

**CAUSES OF POOR PERFORMANCE IN MATHEMATICS IN
MURKAN SECONDARY SCHOOL, MURKAN LOCATION,
KIRINDON DIVISION, TRANS MARA DISTRICT,
RIFT VALLEY PROVINCE, KENYA**


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**A RESEARCH REPORT PRESENTED TO THE INSTITUTE
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FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR
THE DEGREE BACHELOR OF EDUCATION
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the materials in this book has not been presented elsewhere for any academic qualification and I am responsible for any inconsistence

Signature.....
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APPROVAL

This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the candidate's University Supervisor

Sign.......... Date...9/10/2023...

Name: MR. WOMUZUMBU MOSES

DEDICATION

I am dedicating my work to my wife Gladays who gave me the strength and encouragement as I compiled the research report. I also dedicate the work to my dear children Benard and Valorie who were with me on the table disturbing me as I compile my research work.

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I also acknowledge the contribution of my supervisor Moses towards the success of my research project. I also acknowledge the principal Murkan Secondary school for allowing me to use the school as the area of study. I also acknowledge the Director of studies Murkan Secondary school for allowing me access to school academic records which was very valuable for my study.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

- KNEC- Kenya National Examination Council a body mandated by law in Kenya to manage and administer national exams
- TSC- Teachers Service Commission, A government agency charged with the responsibility of employing leaders in Kenya
- SMASSE- Strengthening Mathematics and Science in Secondary Education
- QUASO - Quality Assurance and Standard Officer, Officer's responsible for quality education
- MOEST- Ministry of Education Science and Technology
- JKF- Jomo Kenyatta Foundation
- KLB- Kenya Literature Bureau
- BOG- Board of Governors
- DEO District Education Officer

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ABSTRACT

The research is aimed at identifying the root causes of poor performance in mathematics at Muukan Secondary Schools. The research involves the students, mathematics teachers and principal of Murkan Secondary. The education officer within Kirindon Division has also been involved in this research.

To facilitate the research I have developed the questionnaires that have been responded by selected students, mathematics teachers, principal and quality assurance and standard officer within Kirindon Division. In some case I have used oral question to supplement the question in the questionnaires.

I found that there are many causes of poor mathematics in Murkan Secondary but the one that I found to be the major cause is the negative attitudes mathematics by both teachers and learners. Attitudes have been found to be the key issues for effective teaching and learning of mathematics.

The major recommendation I have given is that of motivating mathematics teachers so as to develop positive attitudes towards mathematics. The teachers should simplify the teaching of mathematics so as to arouse the interest of the students.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

Mathematics as a subject is normally seen as an important engine that can drive towards the realization of industrialization goals. The knowledge acquired in mathematics can assist to turn around the destiny of any given society. This emanates from the fact that the day to day situation and challenges requires the mathematical approach in solving them.

It is for this reason, that emphasize should be put on the teaching and learning of mathematics at various levels of education so as to produce competent people in the society who can face the challenges with an open mind.

In Kenyan Education system the Secondary mathematics curriculum has been designed to enable learners to achieve the following at the end of four year course:

- Develop a positive attitude towards learning of mathematics
- Perform mathematical operations and manipulation with confidence, speed and accuracy
- Think and reason precisely, logically and critically in any given situation
- Develop investigative skills in mathematics
- Identify concretize symbolize and use mathematical relationships in every day life.
- Comprehend analyze synthesis evaluate and make generalization so as to solve mathematical problems

- Collect organize represent analyze, interpret data and make conclusions and prediction from its results
- Apply mathematical knowledge and skills for familiar situations
- Appreciate the role, value and use of mathematics in society
- Acquire knowledge and skills for further education and training
- Communicate mathematical idea for along time, the performance of mathematics in Murkan Secondary was remained to be poor.

For along time, the performance of mathematics in Murkan Secondary has remained to be poor. This has become an issue of concern to the parents, teachers, students and ministry of education who are the main stakeholders of the school.

This has become an issue of concern to the parents, teachers, students and ministry of education who are the main stake holders of the school.

In this research report I have tried to analyze the main root causes of poor performance and give some recommendation that the stakeholders need to adopt to reverse the trend.

1.2. Statement of the problem

The roof cause of poor performance in mathematics in the national examination in Murkan Secondary School

1.3. Purpose of the study

To look into the root causes of poor performance in mathematics and give some recommendation that will be adopted by the following stakeholders

- Teachers
- Parents
- Board Of Governors
- Ministry Of Education Science and Technology

1.4. Objectives of the research

- To find out the teachers and learners attitude towards mathematics
- To find out the contribution of the school management towards the learning of mathematics
- To find out the contribution of the ministry of education science and technology towards the learning of mathematics

1.5. Research Questions

- i. What is the teachers' and learners' attitude towards mathematics?
- ii. What is the contribution of the school management towards the learning of mathematics?
- iii. What is the role of the ministry of education in the teaching and learning of mathematic?

1.6. Significance of the research

The research findings will be used by the stakeholders of Murkan secondary school in improving the performance of mathematics in their school.

1.7. The scope

The research is limited to the students, teachers, Board of Governors and Ministry of Education official within Kirindon Division.

1.8. Limitations of the research

In conducting my research I encountered some challenges which include the following:

- i. Limited time, I had to combine my normal duties as a teacher with that of doing research. Therefore, I did not get enough time to allow the respondents to exhaustively answer the questions.
- ii. Lack of resources, if it was possible I should have travel to the districts head quarter to collect some useful information from the D.E.O. I was limited by money and time in doing so

communities. The political hostility caused by post election violence hampered my research work as the respondents were from different ethnic communities

CHAPTER TWO

2.0. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Overview

A number of scholars worldwide have written issues based on attitude of learners and teachers towards mathematics the role of school management and government in the teaching and learning process. In this section I have quote what re known scholars have written based on the objectives of the research.

2.2. Teachers and learners attitudes towards mathematics

A number of scholars have written a lot of information relating to the attitudes of teachers and learners towards mathematics.

Professor Richard Keirch (2005) unpublished paper presented during the official opening of mathematics teachers seminar said that positive attitude towards mathematics is to key to effective teaching and learning of mathematics. He stresses that for learners to master mathematics thy first of all need to develop positive attitude towards the subject.

Porffesor Gorege Eshiwani (1993) Teaching of Mathematics in Kenyan Schools Okford University Press said that mathematics is a practical subject that requires a practical approach in teaching it. He stresses that the teachers should avoid making mathematics to be too theoretical hence making students to develop negative attitude. He stresses the need to teach mathematics using the familiar examples in daily life.

Dr. Ernest Shiundu (2000), Enjoying your Mathematics class Longhorn Kenya said that the joy of a mathematics teachers when students excel in mathematics. He stated the teacher should ensure that they realize the joy of their profession by ensuring that students excel in their examination.

Dr. G. Polya (1945), How to solve it Princeton University Press said that if Education fails to contribute to the development of intelligence then it is obviously incomplete. Dr. G. Polya was referring to the intelligence that can be acquired by learning mathematics which can be used to solve daily challenges of life.

Dr. L Clare (1960) class room Mathematics Oxford University Press said that the problem solving process is one of the most important aspects of mathematics with which teachers should be concerned with. She stress that problem solving is the best approach that can be used to simplify the teaching of mathematics.

Abrego M.B. (1966), Children's attitude towards mathematics Oxford University Press said that problem solving approach of teaching mathematics enhance positive attitude towards the subject by learners. He stress the fact that the teachers should adopt the problem solving approach of teaching mathematics to enhance effective learning.

Dr. Philis Odhiambo (2005), Making Mathematics desirable to learners Longhorn publishers said that the success or failure in mathematics hangs around the attitude towards mathematics. She stress that the attitude plays a crucial role in determining the success or failure in mathematics. She advised teachers to make sure that they try to make learners develop positive attitude towards mathematics

2.3. The contribution of school management towards the learning of mathematics

Dr. Michell Davis (2001) Principles of school Administration and Management Oxford University Press said that the school management has a sole responsibility of creating conducive environment for the learning process. He said the management should put in place all the necessary facilities required for effective teaching and learning.

Dr. Kilevin Mwina (2000), Tips for School Managers in Keya Longhorn publishes said that History is there to judge harshly the school administrators who run down their institution during their tenure.

Professor George Eshiwani (2006), unpublished paper presented during the official opening of principles and BOG conference said that the success or failure of any educational institution depends on the input of the management team. He stressed that the school management has the power to determine the fate of their institutions. He encouraged them to work hard to ensure that their institution realize their objectives.

Harrison Watson (2000), managing the learning process of a child Princeton University Press said that the learning process of a child should be free from external interference. He was referring to forces that interfere with the learning process. In this book Harrison Watson stressed that management of institution should seal all the gates that interferences may pass to disturb the learning process of a child.

Dick Henry (1985), The role of management in an education system Bench Mark Publishers said that the focal point of a good education system is an effective management. Dick Henry stressed that there should always be an effective management systems that will meet the needs of the society

2.4. The contribution of the ministry of education science and Technology towards the teaching and learning of mathematics

Dr. Meshack Karanja (2002), Government and Education in Kenya Heineman Publisher Ltd said that the role of government through the ministry of Education Science and technology is to create a conducive environment for teaching and learning process

Dr. Karanja stress that the government should use all its machinery to ensure the effective learning and teaching is taking place in school

Professor Michael Inyangala (2001), Financial Education in Africa Oxford University Press said that, the government that invests more in education has a bright future. Professor challenged African countries that money invested in education can never go to waste because it is meant to develop people who will be productive in future. He also challenges African to source for funds globally to expand education facilities.

Dickson Mbugua (2002) unpublished paper presented during the official opening of mathematics seminar said that since mathematics is the corner stone of other subjects in school curriculum the government should consider availing more resources to facilitate its learning.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0. Overview

This chapter covers research design, sampling procedures, involved in data collection and the reasons for selecting samples.

3.1. Research design

In carrying out the research I have developed separate questionnaires that have been responded by various stakeholders of Murkan Secondary. These stakeholders include students, mathematics teachers, principal and QUASO who represent the ministry of education. In some situation I have used the oral questions to supplement the questions in the questionnaires.

3.2. Sampling procedure

Due to limited time I was not able to involve all the 200 students of Murkan Secondary to be my respondents instead I selected at random 40 students as a sample. The 40 students consist of 28 boys and 12 girls picked from all the four classes. The ratio of boys to girls was based on their respective numbers overally.

Table 1: Enrolment of Murkan Secondary School

Form	Boys	Girls	Total
1	29	20	49
2	40	14	54
3	42	08	50
4	35	12	47
Total	146	54	200

The students respondents were distributed in four classes as follows:

Table 2: Students respondents per class

Table 2: Students respondents per class

Form	Boys	Girls	Total
1	5	4	9
2	8	3	11
3	9	2	11
4	6	3	9
Total	28	12	40

Since there are only three teachers teaching mathematics I use the three teachers to be my respondents in filling the teacher's questionnaire. Most of the members of the BOG are illiterate and some are residing far away from the school. It is for this reason that I used the principal as my respondent on behalf of the school management (BOG). BOG so he was better placed to react to the questions on behalf of the management. The QUASO responded on behalf of the ministry of education science and technology since the QUASO is the representative of the ministry at the division.

3.3. Procedure

In conducting my research I met my respondents at their respective working stations. The student's questionnaire was responded in class. Part A of the student's questionnaire was done during the actual teaching and learning process by the selected. Students part B of the questionnaire was responded after classes because the section required essays answers and enough time.

The teacher's questionnaire was responded by the teachers in their offices separately, this was aimed at preventing them from discussing the question. The principal responded to the questionnaire in his offices.

3.4. Data analysis

The information collected from the respondent has been expressed in percentages, tables. The responds inform of essays has been printed to facilitate conclusion and recommendation.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0. Introduction

I have presented my research findings based on the response from my respondents.

4.1. Teachers and learners attitude towards mathematics

I have presented the responds of the students pertaining the teacher attitude towards mathematics in percentages as follows:

Table 3

Questions	Rating of the teacher	Percentages
How does the teacher introduce the lesson	Unsatisfactory	45%
	Fair	40%
	Good	10%
	Excellent	5%
Is the language used by the teacher understandable	Unsatisfactory	48%
	Fair	30%
	Good	20%
	Excellent	2%
Teachers understanding of the subject matter	Unsatisfactory	35%
	Fair	25%
	Good	37%
	Excellent	3%
Teachers preparedness	Unsatisfactory	43%

for the lesson	Fair	18%
	Good	29%
	Excellent	10%

Table 3 gives the following information

The lesson introduction is poor for most teachers, this discourage learners. This can be an indication that teachers have negative attitude

The language used by the teacher does not match with the level of learners

The ability to the teacher to convey the subject matter is poor this discourage students and makes them have negative attitude towards the subject

Most teachers goes to class when they are not prepared this hinder delivery of content

From the above analysis girls are the main contributors of poor performance. Out of 58 girls who sat for exams over the four years 21 girls scored grade E, for boys out 145 boys who sat for exams over the same period 21 of them scored grade E.

4.2 The contribution of the school management towards the learning of mathematics.

The principal stated clearly that he has taken the initiative of informing the school management of their role in improving the performance of mathematics.

B

1. The students stated that the teachers are not available outside class time since all the teachers reside outside the school compound
2. The students also said that the teachers are not punctual in class attendance some attend for only 20 minutes instead of the recommended 40 minutes

C.

1. The students suggested the following as the factors that hinder good performance in mathematics
 - i. Poor foundation in primary
 - ii. Missing of lessons due to non-payments of school fee
 - iii. Lack of enough mathematics textbooks
 - iv. The abstract nature of mathematics
 - v. Negative attitudes towards mathematics
2. The students suggested the following as what the school administration should put in place to improve performance in mathematics
 - i. The school administration should procure enough text books to ensure at least a ration 1:2
 - ii. The teacher should simplify the abstract nature of mathematic
 - iii. Introduce more teaching aids to assist in delivery mathematics content

4.2.2. Teachers' Response

One teacher falls on age bracket of 20-30 which the other two falls on age bracket of 31-40. one teacher has teaching experience of 1-5, while the other two falls on teaching experience of (6-10) years. all the teacher stated that they have mathematics.

All the teachers stated that they prefer teaching the other subject as compared to mathematics.

On terms of employment one teacher is employed of permanent basis whereas the other two are on contract basis.

On promotion none of the teachers has been promoted since the time they started teaching.

The teachers suggested the following as challenges they face in teaching mathematics

- i. Poor attitudes towards mathematics by learner
- ii. Lack of adequate text books
- iii. Lack of motivation by the monetary of education
- iv. Too many lessons for teacher which makes them inefficient
- v. Too many learners per class which hinders individuals attention
- vi. Students absenteeism due to school fees collection

The teachers also stated they are not well motivated and remunerated the teachers suggested the followings as the measures that if put in place they will be well motivated.

- i. Harmonization of salaries to ensure slight variation between salaries paid to TSC teachers and BOG Teachers.
- ii. Remuneration to be based on qualification and teaching experience
- iii. The school administration to avail on time teaching and learning resources when requested by teachers
- iv. The government to employ more teachers to reduce the work load per teacher to enhance efficiency

4.2.3. Principal response

The principal stated that fees payments is a problem the school is facing. The parents don't pay fees on time thus making the principal to be sending students home frequently.

On the issue of schemes of work and record of work covered the principal said that due to many responsibilities accorded to him he has not got time to check and approve the schemes of work and record of work covered.

On the modernization of internal exams the principal stated that he has set up exams department which is charged with responsibility of moderating the exams set by teachers

On teaching and learning resources the principal stated that the school has tried to avail the required resources but due to the limited resources necessitated by poor payment of fees they have not done much.

On the issue of terms of employment the principal stated that 6 teachers are TSC teachers while 4 are BOG teachers basis teachers are employed on temporary basis under the terms and condition of BOG. Due to lack of enough resources in the school there is a big variation in the remuneration of BOD teachers and TSC teachers.

On the issue of inspection the principal stated that the QUASO inspects the school once in a year.

QUASO RESPONSE

The QUASO said that they inspected the school once in a year due to many schools within his jurisdiction. He said that he has 120 schools to inspect.

QUAS said that the inspectorate unit takes keen interest in the following areas

- Teaching methods
- Syllabus coverage
- Examination
- Professional records, schemes of work lesson plan and record 12 work covered

On the notion of QUASO's office being seen as an office being used to harass leaders, the QASO stated that is misconception that is normally used by lazy teachers whose performance follows below the expectation.

The QUASO said that the office is charged with the responsibility of guiding the teachers on issues pertaining to teaching.

QUASO suggested the following as the main contribution of poor performance

- Negative attitude toward mathematics by both teachers and students
- Teachers centered method of teaching
- Poor foundation of primary level of education
- Too many students per class
- Lack of enough textbooks

The QUASO suggested the following as ways of improving performance of mathematics

- Involving learners in the teaching of mathematics (learners centered method of teaching)
- Training teachers on better methods of teachers
- Emphasize to be put in teaching mathematics at primary level
- Classes should be subdivided to enhance individual attention

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0. Conclusion and Recommendation

In this chapter I have summarize the main causes of poor performance in mathematics. After each cause I have recommended a strategy that is aimed at alleviating the problem. I have based the cause of poor performance on the responds of the respondents

5.1. Main Causes of Poor Performance and Recommendation

a. Negative attitude towards mathematics by both teachers and students. I recommend the following:

- i. The teachers should be retrained on better methods of teaching mathematics to attract and retain the interest of the learners
- ii. The teachers should be motivated to encourage them to teach mathematics
- iii. The school administration should invite University Students from the division to share their experience with the students. This will encourage students to develop positive attitude towards mathematics

b. Poor foundation in primary level of education, by nature mathematics is learned by linking the knowledge learned in previous lessons or classes. The research has shown that the students do not have solid foundation in primary. This hinders learning since secondary

mathematics is build on what was learned in primary level. I recommend the following

- MOEST, should ensure that quality teaching of mathematics is done at primary level
- SMASSE should be extended to primary to strengthen the teaching of mathematics
- Subject specialization should be introduced in primary schools

c. Too many students per class, this hinders individuals attention which very essentials in learning of mathematics. I recommend the following

- Classes should be subdivided to enhance individual attention
- TSC should ensure that there are enough teachers in every school to reduce the work load on leaders and enhance efficiency.

d. Absenteeism due to non-payment of school fees. Absenteeism enhance miss-linkage of mathematics concepts. I therefore recommended the following

- The parents to be enlighten on the importance of paying fees on time
- The school administration should find a suitable time for sending students for fees
- The government to declare total free secondary education to curb absenteeism

e. Lack of adequate textbooks, mathematics has stated that mathematics is learned effectively by doing a lot of exercises. Lack of adequate textbooks have hindered this I therefore recommended the following

- The school administration should establish a text book fund which will enable them procure text books to a ratio 1:1 in mathematics
- The parents should be encouraged to buy relevant text books to their children
- The ministry of education through its agencies like KLB and JKF to ensure that all the schools are accessible to enough text books

f. Inadequate inspection of teachers, the teaching of mathematics requires monitoring and evaluation. The QUASO stated that inspection is normally done once in a year due to inadequate personnel to do inspection. I therefore recommend the following.

- The MOEST to employ more inspectors based on the subjects such that we have an inspector for every subject
- The inspection should be done at least once in a month
- Inspectors should avoid harassing teacher but instead guide them professionally. They should only give positive criticism

g. Poor motivation and remuneration of teachers the research found that the teachers especially those employed by BOG are poorly remunerated them has demoralized them. I recommend the following

the salaries of TSC teachers and BOG Teachers should be harmonized to ensure smaller deviation

as much as possible the MOES should ensure that all schools are accessible to TSC teachers.

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APPENDIX I: TRANSMITAL LETTER



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OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
INSTITUTE OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (IODL)

DATE:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR MS/MRS/MR

The above named is our student in Institute of Open and Distance Learning (IODL), pursuing a Diploma/Bachelors degree in Education.

He/She wishes to carry out a research in your Organization on:

.
.

Case Study:

The research is a requirement for the award of a Diploma/Bachelors degree in Education.

Any assistance accorded to her regarding research will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

MR. MUIWEZI, JOSEPH
HEAD, IN-SERVICE

APPENDICES

APPENDIX II

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRES

The following are the research questionnaires for the various respondents

2. Students questionnaire

Please do not write your name in this questionnaire

a. Below are the several items that you will use to assess the performance of your mathematics' teacher during teaching and learning of mathematics. Tick in the appropriate box the number that best reflects how you rate your teacher. The numbers ranges from 1 to 4

KEY

1- Unsatisfactory

2- Fair

3- Good

4- Excellent

How does the teacher introduce the lesson

	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Is the language used by the teacher understandable

	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

3. Teachers understanding of the subject matter

	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

4. Teachers ability to convey the subject matter

b. **Tick yes or No where appropriate**

1. Is the teacher available outside class to help solve mathematics problems Yes No

2. Is the teacher punctual in attending lessons?
 Yes No

c.

1. In your own view what are some of the factors that hinders your performance in mathematics

2. Suggest what the school administration and the ministry of education should put in place to reverse the trend of poor performance

3.2.2. Teacher's questionnaire

Tick the most appropriate choice on the choices given after each question.

1. How old are you:

20-30 31-40 over 41

2. Teaching experience (years)

1-5 6-10 over 11

3. Do you have any other

Yes No

4. If yes in (3) above which subjects do you prefer teaching most?

Math

5. Terms of employment

Permanent Contract

5. Have you been promoted since the time you started teaching?

Yes No

B 1. What are some of the challenges you face in teaching of mathematics?.....

2. Are you well motivated and remunerated as you discharge your duties?.....

b. If no in 2(a) above suggest the best way you should be motivated

.....
.....

3.2.3. Principal questionnaire

- a) Have you taken the initiative of informing the school management of their role in improving mathematics performance?
- b) If yes, in (a) above what strategies have they put in place to reverse the trend of poor performance.

3. What problems does the school management face in their attempt to improve performance of mathematics?

.....

3.2.4. QUASO Questionnaires

- 1. How regular do you inspect the school?
.....
- 2. Which areas do you take keen interest when inspecting schools?
.....
- 3. How do you deal with the notion by teachers that view your office as an office charge with the responsibility of harassing teachers?
.....
- 4. In your own view what are the main contribution to poor performance in mathematics in Murkan Secondary School?
.....
- 5. Suggest the best ways of improving performance of mathematics
.....