

**INFLUENCE OF NON-GOVERMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS EDUCATION SUPPORT  
ACTIVITIES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN PUBLIC  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA: A CASE OF MACHAKOS COUNTY**

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**ABSTRACT**

Non-governmental organizations have initiated education support activities which have improved school performance of students in public primary schools. The researcher looked at the influence of the nongovernment organizations education programs on academic performance of public primary schools. The study concentrated on influence of non-governmental organizations education support activities on academic performance of students in public primary schools in Machakos only. The study delimited itself to the target population of 176 participants in Machakos. The study adopted descriptive method because it provided a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes and opinions of a population by studying a sample population. The researcher has put in mind that participation in research is voluntary, thus quality time was taken to explain to the respondents the importance of the study thus requested them to participate in the study by giving relevant and honest information. Questionnaires were used to collect information from the selected respondents. The researcher then analysed the data using descriptive statistics, the findings will help various key stakeholders including the government and Non-governmental organizations. The results of the data analysis are presented in chapter of this report thus data has been organized and presented as per the objectives of the study and demographic information captured at the beginning of the analysis. The researcher thus concluded that multiple factors influence academic performance of students negatively for instance lack of scholarly materials, lack of well-structured school feeding programs and lack of well installed physical facilities. The study revealed that academic performance was not negatively influenced by lack of clean water.

**Keywords:** *Non-governmental organizations, education, school performance and public primary schools.*

## **Background of the study**

Various reasons have influenced the academic performance of students in public primary schools especially for the children whose parents or care givers cannot afford education in private schools. Some of these factors include; being orphaned, poverty and ignorance by parents. School going Children OVC perform poorly in academics for several reasons including poverty, need for domestic labour, need for income-generating activities, stigmatization, and parental sickness or death. School enrolment inequities among school going children have been documented throughout sub-Saharan Africa (Bicego, Rutstein, & Johnson, 2003). One estimate suggests that orphans are approximately 13% less likely to attend school than non-orphans (Monasch & Boerma, 2004). Studies have also shown that disparities in grade progression were found in several countries including Botswana, Niger, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe (Bicego et al., 2003). Appropriate grade progression is important because losing ground in school places children at higher risk of failing and dropping out. The completion rate of education in Africa is among the lowest in the world (UNESCO, 2006). This poor academic performance and low transition rate of primary school pupils into secondary schools is partially attributed by the inability of caregivers to pay school fees. Even in countries where secondary school education is provided for by the government, there are additional maintenance costs to be settled.

## **Statement of the problem**

Various factors have influenced academic performance of students in public primary schools like poverty, which leads to parents' inability to meet basic needs, therefore; various Nongovernmental organizations have initiated activities geared towards improving the academic performance of such marginalized students. These activities provide scholarly materials like school uniforms and books, school feeding programs, physical facilities and provision of health and sanitation which support the education of these children. However much these strategies have been used in various developing countries, their relative impact on education especially academic performance has not been greatly felt. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the impact of NGO education activities on the performance of Primary school children in Machakos County.

## **Literature review**

### **Theoretical framework**

#### **Tinto's model**

The most commonly referred to model in the student academic performance in relation to school retention. It was first offered in a literature review (Tinto, 1975), and so began with the support of being broadly consistent with a considerable range of other people's research, as well as having a theoretical derivation by analogy to Durkheim's model of suicide. It probably gains most support though because it immediately appeals to people's common sense with its central notion of "integration". It is less clear whether there is much direct empirical support for it, and certainly it is hard to find direct empirical tests of and challenges to it. The literature claiming to support it seems to be about reporting weekly consistent evidence: not controlled experiments, nor comparing alternative theories against Tinto's with respect to data.

This is adapted by the researchers from Tinto, V. (1975) "Dropout from Higher Education: A Theoretical Synthesis of Recent Research" *Review of Educational Research* vol.45, pp.89-125". Its central idea is that of "integration": it claims that whether a student persists or drops out is quite strongly predicted by their degree of academic integration, and social integration. These evolve overtime, as integration and commitment, interaction, with dropouts depending on commitment at the time of the decision.

### **Empirical Review**

#### **Scholarly materials provision and academic performance of students**

Provision of Scholarly materials is a critical construct for academic performance because it has some correlation with the quality of service delivery. Regular attendance for learning is associated with provision of scholarly materials. When they reach school age, research demonstrates that to achieve academically, children must attend school consistently equipped with scholarly materials like textbooks, stationeries and uniform. A child's exposure to curriculum gives him/her an opportunity to learn significantly, influence achievement and exposure from being in school

(Fuller et al., 1999). A study of village-based schools in Kenya found that students with access to scholarly materials had greater learning gains and lower rates of repetition, a finding consistent with many other studies (Miske, Dowd et al., 1998).

### **School feeding programs and academic performance of students**

Kenya is still a developing country and food as a basic need is still scarce in the country especially for orphans and vulnerable children. Kenya is classified as an upper middle-income country (World Food Programme (WFP), 2010) with frequent food deficits because of recurring droughts which have resulted in high rates of malnutrition. The country is food secure at national level; however it is at household level that access to sufficient food for marginalised and vulnerable groups in the society remains a constant challenge, contributing to the current, unacceptable levels of malnutrition. School feeding programs are targeted as social safety nets that provide both educational and health benefits to the most vulnerable children, thereby increasing enrolment rates, reducing absenteeism, and improving food security at the household level. This has linked both food and education for poor and vulnerable children living in highly food-insecure areas.

The government has also initiated the food for work program which targets the families. All these initiatives are hoped to build capacity to the individual child and family and remarkable improvement in enrolment has been noted in the primary schools with the enrolment figure moving from 5 million in year 2000 to 8 million in year 2010. According to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) 2010, assessments in 2009, the estimated overall crop production was 139,000 tonnes, leaving a deficit of 150,000 tonnes, which the country had to import to meet the consumption demand of its population. The world is still recovering from the financial and food crises of 2008. A key response, especially in developing countries, was to scale up school feeding programs.

School feeding programmes are essential in any country whether it is developed or is still developing. The benefits of these programmes are immense not only at the individual level but also to the community and society at large. The primary assumption of school feeding programmes is that education and learning depend on good nutrition (Briggs, 2008). School health and nutrition also addresses the critical health and nutrition factors that keep children out of school and reducing their ability to learn effectively, such as malnutrition and hunger (Save the Children USA, 2007).

Bundy, Burbans, Grosh, Geli, Jukes, and Drake (2009) defined school feeding as the provision of food to school children. There are two main groups of school feeding approaches, namely ‘in-school feeding’ and ‘take-home rations’.

School supplementary feeding programmes can therefore be implemented as in-school feeding, where the children eat the food in school or as take home rations, where the learners take dry portions of food to consume at home. In-school feeding programmes are better preferred for the learners as their eating can be monitored and they consume the full amount of their daily ration. In take home rations however, the possibility of sharing the food with family is high resulting in the learner not consuming adequate amounts of their daily ration. School feeding programmes are mainly implemented with the intention to achieve the following results: Increase enrolment and attendance, Alleviate short-term hunger, Improve nutritional status, Improve micronutrient status (WFP, 2004)

Food can act as a strong incentive for children to attend school on a regular basis. Girls especially benefit from this, as parents feel there are sufficient income-transfer benefits (Del Rosso, 1999). In many communities, girls are culturally disadvantaged such that in hardship situations, male children are given opportunity to go to school over girls. School supplementary feeding programmes can provide a way in which parents can save money by spending less on food and thereby allow the girls to attend school. It is however important to establish that school meals do not replace food that has been part of the children’s diet in the household, but rather add to what the family provides. In Jamaica providing breakfast to primary school students significantly increased rate of school attendance. The learners who benefit the most are those wasted, stunted, or previously malnourished (Del Rosso, 1999). Alleviation of Short-Term Hunger in learners is also another objective of feeding programs in schools. Much research has also been conducted on the effects of short-term hunger related to learning capacity and in-school meals provided to learners reduce short-term hunger (World Food Programme (WFP), 2004).

Learning ability is affected greatly by hunger due to skipped meals. Many factors contribute to hunger among school children, these include long distances children have to travel to school, cultural meal practices that include no or small breakfasts due to a lack of family time and resources to provide adequate meals to children before and/or during the school day (Berliner, D. C., 2009). Poverty and potential: Out-of-school factors and school success.

Many cultures do not provide breakfast. This means the child's last meal is in the evening. The possibilities of long travelling time mean the child starts the school day hungry and is unable to concentrate. The provision of even a small snack at the start of the day or mid-morning alleviates the short-term hunger and has been linked to increased awareness, activity and learning capacity (Briggs, 2008). Improving Nutritional Status in learners is also another major objective. The physical growth of a child is a result of a number of interconnected variables, especially in areas where poverty is endemic. Environmental factors, genetics, food consumption patterns, health and illness, hygiene practices, lack of sanitation and the onset of puberty are but a few. Even though data collection on these variables has been inconsistent, some research indicated that undernourished children do benefit from school feeding programs (Bundy, Burbans, Grosh, and Geli, Jukes & Drake, 2009). The school supplementary feeding programmes help to improve the nutritional status and health status of schoolchildren, as they learn better if they are not hungry (King & Burgess, 1995).

Poorly fed schoolchildren who are provided with good meal improve their growth and school performance, and prevent anaemia, and other nutritional deficiencies. Other objective of school supplementary feeding programmes include: Increasing attention and concentration of students producing a gain in cognitive function and learning. Nutrition affects the development of factors that encourage cognitive development before and after a child is enrolled in school. Conditions such as protein-energy malnutrition and other micronutrient deficiencies can have adverse effects on attention and concentration in school (Pollitt, 1984) School feeding effectively reduces absenteeism and increases the duration of schooling, educational outcomes which includes; performance, drop out, and repetition. It increases community involvement in schools, particularly where programmes depend on the community for preparing and serving meals for the children. In addition, schools have the potential to reach out not only to orphans and vulnerable children, but

also staff, teachers, parents and community members, including young people not attending school.

Rautiainen K., Nissinen M. & Lassenius C. (2000) argue that schools can teach students how to resist unhealthy social pressures since eating is a socially learned behaviour. Skilled personnel are available to provide follow-up and guidance after appropriate training of students, teachers and other service personnel. Teaching school children about nutrition can help other people in the community to learn about nutrition (King & Burgess, 1995). Evaluations show that school-based nutrition education has the ability to improve eating behaviours of young people (Del Rosso, 1999).

Framework for an Effective School Supplementary Feeding Programme needs to be institutionalized, which include; Starting point for developing an effective school nutrition component in broader efforts to improve health status. Schools can effectively deliver some health and nutritional services, provided that the services are simple, safe and familiar, and address problems that are prevalent and recognized as important within the community (Del Rosso, 1999).

## **2.4 Physical facilities and academic performance of students.**

The relationship between school resource level and pupils' achievement can be related largely in various literatures. According to Global Education Monitoring Report (2016) outlines, that the sustainable Development Goal on Education requires availability of learning material as a key strategy for achieving inclusive and equitable quality education that promotes common lifelong opportunities. Mukami (2009) affirmed that Facilities and infrastructure greatly affect the levels of students' achievement as well as the safety of both teachers and learners. Standard classrooms, textbooks and furniture are basis for a good learning environment. Standard classrooms are an important precondition for pupils' learning and participation in school activities, this is what NGOs strive to provide. Availability of classrooms, libraries and other physical facilities enhance the learning environment which is reflected in examination performances (Gakuru 1982).

Fielmua & Bandie, (2012) carried out a study in Ghana, on the contribution of local Non-Government Organizations (NGO) in promoting basic education in the Nadowli District. He identified The Sustainable Integrated Development Services Centre (SIDSEC) which was a local

operating NGO in Nadowli District in Ghana that provided physical facilities including teaching and learning material with the aim of bettering the quality of education in the district. Teachers at basic education level indicated that the reading and counting skills of pupils had improved as a result of the provision of physical facilities by NGOs. In addition it led to increased enrolment and retention in the primary schools. A poor physical facility in primary schools is one of the main barriers to excellent academic performance.

A study by Buhere (2007) in Webuye subcounty in Kenya revealed gaps in the quality of education in Kenya relative to physical facilities. The study proved that nearly all physical facilities required for teaching and learning were lacking, from textbooks, learning material and inadequacy of library services. As a result, performance in these schools is affected negatively, since learners lack practical approach in learning of the subject taught. Empirical data show that physical facilities are an important factor in both school attendance and achievement. For this reason, improving primary school infrastructure is a high priority among SMCs. Over time, communities and parents have been responsible for and have made substantial investments in school infrastructure.

World Bank (2002) did a study that involved over 89 education projects across Africa. The study found the cost effectiveness and importance of localized and customized reading materials in increasing literacy skills in school settings. In 2007-2009, a research study was implemented to analyze the impact of text and library books upon reading comprehension and fluency upon students in Tanzania (Plonski, 2009). This study used a comparative case study that incorporated a mixed methods design. The results of the investigation indicated there were some significant differences in student fluency and reading comprehension achievement scores.

In addition a study by Fuller (1985) discovered that pupils who had more than two textbooks were almost 3 times likely to pass with 67% while completing school compared to pupils who had no textbooks in school had 24% on completion. Therefore textbooks are very significant for academic achievement. In Kenya, due to the increased enrollment as a result of the free primary education, the Government funds schools to cover non-salary expenditure, including textbooks. According to the Global monitoring report 2016, these grants are vulnerable to budget reductions. The current unsustainable financing of textbooks has often left parents covering the cost of learning materials



for their children, disadvantaging families who cannot afford these out-of-pocket expenses. Since a growing body of evidence has confirmed the critical role of textbooks in improving student achievement has influenced education policies, there is need for NGO involvement.

### **Health and sanitation and academic performance of students**

To recognise and treat existing and new illnesses, the necessity to provide clinical services to treat illness and injury in schools has long been recognised, and this primary health care service forms the backbone of school health provision services. Palmiere (2000) argue that opportunities for health improvement for the majority of students in schools provide a unique opportunity for health assessment and care and for high risk behaviours and chronic, perhaps silent, diseases to be identified and treated. In their study, Pridmore, & Yates (2006) posit that health and sanitation not only fulfils the duty of care of the health providers to the students, but may enhance student's ability to perform better academically, with a subsequent reduction in the risks to themselves and the community. According to WHO (2006), clinical services can be categorised as acute care services, communicable disease control, chronic disease control and mental health. Core services in these programs are generally delivered by health centre staff, with additional services provided by visiting community-based organisations and specialist in reach.

According to Holzmann & Jørgensen, (2001) the prevalence of chronic disease in schools has led to the establishment of a systematic program run throughout the State. The chronic disease program focuses on the chronic diseases of asthma, cardiovascular disease and diabetes. The framework for the program is based on: the identification of students with a chronic disease he improvement of health care for these people through individualised services like introduction of hand washing activities which ensure there is continuous process of students washing their hands, this water containers are placed strategically especially outside the latrines, at the entry of the dining places and also provision of clean and treated drinking water.

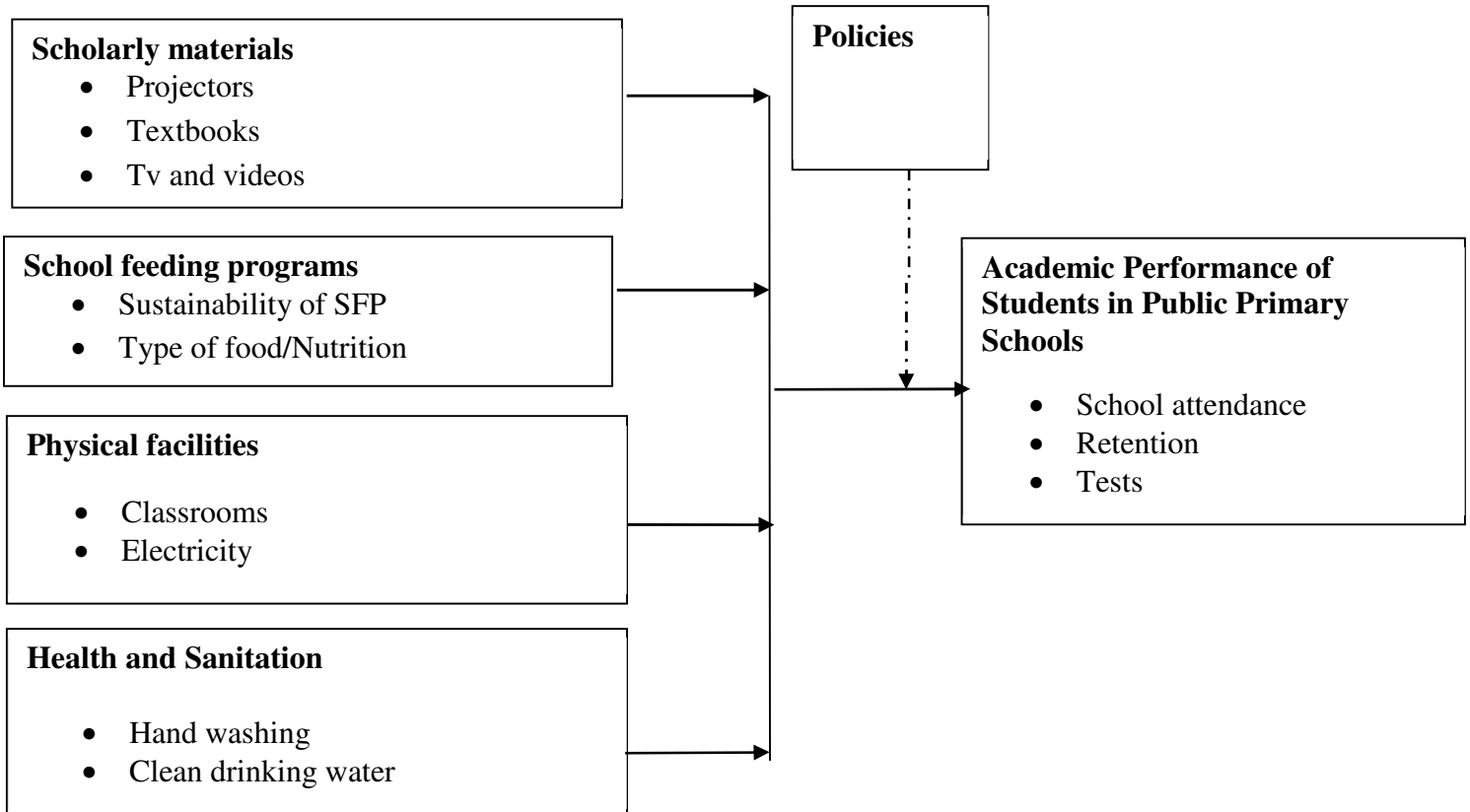
### Conceptual framework

The study was guided by a conceptual framework in a diagrammatic representation containing all variables and indicators

#### Independent variables

#### Moderating Variables

#### Dependent variable



## **Research methodology**

### **Research design**

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design was considered appropriate for the study because the purpose was to obtain information which would describe the existing phenomena by asking individuals about their perception, attitudes, behaviours or values (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2007).

### **Target population and sample size**

According to Mugenda (2003), target population is the total number of elements that researcher specifies in his or her research. The target population for this research was 176 participants which is inclusive of principles/deputy, heads of department in schools, board of managers, subject teachers, educational officials and NGO project manager. According to the TSC records in Machakos County, there are a total of 777 public primary schools in the region. A sample of size of 88 schools was selected, the researcher used the concept of Gall and Borg, (2003) who recommended that at least 10% of the participants in the population are representative; in this case, 88 schools will be the least number to be selected. The unit of analysis was therefore represented by 1 Principal and 1 Deputy Principal per school.

### **Data Collection Instrument**

Questionnaires were used to collect information from the selected partakers. The questionnaires were self-administered by use of two trained research assistants and the researcher. The questionnaire was administered to a convenient sample in Machakos.

### **Data analysis and procedure**

Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyse the data with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 which was used in the analysis. After data collection, the data was organised and edited to remove any inconsistencies, repetitions or errors that made its analysis difficult. The cleaned data collected was then analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The data was analyzed in the most logical and meaningful way and relevant comments made appropriately. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics which included meaning, standard deviation and frequency distribution. Considering the

quantitative nature of the data, descriptive statistics which describes the main features of the data collected (frequency, percent, mean and standard deviation) was used. Inferential statistics was tested using Pearson method of correlations (a measure of relations between variables) which involves determining the extent of the relationship between variables (arrange of 0 to 1).

### **Summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations**

Majority of the respondents 57% agreed that donor funded overhead projectors/transparencies improves learning outcomes in public primary schools, majority of the respondents 69%. Agreed that here was no sufficient donor funded overhead projectors/transparencies in school; this implies negative learning outcomes in public primary schools. Respondents strongly agreed that enough textbooks improve academic performance of students which implies that lack of enough textbooks in school; this implies a negative academic performance for students.

The study concluded that sufficient donor provision of television and videos as learning materials improves the academic performance of students. Most of the respondents said that there was lack of donor provision of television and videos as learning materials in school; this implies negative learning outcomes in public primary schools. Majority of the respondents 43% said that sustainability of SFP improves the academic performance of students. Respondents agreed said that there was lack of sustainability of SFP, this implies a poor academic performance in public primary schools, that food/Balanced diet in SFP improves the academic performance of students and that there was lack of nutritious food in SFP, and this implies a poor academic performance in public primary schools.

The study concluded that the academic performance of students was negatively influenced by the lack of scholarly material, lack of well-structured school feeding program, and lack of well installed physical facilities. The study revealed that academic performance was not negatively influenced by lack of clean water.

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