>Active</b>	104	71.2
<b>Not active</b>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100</b>

Results in table 4.6 show that 71% (104) of the respondents perceive themselves as active in class while 28.8% (42) of the respondents perceive themselves as very active. No respondents perceive themselves as not active in class. All students therefore feel they participate in class.

**4.1.4: How often students make use of the library**

The use of library was assessed as very often, sometimes, hardly and never, as shown in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7. How students make use of the library**

	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Very often</b>	8	5.5
<b>Often</b>	90	61.6
<b>Hardly</b>	23	20.5
<b>Never</b>	26	12.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100</b>

Result show that 5.5% (8) of the respondents use the library very often, 61.6% (90) use the library sometime, 20.5%(23) of the respondents hardly use the library while 12.4%(26) never use the library.

**4.1.5: How often students do extra exercise, assignment and homework.**

How often students do extra exercise, assignment and homework was assessed as Very often, occasionally, hardly and never.

**Table 4.8: How often students do extra exercises, assignment and homework.**

	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Very often</b>	75	51.3
<b>Occasionally</b>	65	44.5
<b>Hardly</b>	5	3.4
<b>Never</b>	1	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100</b>

Results in table 4.8 show that about half, 51.3% (75) do extra exercises, assignment and homework Very often, 44.5% of the students do their extra exercise, assignment and homework occasionally. Those who reported that they hardly do extra exercise, assignment and homework were 20.5% (23) while those who never do extra exercise; assignment and homework were 12.4% (26).

#### **4.1.9 Whether students have a personal timetable and how often they use them.**

**Table 4.9: Whether students have a personal timetable and how often they use them.**

	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Have a personal time table</b>	138	94.5
<b>Do not have a personal time table</b>	8	5.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100</b>

Results in table 4.9 show that a majority of 94.5% (138) have a personal time table while a minority of 5.5 % (8) of the respondents have no personal time table.

How often students use their timetable was rated as very often, occasionally, hardly or never.

**Table 4.10: How often students use a personal time table.**

	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Very often</b>	80	54.8
<b>Occasionally</b>	48	32.9
<b>Hardly</b>	10	6.8
<b>Never</b>	8	5.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100</b>

Results in table 4.10 indicate that more than half; 54.8% (80) of the students use their personal time tables very often. Those who occasionally use their personal time tables were 32.9% (48), those who hardly use their personal time tables were 6.8% (10), while those who hardly use their personal time tables were 5.5% (8) of the students.

#### **4.1.7 Whether students have time to study at home**

Students were asked whether they had ample time to study at home. The results show that a majority; 83.6% (122), had ample time to study but 16.4% (24), did not have ample time to study at home.

**Table 4.11 Whether students have time to study at home**

	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Have time to study at home</b>	122	83.6
<b>Don't have time to study at home</b>	24	16.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.1.8 How students rate syllabus coverage in their school.

Syllabus coverage in school was rated as either very good, good, fair or poor as shown in the table 4.12.

**Table 4.12: How students rate syllabus coverage in their school.**

	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Very good</b>	5	3.4
<b>Good</b>	49	33.6
<b>Fair</b>	67	45.9
<b>poor</b>	25	17.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100</b>

Results in table 4.12 show that 3.4% (5) of the respondents feel that syllabus coverage is very good, while 33.6% (49) of the students feel that syllabus coverage is good. A bigger percentage of respondents; 45.9% (67) feel that syllabus coverage is fair while 17.1% (25) feel that the syllabus coverage is poor.

#### 4.1.8 Correlation analysis of various variables

A correlation analysis for various variables was carried out to test the relationship between the variables.

**Table 4.13: Correlation between setting an academic target and future career, having a personal timetable and ample time to study.**

	Setting of a career	Personal time table	Time to study at home
Setting of an academic target	1.000	1.000	1.000

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Results in table 4.13 show that there is a positive and perfect correlation between setting an academic target and setting a career to pursue in the future, having a personal time table at school and having ample time to study at home. The

correlation coefficient between setting an academic target and setting of a career to pursue in the future, having a personal time table and having ample time to study at home is one ( $r=1.000$ ).

**Table 4.14 Inter-correlation between variables**

	participation in class	Use of library	Doing of Home work	Use of time table	Coverage of syllabus
Participation in class	1.000	0.807	0.798	0.597	-0.006
Use of library	0.807	1.000	0.289	.009	0.431
Doing of Home work	0.798	0.289	1.000	<b>0.960</b>	-0.444
Use of time table	0.597	.009	0.960	1.000	-0.610
Coverage of syllabus	-0.006	0.431	-0.444	-0.610*	1.000

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

The following observations can be made from table 4.14.:

- (i) There is a positive and significant correlation between participation in class and use of library. Correlation coefficient  $r = 0.807$  significant at 0.05 level.
- (ii) There is also a positive and significant correlation between participation in class and doing of home work, extra work and assignments, Correlation coefficient  $r = 0.798$  significant at 0.05 level.
- (iii) The results also show a positive and significant correlation between students participation in class and the students' use of time table where the correlation coefficient  $r = 0.597$  significant at 0.05 level.
- (iv) There is also a positive and significant correlation between student's use of library and doing homework where correlation coefficient  $r = 0.289$  significant at 0.05 level.

- (v) The results indicate a strong positive correlation between doing homework, and the use of personal time tables where correlation coefficient  $r = 0.960$  significant at 0.05 level.
- (vi) The results show a weak negative correlation between coverage of the syllabus and: students participation in class where correlation coefficient  $r = -0.006$  significant at 0.05 level. The correlation between syllabus coverage and doing of homework is negative and significant where correlation coefficient  $r = -0.444$  significant at 0.05 level. A significant and positive correlation exist between coverage of syllabus and use of library where correlation coefficient  $r = 0.431$  significant at 0.05 level.
- (vii) A significant and negative correlation exists between coverage of syllabus and use of time tables where correlation coefficient  $r = -0.610$  significant at 0.05 level. It is evident from the results that the students are negatively motivated to put any positive effort to use their personal time tables, use the library or even participate in class by the knowledge and fear that they will never complete the syllabus thus the negative correlation that reverses the direction of influence.

#### **4.1.9 How students feel responsible for their performance**

How students feel responsible for their performance was assessed through unstructured open-ended question. The students reported to feel that it is a duty for them to work hard and that by working hard they will perform well. They also reported that they can perform better by being active in class. They pointed out that time management is their responsibility and by being disciplined to use their time in

studying past papers and revision they can improve their performance. They need to improve while some reported a guilt feeling for having poor performance.

#### **4.1.10 Students factors that hinder learning**

Most students reported noise making as the main student factor that hinders learning in school. They also noted that failure to complete the syllabus hinder their learning and makes them perform poorly. Other factors that they put forward include:

- Drug use and abuse
- Theft groups
- Missing some lessons
- Copying during exams
- Not being active in class
- Use of vernacular languages in school
- Time wastage and mismanagement of time
- Failure to follow the time table
- Failure to do assignments, extra work and home work
- General indiscipline among students

#### **4.1.11: School factor that positively contribute to good performance**

Students reported that holiday tuitions and homework had greatly contributed to good performance in the schools. They also reported that hard work by teachers to motivate the students and complete the syllabus has contributed positively to performance. A good learning environment has also been created by a good relationship between the students teachers and the parents. This has contributed

positively to the students performance. Other school factors outlined by the students as contributing positively to the students' performance include:

- Good learning environment
- Past papers and KCSE revision booklets
- Group discussions
- Doing of assignments, homework and extra work
- Very hard working teachers
- A school program that provide for good time management
- Highly motivated teachers

#### **4.1.12: School factors that have negatively affected school performance**

- (i) Many students reported that failure to complete the syllabus by the teachers contributed greatly to the poor performance of the school.
- (ii) The teachers are reported to attend few classes and fail to attend most classes leading to non-completion of the syllabus and the consequence of poor performance.
- (iii) Teachers also come to class late and teach for a short time therefore, they do not cover the syllabus. This compounds the problem of syllabus coverage which students pointed out as the main school factor contributing negatively to the performance in the school.
- (iv) Absenteeism by the students due to lack of school fees was also pointed out as another major school factor contributing negatively to the school performance. Students are sent home frequently to collect school fees from the parents, this makes them miss lessons and the consequence of poor performance of the school.

- (v) The students also reported being punished during class hours. This include being compelled out of class as a punishment, doing manual work during class time and other deterrent activities that are enforced to students during class time. This, students reported causes students to skip classes that are vital for performance in school. The students also reported poor students – teachers relationships as a contributing-factor to poor performance.
- (vi) Lack of facilities such as libraries, laboratories and relevant books was also pointed out as factor that contributes negatively to the performance of students. Other factors that students outlined were:
- Communal work, where students are expected to clean up the school compound
  - Teachers are overloaded with lessons making them tired and unable to exhaust the syllabus
  - An unfriendly relationship between the teachers and administration
  - Drug abuse by students
  - Severe punishments such as suspension from school
  - Boy-Girl relationships in school
  - Poor attitude towards academics and a bad learning culture in schools

#### **4.1.13: Students' perception of the role of parents in supporting their studies**

The students reported the major role of the parents as being paying of school fees on time to ensure smooth running of the school program. Prompt payment of school fees is perceived by students as important as are not asked to go home to collect school fees during class time.

The parents also motivate and encourage the students to work harder in their academic pursuits in school. The parents encourage good learning habits and discourage bad behavior that affects the student's learning. The parents also provide books and other learning materials required by the students in the learning process. They also provide a conducive learning environment at home for the students so that they can study while at home. However, this is not true for all parents and families.

#### **4.1.14: How communities' social-cultural practices such as attending maddrasa, marriage customs influence the students' learning**

Students reported both positive and negative effects of the communities' social-cultural practices. Some of the positive effects pointed out by the respondents include:

- Some practices such as Maddrasa and marriage customs enhance the understanding of some topics in Religious education (IRE and CRE) which are examinable. This leads to better grades in the subjects involved.
- Some practices such as Maddrasa enforce discipline to students which help them in day-to-day activities and school work.
- Students also reported to have a better understanding of the Muslim religion by attending Madrassa.

The students also pointed some of the negative influences of the communities' social-cultural practices. These includes:

- Maddrasa overloads students with work such that they are unable to complete or even attend to their homework.

- Most of the communities' practices are time consuming, this reduces the amount of time available for students to study.
- Involvement in the practices makes students very exhausted and therefore unable to concentrate in class.
- Early marriages <sup>are</sup> ~~and~~ demotivating for female students and even for male students where such practices are carried on.
- Where such practices and occasions coincide with class time, students miss classes to attend to the practices. Madrassas lessons take place every evening and early morning. *This impacts negatively on students class time/work.*
- The communities' practices are also very expensive, this means that money that could have been used to pay school fees is spent.
- Different communities socialize boys and girls differently. This socialization affects the esteem of the students and their confidence in class. Due to socialization differences, different students participate differently in class.

#### **4.1. 15: Students' suggestions of how to improve KCSE performance**

Most suggestions are what students view as the possible solutions to the problems they face in their studies. The most emphasized problem that students emphasized was failure to complete the syllabus on time, leaving the students to sit for their examinations before completing the syllabus and without proper revision. The students suggested that more teachers should be hired to ease teachers' workload so that they can complete the syllabus. They also suggested that teacher transfer be minimized and the shifting and switching delays in teachers affect the syllabus coverage. Teachers are also to stop dodging and coming late for classes. Other suggestions regarding different problems faced by the students are:

- Parents to pay school fees on time and the payment of school fees not to be through the students. They are not to be sent home for school fees.
- The students should not do any form of punishment during class time.
- Instead of suspending students, other modes of punishments to be applied for minor offences.
- The schools to provide more learning material such as books, and revision material.
- The school to ensure that facilities for science practicals are available for students to perform the experiments more frequently.
- Frequent assessment tests to ensure that students continuously revise.
- Improve health facility to ensure that students attend classes.
- Increase competition among students
- Improve the relationship between students and teachers.
- Improve on class participation.
- Intensify tuition holidays
- Develop a positive attitude towards all subjects.
- Provide bursary to keep poor students in school.
- Form discussion groups
- Guiding and counseling to deal with students' problems to enable them concentrate in class.
- Avoid bad company and relationships with the opposite sex.
- Reading ahead of teachers
- Introduce educational trips
- Enforcement of school rules
- Grouping of bright and poor students to facilitate learning

## 4.2 PARENTS' RESPONSE

### 4.2.1 How often parents discuss with their children on the or performance

This was assessed as either Very often, occasionally, hardly and never. Table 4.15 shows the parents response.

**Table 4.15: How often parents discuss with their children on the or performance**

	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Very often</b>	23	62
<b>Occasionally</b>	14	38
<b>Hardly</b>	0	0
<b>Never</b>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>

A majority; 63.1% (24) of the parents discuss Very often with their children on their academic performance. The results also show that 36.9% (14) of the parents discuss occasionally with their children about their academic performance. No parent never or hardly discuss with the children on their performance. Results also show that all parents (100%) discuss the future aspirations and hopes of their students with them.

### 4.2.2: How often parents visit the schools where their children study to check their academic progress.

The trends of parents' visit to schools where their children study to assess their children's academic progress was assessed as either Very often visits, occasionally, hardly or never as shown in table 4.16.

**Table 4.16.: How often parents visit the schools where check students academic progress.**

	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Very often</b>	20	54.1
<b>Occasionally</b>	13	35.1
<b>Hardly</b>	1	2.7
<b>Never</b>	3	8.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>

Results in table 4.16 indicate that 54.1% (20) of the parents visit the schools where their children study to check their academic progress Very often, 35.1% (13) occasionally visit while 2.7%(1) of the parents hardly visit the schools. However a significant number of parents ; 8.1% (3) do not visit the schools where their children study to check their progress.

#### **4.2.3: How often students are sent back home for school fees**

Table 4.17 shows how often students are sent home from school for school fees from their parents.

**Table 4.17: How often students are sent back home for school fees**

	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Very often</b>	6	16.2
<b>Occasionally</b>	12	32.4
<b>Hardly</b>	9	24.3
<b>Never</b>	10	27.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>

Results in table 4.17 indicate that 16.2% (6) of the parents accept that students are sent home Very often, 32.4% (12) of the parents reported that their children are sent home occasionally while 24.3% (9) of the parents reported that their children are

hardly sent home for school fees. However 27% (10) reported that their students are never sent home for school fees.

#### 4.2.4 Whether parents reward their children's performance

Results show that 94.6% of the parents reward their children on good academic performance, 5.4% of the parents reported not to reward the children at all for their performance. Table 4.18 show how often parents reward their children on academic performance.

**Table 4.18: How parents reward their children's performance**

	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Very often</b>	11	29.7
<b>Occasionally</b>	20	54.1
<b>Hardly</b>	4	10.8
<b>Never</b>	2	5.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>

A majority of parents; 54.1 % (20) rewards their children occasionally, 29.7% (11) of the parents rewards their children very often, while 10.8% (4) of the parents hardly rewards their children for academic performance. Some parents never reward their children for good academic performance, 5.4% (2) reported that they never reward their children.

#### 4.2.5 Problems that parents perceive students face in their studies

This open-ended question assessed the parents perception of the problems students face in their studies.

Parents pointed out that schools have few teachers than are required. They felt that due to shortages of teachers, the students do not cover the syllabus leading to poor performance in KCSE. The parents also reported that schools have insufficient learning and teaching materials and facilities that make it difficult for the teachers to cover the lessons exhaustively. Lack of good laboratory apparatus and chemicals hinder good performance in science subjects while lack of books and library facilities limit the students research and revision.

Failure of teachers to attend to all the lesson was also pointed out by the parents. They strongly noted that teachers skip afternoon classes and attend to their private businesses outside classes. This, parents said, contributes to the poor syllabus coverage and KCSE performance.

The parents also reiterated the problem of school fees payment. They said that when students are frequently sent home for school fees, they miss classes and may not have an opportunity to go through the lesson with the teacher. Lack of school fees keep the students out of school for too long. This makes them ill prepared to do their examination.

Other problems that the parents highlighted as affecting the students' studies include:

- Students lack self-confidence
- Students are indisciplined
- Students prefer to watch Video and cinema instead of studying.
- Students dodge classes and do not do enough home work
- Some students are poor learners and others slow learners

#### **4.2.6 Difficulties that parents experience in educating their children**

Parents reported financial constraints as the major difficulty they face when educating their children. Students are frequently sent home to collect fees from the parents. This keeps them out of class unnecessarily.

Parents also reported being ignored by their children as the children feel they know better than the parents. This was common to parents that have no formal education, or high school education.

Parents reported transport problems for day school students who walk or cycle long distances to school in the morning, lunch hour and in the evening when meals are not provided by the school. Walking or cycling for long distances makes them very tired that by the time they get home in the evening, they can not do their homework or revise.

Parents also said that the students become disobedient and unruly because of peer pressure. Some take drugs and alcohol with or without the knowledge of the parents. Some students also go out to cinema, video and dance halls without the parents' consent or permission. Thus they do not do their revision and home work and may not concentrate in class as they are either too tired or sleepy.

#### **4.2.7: Effects of community factors on students' performance**

The analysis of effects of community factors such as drug abuse, alcohol, and early marriages/engagements based on the parents' perception. When asked whether they think such factors influence their students' learning, 67.6% (25) said yes, while

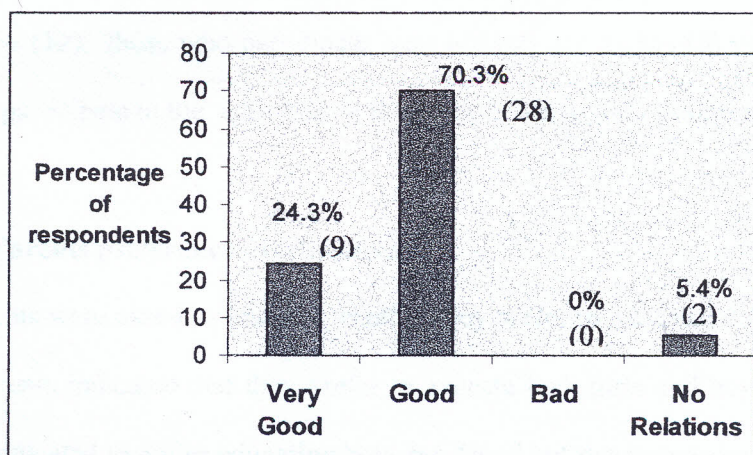
32.4% (12) said no. Those who said yes pointed out the following factors as affecting the students' learning:

- Drug use and drug abuse
- Early marriages/engagements
- Alcohol
- Dance, cinema, and video.

#### 4.2.8 How parents rate their relations with the school their children attend.

The school-parents relationship was related as either very good, good, bad or no relations.

Fig 4.1: How parents rate their relations with the school their children attend.



Results in figure 4.1 indicate that 24.3% (9) of the parents have a very good relationship with the schools where their students study, 70.3% (28), of the parents have a good relationship with the school, 5.4% (2) of the parents have no relationship with the school while no parent has a bad relationship with the school where their children study.

#### 4.2.9: How parents rate their participation in school.

Parents' participation in school was assessed as either very active, active or no participation. Table 4.19 shows the parents rate of participation.

**Table 4.19: How parents rate their participation in school.**

	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Very active</b>	8	21.6
<b>Active</b>	17	45.9
<b>No participation</b>	12	32.4
<b>Total</b>	37	100.0

Results in table 4.19 indicate that a significant percentage of the parents do not participate in the schools their children study. Those who reported non-participation are 32.4% (12), those who participate very actively are 21.6% (8) while 45.9% (17) actively participate in the activities of the schools where their children study.

#### 4.2.10: Parents preference in education

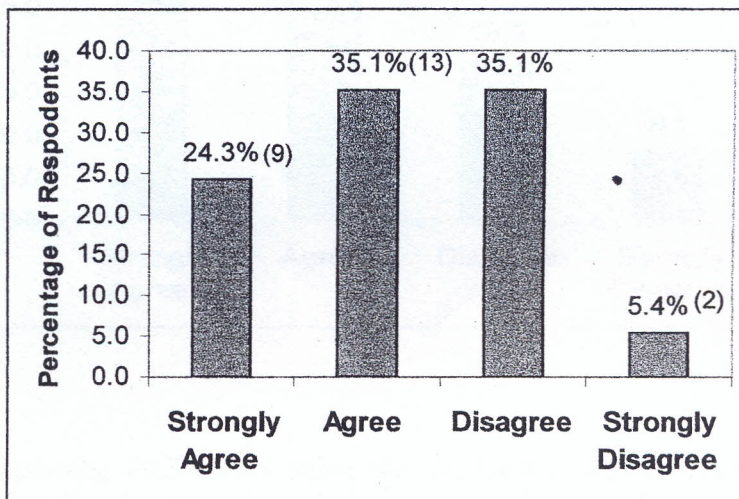
The parents were asked to indicate whether they prefer to educate boys, girls or both. Most parents indicated that they prefer to educate both girls and boys 96% (37), no parent indicated to prefer educating boys but 4% (1) of the parents indicated to prefer educating girls.

#### 4.2.11: Parents' perception of the causes of poor performance

The parents were asked to indicate whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the cause pointed out to them. Following is a summary of their response:

##### 1. Lack of learning materials

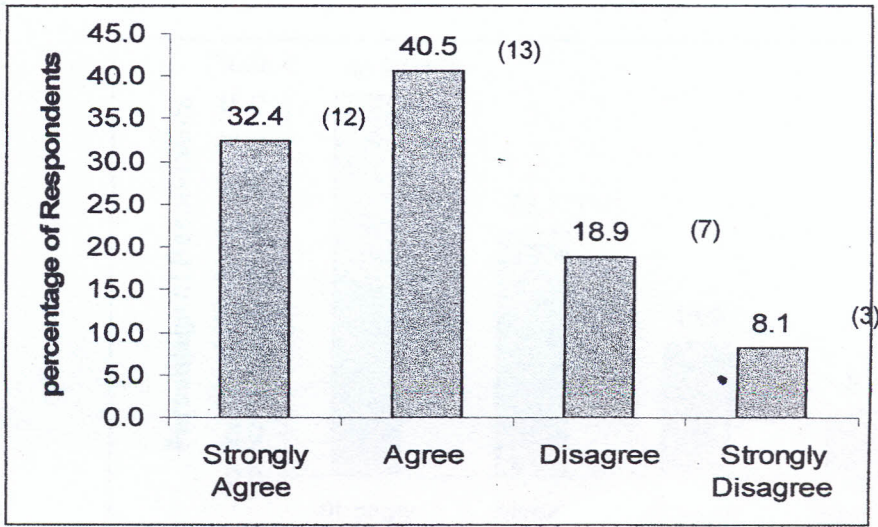
Fig. 4.2. How parents rate lack of learning materials as a cause of poor performance



As indicated by results in figure 4.2, 35.1% (13) of the parents agree that lack of learning material cause poor performance in KCPE, an equal percentage, 35.1% (13) disagree, 24.3% (9) of the parents strongly agree while 5.4% (2) of the parents strongly disagree that lack of learning materials cause poor performance in KCSE.

2. Ineffective PTA causes poor performance in KCSE.

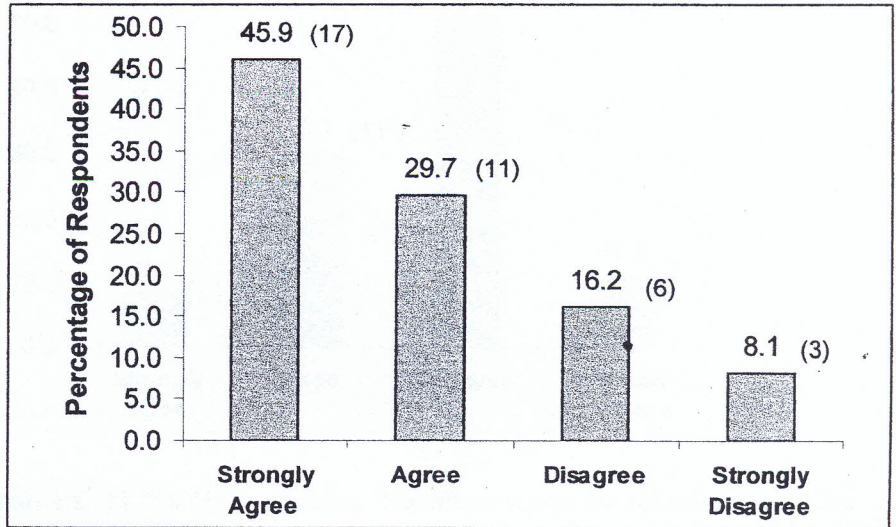
Fig. 4.3: How Parents rate ineffective PTA as a cause for poor performance in KCSE.



A majority of parents; 40.5% (12) agree that an ineffective PTA causes poor performance in KCSE, 18.9 % (7) disagree, 8.1% (3) strongly disagree while 32.4 % (12) of the parents strongly agree.

**3. Pupils truancy, absenteeism and indiscipline cause poor performance in KCSE.**

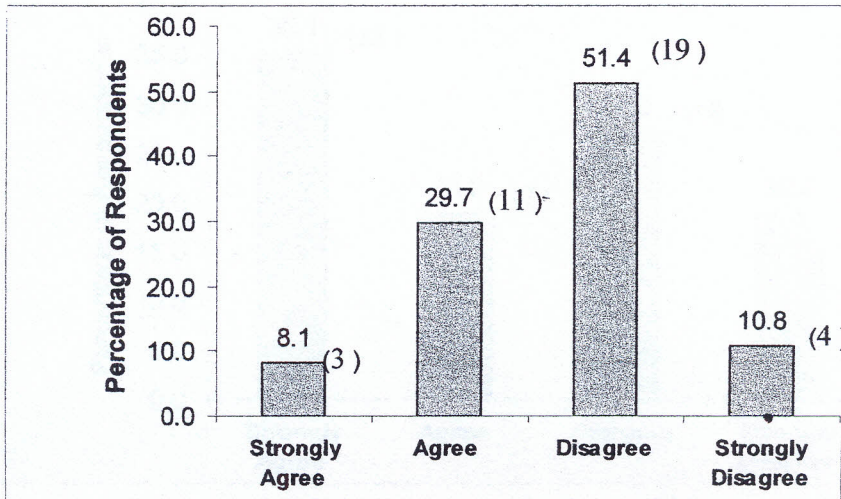
**Fig. 4.4 Pupils truancy, absenteeism and indiscipline cause poor performance in KCSE.**



A majority; 45.9% (17) of parents strongly agree that Pupils truancy, absenteeism and indiscipline cause poor performance in KCSE, 29.7% (11) of parents agree, 16.2% (6) disagree while 8.1% (3) strongly disagree. Therefore 24.3% of parents disagree that Pupils truancy, absenteeism and indiscipline cause poor performance in KCSE while 75.7 % of the parents agree.

**4. Interference by outsiders in school matters cause poor performance in KCSE..**

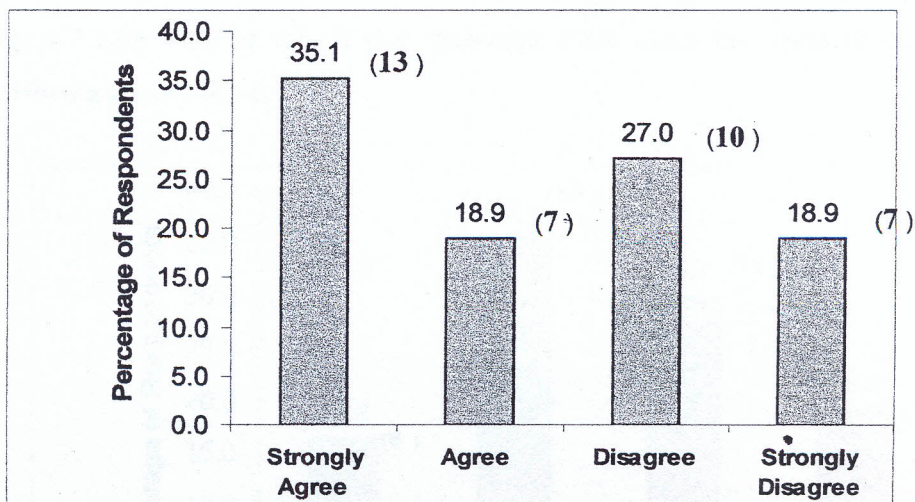
**Fig. 4.5: Interference by outsiders cause poor performance in KCSE.**



A majority of parents; 51.4% (19) disagree that interference by outsiders in school matters cause poor performance in KCSE. Some parents strongly disagree; 10.8% (4), 29.7% agree while 8.1% (3) strongly agree that interference by outsiders cause poor performance in KCSE.

**4. Little devotion, cooperation and absence from duty on the part of teachers cause poor performance in KCSE.**

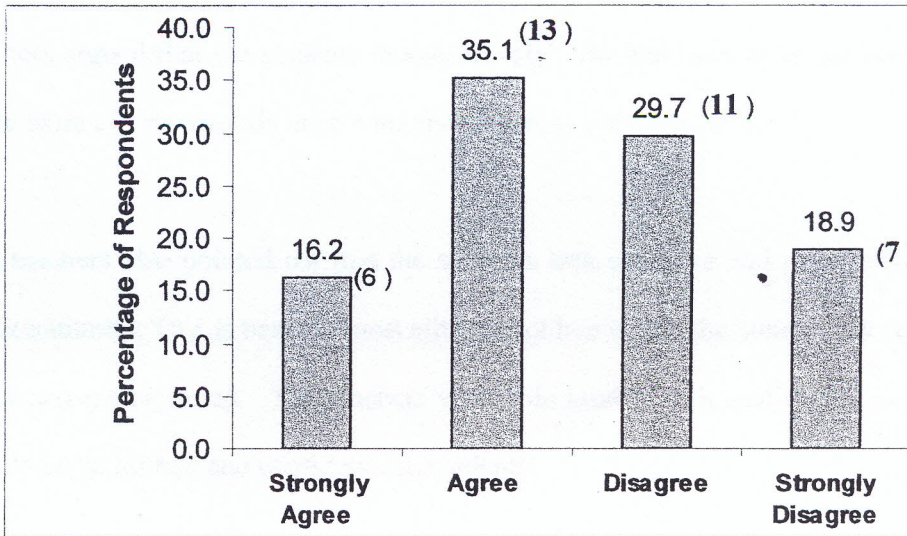
**Fig. 4.6: Little devotion, cooperation and absence from duty on the part of teachers cause poor performance in KCSE**



Results in fig. 4.6 indicate that the majority of parents; 35.1%(13) strongly agree that Little devotion, cooperation and absence from duty on the part of teachers cause poor performance in KCSE, 18.9% (7) of the parents agree, 27.0% (10) disagree while 18.7% (7) of the parent respondents strongly disagree that Little devotion, cooperation and absence from duty on the part of teachers cause poor performance in KCSE.

**6. Low rate at which the chairman PTA visits the school and hold discussions with teachers and students cause poor performance in KCSE.**

**Fig. 4.7 Low rate at which the chairman PTA visits the school cause poor performance in KCSE**



A majority of 51.4% agree that Low rate at which the chairman PTA visits the school and hold discussions with teachers and students cause poor performance in KCSE, 16.2% (6) strongly agree, 35.1% (13) agree, 29.7% (11) disagree while 18.9 % (7) strongly disagree that low PTA chairman visits to school causes poor performance in school.

**4.3 Teachers' response in FGDs**

The FGDs for the teachers attempted to answer the research questions. In particular the discussion surrounds the students, school and community factors that influence the performance of the students. The mean grade for the schools was D+.

#### **4.3.1 The student factors that have influenced performance in the school.**

Teachers were asked what student factors they thought influenced the their schools' performance. Most teachers said that the students are not intrinsically motivated. They lack confidence and a desire to improve in their academic performance. The teachers argued that the students morale is very low and have to be pushed to put some extra efforts towards improving their grades.

The teachers also pointed out that the students lack exposure and role models from the community. This is because most elite do not live within the community but in the cities and major towns. The teachers view role models as a motivating factor that should boost morale and confidence in students.

Hardship reflected in poor fee payment and absenteeism was also reported by teachers. The teachers observed that some students whose parents are unable to pay the school fees promptly are kept at home missing important classes. Teachers suggested the use of bursary by the school to help such students attend their classes and arranging with the parents on fees payments to avoid the frequent absenteeism.

Poor attitude towards secular education by some students was also pointed out as a student factor contributing to the school performance. Teachers described some students as being too religious to learn. Students hardly attend to their class work as they are busy with religious activities. Religious fanaticism in coastal schools has swayed the goals, aspirations and hopes of the students into a new culture of vain devotion.

Low aspiration and no goals, future visions or hope for some students. The teachers said that some students are not motivated to learn as they have no aspirations or low aspiration if any. Most of these students' goals are in religious studies through Madrassa. They set very low academic targets such as achieving a secondary education (no matter what grade they achieve). Students suggested that the higher the academic targets, the better students perform. Therefore having low aspiration or no academic aspiration makes students put no efforts to pass in their examination.

- Students are over loaded, especially those who take religious studies in Madrassa. "It is like there are two curriculums running concurrently". Teachers said. They have to leave normal classes to attend to Madrassa
- Student exposure to business men who seem to be the most progressive, some feel they can easily make money by working as beach boys or taking to fishing, farming.
- Low discipline that was viewed by sharp contrast to religious discipline.
- Bad peer influence. The few progressive students are pulled down by the lazy large group.
- Poor attitude towards math's and sciences
- Learning to simply finish and go
- Early engagement, this is done while the student is still in school (divided time).
- Poor exposure, little academic interaction outside the district.
- Poor time management

- Most students are passive disadvantaged geographic location that is hard to have field studies.
- Education not viewed in terms of its value emphasis is made on economic returns
- Poor academic foundation in primary school
- DRUG taking increasing in boys' schools.

#### **4.3.2 Positive and negative impact of the community social-cultural practices to student's performance.**

Religious celebration interrupt, learning as a student go home to join their families for the celebrations. Most students are required by parents at home for the celebrations that may take as long as three days. During the religious celebrations, class work is interrupted. Class attendance by students therefore become poor. As a result students fail to cover sufficiently what they ought to cover for the lessons missed.

Truancy and indisciplined students were also discussed as a major factor contributing to the poor performance. Students sneak from schools and classes during the day or and night to go and watch movies and video. This habit was reported to be very common among boys.

Students also take advantage of the relaxed regulations during Muslim festivals such as Ramadhan to waste time. During the fast, students were said to attend very few classes. Most students either sleep or go visiting in the neighborhood. This causes interruptions for almost a month.

Village politics interfering with school was also viewed by teachers as a contributing factor to poor performance. The teachers said that community leaders meddle with the affairs of the school causing tensions that demotivate the school fraternity barring effective learning.

#### **4.3.3 Some of the school factors such as preparation of records, utilization of facilities, social relations, administrative support that contribute significantly to academic performance.**

Teachers pointed out that records are prepared on time in some schools while in others, they are late. Where records are prepared late the teachers are unable to refer to them for evaluation of progress. The teachers also pointed out that some teachers do not refer to the records even if they are available. They said that refereeing to records is important as in doing so, the teacher can effectively improve his/her approach in teaching.

Teachers also discussed the preparation of lessons plans. They said that most teachers hardly prepare the lesson plans and when they do, it is only for official purposes and not for guiding the teacher in teaching.

Syllabus coverage varied from schools to schools and from subjects to subjects. There was a clear indication that some teachers do not complete the syllabus. In many subjects, students sit for their examinations before completing the syllabus. The teachers said that this has been one of the major causes of failure as students have to answer questions they have not covered in class. Most students do not answer such

questions satisfactorily. Syllabus coverage is slightly above average or below average in most schools.

Course books are fairly insufficient in schools but the teachers said the schools lack functional libraries. Most students therefore do not read on their own and therefore wait for the teachers to cover all what is needed for the examination. The teachers said that there are books stores but no functional libraries in the district.

Some laboratories are not well equipped while others are under utilized. The teachers reported that, some laboratories have no apparatus for the students to use. Where they are available, they are insufficient for the big number of students in a class. Teachers also said that some laboratories, though well equipped are hardly used.

The relationship between teachers and students is good. There are however few students who do not respect teachers. This leads to poor relationship with the teachers. The students are unable to pay attention to the teachers in class and end up failing in their KCSE examination.

The relationship between students who frequently visit staff room for academic assistance and those who do not is not very good, they are looked at as student with suspicion or as traitors who report misconducts of others. Therefore, student shy away from going to the staff room to discuss question with teachers.

Understaffing especially in language department was also pointed out by teachers as big struggle that some schools have to live with. The few teachers that are available are overloaded and in some cases unable to complete that syllabus.

Teachers agreed that the lack of in -service from ministry of education has also contributed to the poor performance.

#### **4.3.4 Teachers' opinions about general KCSE performance in Lamu District**

The teachers feel that Lamu District has performed poorly continuously over the years and that there is no improvement in performance. The district mean score has stagnated between 4.3 and 4.5 for the last ten years stable at D+ and rarely gets to c-. However, the teachers feel that the students can do better if their suggestions are put in place.

#### **4.3.5 Teacher's suggestions on how to improve the KCSE performance**

Teachers suggested that social cultural aspects to be addressed - those who have low opinion on education as a western culture.

For the teachers to complete the syllabus, more teachers should be employed to offload those overloaded. Provision of materials and laboratory apparatus will also help the science teachers cover the syllabus. The teachers suggested that if parents pay school fees promptly, students will not be sent home for school fees. This will help them concentrate with their class work and complete the syllabus in time.

Parents should be prepared to invest in education of their children. Apart from the financial and material investment that the parents should put, they should also

motivate their children towards academic excellence. They should reward good performance to condition the children to do better and show sincere interest in their children's academic performance.

The teachers also suggested that preps should be made compulsory even for day school students. Students should spend more time in schools even on weekends

The community should also be enlightened about the importance of education. This can be done during parents day, bonanzas and prize giving day.

The elites of the community should come back frequently and address the students so that they can have realistic role models. Teachers feel that the students lack people whole model their circumstances. This is true as many of the elites of the community do live in the community and hardly come home. The students therefore do not know them and derive no motivation from them.

Other suggestions given by the teachers include:

- Strengthening of guidance and counseling in school to help disturbed students cope with past backgrounds.
- Disciplined students to be accorded financial rewards.
- Teachers to be more compassionate and tolerant because some students come from broken families'. These students may be very disturbed psychologically and need understanding. For example those living with step fathers "baba wa kambo" who hold no responsibilities.

#### **4.4 Head Teacher's Response from the FGDs**

The entry behavior of students vary with schools. The head teachers pointed out that cut off marks for each school vary with performance in KCPE national examinations.

The highest in the provincial school in 2005 for example was 418 marks out of 500 and the lowest had 218. These results show great variation of the entry behavior. District schools take students with 250 and above and a few below 240 marks out of 500.

The three head teachers felt that their schools have never set an academic tradition of excellency . There is fluctuations in performance each year. The entire district has never had 50% quality grades and thus performs below average every year.

They noted poor administrative styles as a major contributing factor to poor performance in the district. The bureaucracy in administration and related procedures in institutional management policies makes communication inefficient and rigid. The head teachers said that the key to good performance lies in a simplified but efficient administrative style that creates a conducive environment for teaching and learning. A style that support communication between the administration and teachers and boosts the relationship between the administration, teachers and students will create a relaxed environment needed for learning for good performance.

The environment is not encouraging to students to learn. The students are sometimes interrupted by religious functions, suspensions, expulsions, and being sent home to collect school fees. The head teachers felt that with such interruptions, the students are unable to concentrate on learning neither do teachers have time to complete syllabus.

The social cultural environment also plays a major role in developing the students' attitude towards academic excellence. The society does not invest in education as it should. It dwells too much on non-academic activities such as cultural, religious festivals and business at the expense of academic performance. The head teachers pointed out that due to this poor attitude to education, the students do not aspire to do well and therefore do not work hard in class.

Most schools have bookstores with basic pupil textbooks but no functional library. The students therefore do not have a reading habit. The lack of proper libraries have contributed to a habit of students staying in their dormitories when free instead of the library where they could learn. Thus, the students hardly do extra work.

The head teachers also feel that lack of commitment from teachers has also been a barrier to academic excellence in the district. Some teachers miss classes while others show no interest in students' performance in class. Some teachers also do not complete the syllabus making students fail in the final examination.

Over-involvement of the students in the festival disorients them from studies and make them relax in class. The students for example involve themselves in tree planting days and public national holidays - Donkey race and swimming competition and tradition dances, painting to mark celebrations such as Maulidi. Other festivals include, Kiswahili cultural day. While these cerebrations are important in developing student's creativity, they tend to run for at least a week, thus consuming student's time for study.

Concerning the strengths within n the school the head teacher pointed out the following:

- Bright students who are above average.
- Some students share a positive attitude of education with some parents
- Students *baraza* where they air problems and give suggestions or solutions to their problems.
- Occasionally the community through PTA avail them selves problems to solve problems and talk to students.
- Fair discipline among students

The weaknesses noted by head teacher were the following:

- Parents want students to perform well but do not invest adequately in education. This is evidenced through poor payment of fees and insufficient facilities in the schools.
- Many parents tend to compare their schools with those in the upcountry which are seen to be doing well, waste time in talking yet they offer neither constructive criticism nor positive action.
- Theft cases in school are a reflection of the community around.
- Drugs and drug abuse have found their way to schools .they look at the community seem to be less concerned about stamping it out the vice.
- Almost half the parents do not monitor child progress, the school administration is always forced to shoulder parents responsibility
- Schools lack sufficient money to create conducive environment, boarding facilities are simply fair or average but far from being ideal for learning.

- Students have negative attitude especially towards mathematic and sciences while in some schools there are under ground anti-mathematics emphasis group.
- Students hardly communicate in English; they use Kiswahili, which makes them poor in English.
- Poor management of time by teachers and students alike. Teaching sometimes is not done as per time allocated.
- There is a strong feeling that serious teaching is done for two years compared to four years expected before sitting for KCSE examination.

However, the community also has some positive effects on schools. The head teachers pointed the following as positive influences on the school from the communities around the school.

- Some parent's value education. They impart on their children that education is their only inheritance. This encourages students to work hard.
- Madrassa classes enhance good performance in Arabic and Islamic religious studies.
- Madrassa also instills discipline in keeping time.
- Students' spiritual welfare is well taken care off.

The head teachers however commented that studies in Madrassa are rigorous, tedious and time consuming. Students are known to take advantage to be out of school

The head teachers feel that teachers' parents' cooperation is fairly good, there is no hostility but lack cooperation especially in cases where money is involved. They

pointed out that lack of prompt payment of school fees and false promises leave them with no option but to send students back home to collect the school fee even though sending the students home wastes their valuable time.

#### **4.5 Ministry of Education officials' Response**

Discussion with people from the ministry of education and observation of records revealed the following

1. It was found out that the best district mean score for the last ten years was 4.3819 (D+) obtained in the year 2003. In the same year, 48 (16%) students out of 305 candidates scored a mean grade of C+ and above.
2. Common findings and constrains in inspection reports include:
  - Low entry grades in form one because of poor performance in KCPE.
  - There is absence of value added progress in secondary Education. Most students do not add value in the four-year secondary education.
  - Drug and substance abuse among students.
  - There is understaffing in some subject areas which cause low instructional level and consequently poor syllabus coverage.
  - Demotivated teachers (not all) due to working in schools not of their choice and far from their home districts. Feelings of apathy and defeatist approach among teachers.
  - Localized head teachers/teachers hence concentrate more on personal issues.
  - Head teachers' failure to network with the education office and, poor managerial skills.

- Lack/ poor parental guidance for students.
- Poor payment of fees hence low cash flow making schools unable to provide basic resources and facilities.
- Non payment of school fees on time tampers with school operations.
- Education supervision both within the school and from the education office had not been effective enough to ensure standard management in institutions.
- Absence of regular INSETS. Most teachers had not attended any workshop/seminars on their relevant subject areas since they were employed. Such teachers do not change their teaching methodology and the way of doing things considering the current generation, modern trends and changes in the curriculum.
- Lack of competition amongst schools.
- Incompetent Board of Governors that are driven by other reasons necessarily not educational oriented.
- Inactive sponsors (DEB).
- Poor infrastructure in the schools.
- Negative attitude towards education within the local community hence their children lack aspiration that could give them the impetus to concentrate in studies.
- Lack of role models. The bigger percentage of the local people is not educated. The elites live outside the community.

## 4.6 Summary of Research Findings

### 4.6.1 Students' view

Students noted the following as major factors contributing to poor KCSE results: -

1. Poor management of time by students
2. Student indiscipline existed in many schools as in the case of noise making, copying during examinations, rampant use of vernacular, theft groups, boy girl relationships and cases of strikes.
3. Inadequate facilities and resources features in the schools.
4. It was found out that some students are forced by financial constraints to be absent from school. Missing of classes was partly blamed on teachers for punishing students during class time and sometimes suspension and partly due to poverty.
5. Another set back is a feeling of hopelessness among students at the knowledge that they do not complete syllabus. This is evidenced by the immense negative relationship between syllabus coverage and student passive participation in class and failure to do extra exercises and assignments.
6. With regard to attending Madrassa (Arabic and Islamic religion studies). Madrassa classes enhanced performance in Arabic Language and Islamic religious but it is time consuming. The studies take place daily in the evening and early mornings.
7. The students tend to blame teachers for dodging in classes and for the poor student teacher relationship. The students blame the school for insufficient facilities and the ministry of Education for insufficient teacher personnel.
8. Some few parents have negative attitude towards secular education alias "elimu ya dunia"

9. Some students do not perceive the importance of education for their future life. They only do so later when out of school.
10. Most of the progressive people are business people. Even though education is important it is not yet the only way to economic success. Students therefore argue that they do not have to study to be successful.
- 11.

#### **4.6.2 Teachers perception of poor performance.**

Teacher responses presented the student as;

1. Not intrinsically motivated. It was found that many students come to realize the importance of education during their last year. Other factors that teachers lamented about included;
  - a) Student indiscipline as evidenced by drugs abuse, boy-girl relationships and strikes.
  - b) Negative peer influences such as anti-mathematics and science club
  - c) Environment (community) do not carry the weight of education.
  - d) Poor time management by students
  - e) The high variation in marks student intake in form one whereby the majority with average and below average marks pull down the bright students.
  - f) Many students tend to be passive in class.
  - g) Expansion in number of students do not consumerate facilities available
  - h) Students hardly communicate in English.

2. It was noted that many parents want their children to perform well but the same parents do not invest adequately in education. This is evidenced by poor payment of school fees and the insufficient facilities in many schools.  
Teachers blamed drug abuse among students on parents because of their lack of cooperation to stamp it out. They noted that drug abuse among students is a reflection of the community.
3. There exists poor time management by some teachers, lack of spirit of sacrifice and commitment.

#### **4.6.3 Parents perception of poor performance**

- a) The parents noted lack of sufficient teachers as a major factor that affected school performance.
- b) They pointed out insufficient teaching resources materials and facilities as a major problem in their schools.
- c) The parents seemed to blame lack of syllabus coverage on teachers who tend to skip lessons. They also concurred with teachers on financial constrains leading to poor fee payment.
- d) Student indiscipline is noted as contributing to poor performance.
- e) A small section observed early engagement particularly of girls while still in school as a factor that affect performance negatively.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 INTRODUCTION.

This chapter gives a discussion of the findings arrived at from the data analysis. It also contains conclusions and recommendations based on research findings and implications. The findings are organized in the order.

- i. Student view
- ii. Teachers response
- iii. Parents response

The purpose of this study was to study some factors contributing to poor KCSE Examination results in Lamu District as perceived by students, teachers, and parents.

#### 5.1 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

##### 5.1.1 KCSE results in Lamu District

The finding in this study clearly shows that, KCSE results continues to be a major hurdle and a hindrance to student academic advancement and development. It is also clear from the findings that students, teachers, parents and the public are not happy with this state of affairs.

The students, teachers and parents who participated in the study noted many and varied reasons for the poor KCSE result.

##### 5.1.2 Student Factors

The students, teachers, and parents who participated in this study unanimously pointed out poor management and use of time.

Noise making in class was noted to be disturbing making it difficult for students to concentrate in their studies.

The findings revealed that students' indiscipline as a major problem as many young people were resorting to drug use and abuse, boy-girl relationships copying during examinations and existence theft groups. The existence of anti-mathematics and science group is another form of student truancy in the schools.

General indiscipline is implied by the fact that many students complained of being punished during class time while some are suspended or expelled altogether. Indiscipline among students' results to poor academic performance as discipline is an integral part of success.

The findings also revealed rampant use of vernacular in the schools. It was noted especially by the teachers that vernacular speaking has contributed to poor command of the language of instruction and consequently poor performance in examination. The teachers observed that some students lacked foresight on the importance of education to their future lives. According to them, students come to realize this towards the end of their years in secondary school. Many students therefore sit for their national examinations not well prepared hence the poor results.

Teachers and even students themselves revealed that some students were passive learners while others nursed feelings of hopelessness. Others still underestimated their academic potentialities. All these signs of demotivation among pupils negatively impacted on students' performance in national examination.

Student study habit was found to be highly questionable. Many students noted to have set an academic target, chosen a career to pursue after school, use personal time table and have time to study but their study habits seem not helping them in their academic pursuits.

Most of the local elites live outside the community hence students lack role models to emulate.

Many would-be successful learners have been enticed and misled by their peers through falling into bad habits, absenting themselves from schools, engaging in drugs and substance abuse, boy-girl relationships at the expense of their academic pursuits. Such poorly learning pupils should never expect positive results from a difficult national examination like KCSE. This perhaps explains why school administrators noted that there is minimal added value in secondary education in the district.

Some pupils and unfortunately some parents are convinced that it is simply enough to go through the system, know how to read and do simple arithmetic, and get married.

This kind of mediocre reasoning on the part of the learner would degenerate unrealistic truancy, early marriages for girls, dropouts, laxity and general indiscipline problems. This perception seems to be confirmed by the view held by teachers that no sooner do such girls complete their last paper in KCSE than they are married. Towards this direction, the pupils do not view learning as a means to an end, but taken as an end in itself.

### **5.1.3 School factors**

The major school factor that featured prominently was a general lack of sufficient facilities, dormitories. Most head teachers who took part in this study considered their facilities as simply fair or average. It was noted that the schools lacked sufficient money to create conducive learning environment. What students referred to as library is best understood by teachers as book stores. Lack of functional library makes it impossible for students to do research.

The teachers showed that the major snag to good performance in KCSE was the great range between the highest and the lowest score of those who joined form one. This variation made very few to improve while the majority of the students tend to deteriorate by the end of form four.

Poor syllabus coverage was found to be a strong demotivating factor among students. Poor time management by teachers was cited strongly by students as factor that leads to poor syllabus coverage. Some school administration seemed to concur with the students view when they cited lack of sacrifice and commitment to work by some teachers. Consequently, students are not well prepared for their external examinations.

### **5.1.4 Social-Cultural Practice**

Research findings showed that the socio-cultural practices negatively affected student performance. Although the Madrassa classes had some positive aspect, the fact that it runs almost daily meant that student time and energy is divided. It means that the student is subjected to two curriculums concurrently. The vigorous nature of

Madrassa lessons exhausts students' energy and concentration hence the negative consequences in examination results.

The teachers who participate in this study pointed out that a section of the parents tend to organize early engagement for their girls while still in school. Such girls are married off soon after the final examination in form four. These arrangements divert student interest and concentration from academic pursuits. Many of them stay on in school without vision or aspiration to advance further but simply to pass time and complete secondary education. It is observed that such students worry less about good performance.

Other factors from the community that were found to impact negatively on schools include the availability of drugs and illicit brew, the beach boy business. These are noted to divert student interest away from school activities.

#### **5.1.5 The Ministry of Education**

The students, teachers and ministry of education reported understaffing in some subjects as a drawback in most schools. It was observed that wherever there is understaffing in a school, the lower forms seem to be sacrificed and attention is concentrated in higher forms. These affect negatively academic foundation and with time this accumulated effect was found to result in poor performance in national examinations.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

This study was a survey of some factors contributing to poor KCSE examination results in Lamu District as perceived by students, teachers and parents. The basis of the study was the stagnated KCSE results in Lamu District for more than a decade. This was strongly noted by most head teachers who commented that the district had never had fifty percent quality grades in KCSE. Concrete information was sought from ministry of education officers who wield better understanding and are directly involved in educational matters in the district.

Most schools continue to record poor KCSE results, a fact that denies most students entry into the University and retard development in the society.

Many factors ranging from seemingly simple but destructive culture of vernacular speaking by students, general laxity in class work and indiscipline is taking a heavy toll on school performance in national examination. Poor time management and some community practices have impacted negatively on school performance as summarized in the previous chapter.

Teachers need to re-evaluate their commitment to their students. Parents on the other hand ought to honor fee payment on time to avoid student absenteeism. They should also ensure that there are adequate resources facilities and finances to enable schools to establish conducive environment for learning.

Better arrangements on “Madrassa” classes ought to be made to avoid student divided attention, minimize their movement of school and also to avoid loophole for indiscipline.

In view of the noted problems, a thorough going introspection perhaps by all stakeholders without shifting blame is the beginning. Knowledge of what goes on in the entire student life in the school, the home and the community may shed light on the right plan of action.

The above issues and concerns ought to be addressed for better results in national examinations. This calls for cooperate efforts, willingness and determination by students, teachers, parents and the community at large in academic matters and thus to reverse the current trend.

In conclusion, it was established that KCSE results in Lamu District is wanting.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The following recommendations have been made based on the observations made in this study. It is hoped that it will help improve in fostering seriousness and improve educational standards in Lamu District.

1. There is need to sensitize students on the importance of good education and academic performance, placing emphasis on preparation as early as the student join form one. Students need to be made aware that the goals of academic success lie beyond economic returns. Knowledge is to be sought after as a value in itself, a source of enlightenment and a means of adjusting well to the global society.
2. Teachers, parents and the public need to cultivate in the youth a culture of personal responsibility whereby students are made to see the relationship

between their own effort or hard work and good results. Students ought to be made to see it important and their responsibility that their efforts consummate the heavy financial investment the parent and the state place on education.

3. It is time that teachers and administrators borrow a leaf and learn from dedicated, self-sacrificing individuals like the late Griffins of Starehe boys centre, Nairobi. The common phrase that school performance is as good as the teachers seem to be true. Students look upon the teacher for his academic repertoire and model of good citizenship.
4. Due to the negative peer influence, it is recommended that teachers and parents should offer the needed guidance and counseling to pupils so that their indispensable interaction can yield to relationships with peers who hold educational value and attitudes that are compatible to society's educational expectations.
5. Parents should be fully aware of their influence and that of the adolescent peer group on the aspirations of their youth. They also need to be exposed to strategies for improving the quality of their influence. This is crucial in confronting sex stereotypes that often compel many youth to lower their aspirations or to aspire far beyond their capabilities as a result of peer pressure.

6. School heads should work closely with the local leaders such as chiefs and district officers to deal with social evils like drinking alcohol, drugs and substance abuse.
  
7. Appointment and deployment of school administrators should be revisited so as to select those with necessary skills. Localization of administrators should be avoided where possible. There is also need for both field and school administrators to pay close attention in schools to issues such as; teachers planning and execution of their duties, students homework/ assignments, inspection and the amount of time allocated to and used for instruction.
  
8. There is need for the ministry of education to tackle the perennial understaffing problem in schools in order to reduce undue frustrations and frustration among students.

#### **5.4 Area of research**

Research into what goes on inside the schools. An understanding of what goes inside the schools and classrooms is a necessary step to understanding why there is no added value in secondary education in Lamu District.

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## APPENDIX AA

### Letter to the respondents

Dear Respondent,

I am a post graduate student pursuing a masters degree in Psychology of Education at Kenyatta University. I am conducting a research for my final year project, which is a requirement of the degree program.

I therefore kindly request you to spare a few minutes<sup>9</sup> to answer this questionnaire. This is purely an academic exercise and your sincere responses will be highly appreciated and treated in confidence. To ensure this please do not indicate your name or that of your school anywhere on this questionnaire.

Yours Faithfully,

**Sr. Josephine Keino.**

**Kenyatta University**

## APPENDIX A

### LAMU DISTRICT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

NAME	TYPE
1. Mpeketoni	MB
2. Witu	MB <sup>Δ</sup>
3. Lamu girls	GBD
4. Lamu boys	BBD
5. Faza	MBD
6. Bakanja	MD •
7. Sacred Heart	GB

#### KEY

MB- Mixed boarding

MD-Mixed day

GB- Girls boarding

MBD-Mixed boarding and day

GBD-Girls boarding and day

**GBD**-Boys boarding and day

*Source: Ministry of Education,*

*Lamu District Education Office.*

**APPENDIX B**

**SELECTED SCHOOLS OF STUDY**

1. MPEKETONI SECONDARY

2. LAMU BOYS

3. LAMU GIRLS

## APPENDIX C

### TABLE 3.1 SAMPLING GRID

<i>Category of school</i>	<i>No. of Schools</i>	<i>Sample of Population of school</i>	<i>No. of students responded to Questionnaire</i>	<i>No. of H/T interviewed</i>	<i>Parents that responded to questionnaire</i>	<i>Ministry of Education Officers and to be interviewed</i>	<i>Teachers for FGD sessions</i>
<i>Public District School</i>	4	2	70	2	20	6	32
<i>Provincial School</i>	1	1	76	1	17	-	15
<i>Total</i>	N=5	N=3	N=146	N=3	N=37	N=6	N=47

## APPENDIX D

### STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is divided into 3 sections. Read it carefully and answer all the questions in all the sections. No answer is necessarily wrong or correct. Feel free to provide the answer you consider appropriate.

#### SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Indicate your gender:     Male                       Female
2. Type of school:     Day               Boarding     Mixed Day & Boarding
3. Your KCPE performance in points \_\_\_\_\_ out of \_\_\_\_\_

#### SECTION 2

Please tick mark [] any of these alternatives which best indicate your appropriate answer.

1. Have you set your personal academic target?

Yes []              No []

If yes, what is your target? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Have you chosen a career to pursue in future?

Yes []              No []

If yes, which one? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How do you rate yourself in class participation?

Very active []    Active []    Not active []

4. How often do you make use of library services?

Very often []    Sometimes []              Hardly []    Never []

5. How often do you do extra exercises (assignments, homework)?

Very often [ ]    occasionally [ ]    Hardly [ ]    Never [ ]

6. Do you a personal time table in school?

If yes, how often do you use it?

Very often [ ]    occasionally [ ]    Hardly [ ]    Never [ ]

7. Do you have time to study while at home?

Yes [ ]    No [ ]

8. How is syllabus coverage in your school?

Very good [ ]    Good [ ]    Fair [ ]    Poor [ ]

### SECTION 3

Please explain briefly

1. In which way do you feel responsible for your performance?

2. What are some of the student (peer) factors if any that hinder your learning?

3. What are some of the main school factors that have positively contributed to good KCSE performance?

4. What are some of the school factors that have negatively affected school performance?

5. In which way(s) do you feel parents support your studies?

6. In which way do the communities social-cultural practices such as attending maddrasa, marriage customs influence your learning:
- (a) Positively
  - (b) Negatively

Explain \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Give suggestions on how to improve KCSE performance in your school?

## APPENDIX E

### ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED DURING FGD SESSIONS

1. What do you think are the student factors that have influenced performance among your students?
2. What are some of the community social-cultural practices that have had significant impact on your school performance?
3. What are the main school factors such as preparation of records, utilization of facilities, social relations, administrative support etc that contribute significantly to academic performance?
4. What is your opinion about general KCSE performance of Lamu District?
5. Give suggestions for better performance

## APPENDIX F

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE ( head teachers)

1. What is the cut off marks of students admitted in your school?
2. Have you set an academic tradition in your school? Please explain.
3. Are your students involved in the communities' socio-cultural activities? Which ones? How often?
4. What are the strengths within the school that contribute positively to school performance?
5. What are the weaknesses that inhibit learning in your school? Explain.
6. In which way(s) does the community influence the school
  - (a) Positively
  - (b) Negatively
7. What can you say about teachers -parents' co-operation in school matters?
8. What plans do you have for improving your school performance?

## APPENDIX G

### PARENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Read the following statements given below and indicate what you feel in relation to proper learning and better performance in KCSE.

Tick [✓] mark what you think is the appropriate option from the choices given.

#### SECTION I

1. Do you discuss your children's performance with them?

If yes, how often?

Very often [ ] occasionally [ ] hardly [ ] never [ ]

2. Do you visit school to check your child's academic progress?

If yes, how often?

Very often [ ] occasionally [ ] hardly [ ] never [ ]

3. Are your children often send back home for school fees?

If yes, how often?

Very often [ ] occasionally [ ] hardly [ ] never [ ]

4. Do you reward your children for good performance?

If yes, how often?

Very often [ ] occasionally [ ] hardly [ ] never [ ]

6. Do you / have you discussed with your children their hopes and aspirations/

Yes [ ] No [ ]

#### SECTION II

1. What problems, if any do your children experience in school at the present?

2. What struggles if any do you experience in bringing up and educating your children?

3. Are there community influences such as drugs, alcohol, early marriages that affect schools around?

Yes [ ]            No [ ]

If yes, which ones?

4. How do you rate your relations with the local secondary school where your children study?

Very good [ ]    good [ ]    bad [ ]    no relations [ ]

4. How do you rate your participation in school activities, particularly those that your children study?

Very active [ ]    active [ ]    No participation [ ]

5. Whom do you prefer to educate? Boys [ ] or girls [ ] or both [ ]

Give reasons for your choice

### SECTION III

Read the following statements and indicate what you will feel is appropriate option from the 4 given choices.

Key

SA – Strongly agree

A - Agree

D - Disagree

SD - Strongly disagree

1. Lack of learning materials has tended to lower K.C.S.E performance in the school

A	B	C	D
SA	A	D	SD

2. Ineffective moral and material support by parents association has led to the schools poor performance

A	B	C	D
SA	A	D	SD

3. Pupils' truancy absenteeism and indiscipline has led to poor KCSE performance.

A	B	C	D
SA	A	D	SD

4. Interference by outsiders on school matters has caused a drop in standards of the performance of the school in K.C.S.E.

A	B	C	D
SA	A	D	SD

5. Little devotion, cooperation and absence from duty on the part of teachers.

A	B	C	D
SA	A	D	SD

6. Rate at which the chairman PTA visits the school and hold discussions with teachers and pupils

A	B	C	D
SA	A	D	SD

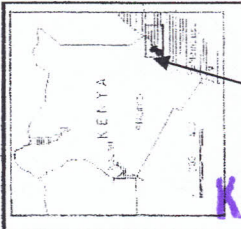
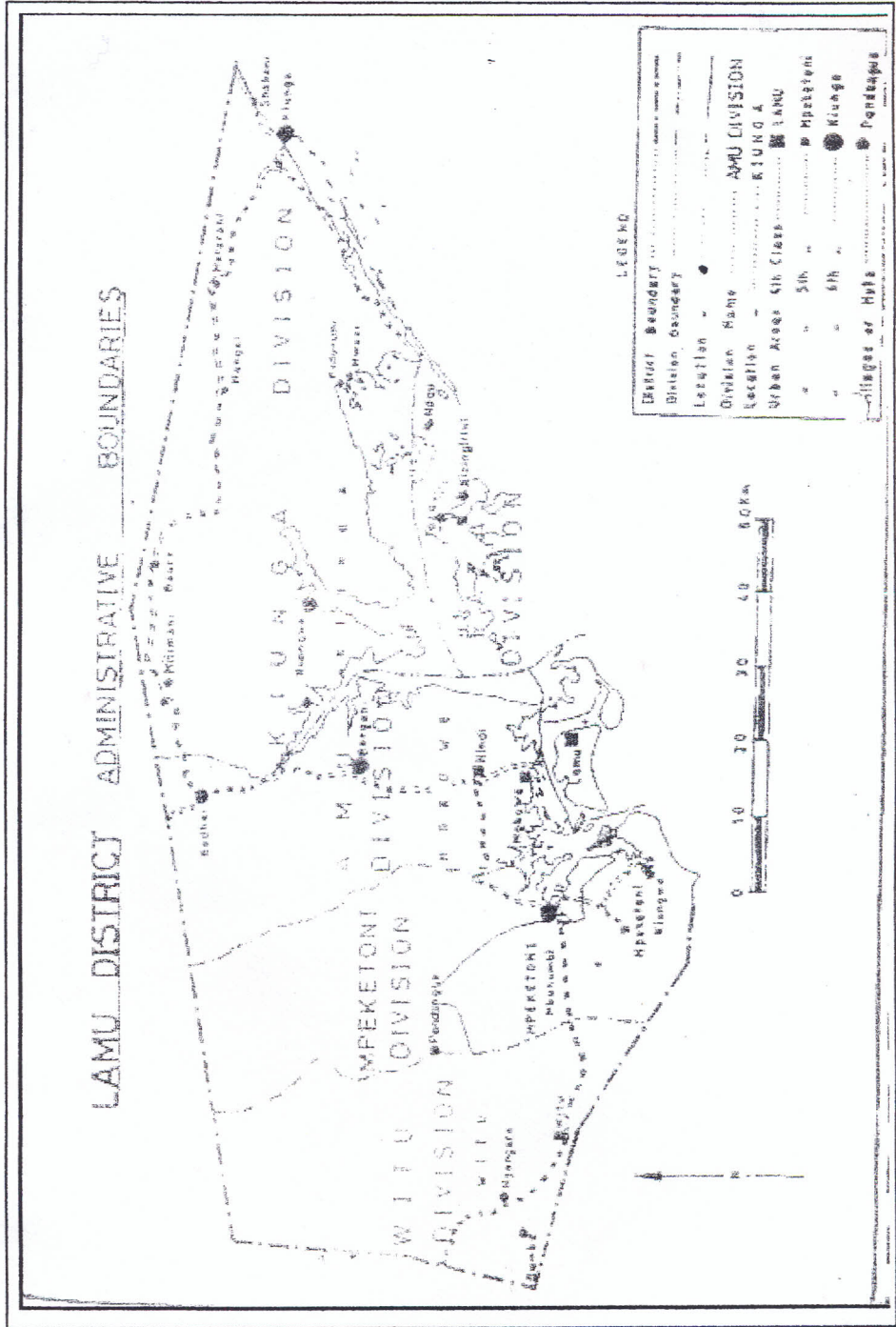
## **APPENDIX I**

### **SCHEDULE FOR MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OFFICERS**

1. The latest best District mean score
2. The common findings in curriculum inspection report in secondary schools in Lamu District.
3. Constrains, if any that schools experience in the district.
4. Suggestions for better performance.

APPENDIX J

MAP OF LAMU



LAMU

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY