

**KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY**

**FACTORS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN  
URBAN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN KENYA: A CASE  
STUDY OF PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF KIBERA SLUMS,  
NAIROBI COUNTY**

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## ➤ **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study was to investigate factors influencing academic performance in urban informal settlements in Kenya.

## ➤ **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In spite of the government's commitment to provision of universal FPE to all children that have attained school going age, there are segments of the society which continue to face myriad of hurdles in access of and participation in basic education. Key amongst these are children in the slums. Though these challenges exist in public primary schools, they are more pronounced in schools located in informal settlements. Due to the complexity of the nature of informal settlements, pupils' academic performance is faced by multiple challenges. This has led to poor performance in exams with some learners having fallen prey of prostitution, child abuse, crime, child labour among others.

## ➤ **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

To establish the social economic factors influencing academic performance in urban informal settlements; to examine to what extent do the environmental factors experienced in urban informal settlements influence academic performance; and to find out pupils psychological factors that influence academic performance.

# **Methodology**

## **➤ Study Area**

The study was carried out in Kibera division of Lang'ata District, Nairobi County. In Kibera slums there are four public primary schools. The population of these schools is seven thousand four hundred and ninety three pupils and eighty two teachers (City Council of Nairobi Education Department, 2012).

## **➤ Research Design**

The research used descriptive survey design because descriptive research is the description of the state of affairs as it exists.

## **➤ Target Population**

The research used purposive sampling technique as well as simple random sampling. Purposive sampling was used to sample the 4 schools and the 4 head teachers since they were few in number and can be easily reached (Frankfort & David, 1996). Furthermore, simple random sampling was used to sample teachers and pupils representatives from the schools sampled.

## **➤ Sampling Procedure and Sample Size**

Through purposive sampling, the researcher sampled the four public primary schools and the head teachers (100%). Ten (10)% percent of all accessible population is enough for a descriptive survey study (Kasomo, 2006). Hence 10% of both the teachers and class eight pupils were sampled.

## **Research Instruments**

The research used questionnaires as the sole research instruments. These questionnaires were used to collect data from the head-teachers, teachers and pupils.

### **➤ Reliability**

pilot study was done in the neighbouring Kawangware district and two schools were sampled for the pilot study 10% of the total population of teachers and class eight pupils were sampled. The questionnaires were also subjected to analysis by experts to ensure the appropriateness of the tools.

### **➤ Validity**

Validity was enhanced through a test retest which was done after two weeks and the data for the both tests was compared to ensure the adequacy of the results and a correlation coefficient of 0.81 was obtained. Since a correlation coefficient of  $> 0.7$  is considered acceptable according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009). Content validity was ensured by the researcher by including as many questions as possible for each variable under investigation.

### **➤ Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher got authority to carry out research from the National Council for Science and Technology then booked an appointment with the sampled respondents and sought their permission to administer the questionnaires. The head-teachers, teachers' and pupils' questionnaires were delivered to head-teachers who then administered them to the other respondents and were collected after one week.

## **Data Analysis**

➤The Data collected was both quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the sample. As such, a Statistical Package (SPSS) and spreadsheets (Microsoft Excel) was used to analyze data quantitatively. Findings were presented in form of tables . Data was reported based on the relative importance of the responses given and was thematically analyzed according to the themes. This was followed by a summary of the researcher's findings and Conclusions which was done qualitatively.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **➤Social economic factors influencing academic performance in urban informal settlement**

To this end, the major social economic factor that influenced academic performance was lack of electricity at home at 78.2%. Followed by: ,lack of proper medical care at 74.97% and child labour at 74.9% followed by inability of parents to afford school requirement at 72.3% and lack of enough meals at home at 70.5%.

➤ **Extent to which environmental factors influenced academic performance in urban informal settlements.**

The study also found out that the major environmental factor that influenced academic performance was tribal intolerance and stereotyping at 100%, followed by text book pupil ratio at 84.74%, high prevalence of drug abuse at 80.56%, pupil teacher ratio at 78.9%, high level of indiscipline cases among pupils at 76.4%, strained sanitary facilities at 76% and strained classrooms at 73.56%.

➤ **Psychological factors that influenced academic performance**

**Lastly, the** major psychological factor that influenced academic performance was stigma related to sickness due to HIV AIDS related issues at 100%. Followed by: pupils stress emanating from poor parental support at 80%, pupils anxiety prior to and during exams and stress as a result of poor health and nutrition both at 75%, pupils self esteem at 71.93%, mental preparedness of pupils at 66.93% and pupils attitude to attending classes at 60.33%.

# Conclusion

➤ In conclusion the study corroborated with the findings by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE, 2001) and Lupton (2004) that poverty affected the performance of students in examinations as shown by the respondents that socio-economic factors affect the performance of students.

These findings also agree with the study by Yinusa and Basil (2008) on socio-economic factors influencing students' academic performance in Nigeria that involved 60 male and 60 female students that families' economic status determined the academic performance of the students.

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➤ As pertaining the environmental factors, just as in the works of Sprinthall (1987) and Akey (2006) that a school environment with high teacher support and high-quality pedagogy leads to the improved performance of students. It also buttressed the study by Makewa (2011) who found out that high performing school had a more favourable environment. The study findings also concurs with a similar study by UNESCO, (2006) which states that school environment is indispensable in the teaching and learning processes. Absence of conducive and safe environment negates any meaningful pedagogic activities.

➤ The study proved, like the previous studies of Karim and Venkatesan (2009), and Vitasari (2010), that psychological factors affected academic performance. Furthermore, this study buttressed the findings of Shah (1993) that self-esteem and mental preparedness of pupils meant better academic achievement.

## **Recommendations**

- Parents -Parents should be supportive of school activities and be sensitized on importance of education cooperation with school administration and teachers in bringing up their children.
- Pupils - Pupils should be supported psychically, socially emotionally and psychologically, guided by both parents and teachers, given conducive environment for learning, discouraged from using drugs and other substances.
- Head teachers/teachers - Head teachers should create good working environment for their junior teachers and support staff, parents hold regular meetings with the parents and other stakeholders to establish the reasons for poor performance and establish a way forward. They should offer parental guidance and mentor the young ones to be responsible citizens in future.
- School management committee- The school management committee should coordinate well with the teachers and parents, advice on needs of school to other stakeholders, provide necessary facilities and stationery.
- The Government- The government ought to provide enough facilities, ensure funds are disbursed in time, address the issue of pupils teacher ratio, upgrade schools, improve on teachers remunerate and monitor syllabus delivery.



## **Suggestions for Further Study**

- This study focused on schools in urban informal settlement. There is need for undertaking more studies focusing on other areas such as peri-urban and rural poor neighborhoods;
- A research study should be carried out on the factors influencing academic performance of pupils in private schools.

**\*\*\*END\*\*\***

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