

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN BIOLOGY SUBJECT  
OF LESERU SECONDARY SCHOOL IN UASIN- GISHU

DISTRICT, KENYA

By

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A Research Report Presented to the Institute of Open and Distance Learning of  
Kampala International University in partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the award of Degree of Bachelor of  
Education with Science.

AUGUST, 2007

## DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and had not been presented for a degree in any other University.

Signed ..... Date.....

Busienei Leonida

(BED/7096/51/DF)

This research project has been submitted, to the Institute of Continuing and Distance Studies with my approval as University Supervisor.

Signed  ..... Date 25/09/2017 .....

Ssekajugo Derrick

## **DEDICATION**

I would sincerely like to appreciate the contributions made by my husband Mr. Leonard Kemei for his financial and moral support during my studies.

I also would not forget to mention my children Sharon Chepkoech and Collins Kimutai for their perseverance when I was away for studies. To all, may God bless you abundantly.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would like to thank all the individuals who contributed and sacrificed their time towards the completion of this project.

I would sincerely like to acknowledge my Supervisor for the support and resourceful advice towards this project.

My special thanks goes to Mr. Crispus Kitui and the Academic Department of Leseru Secondary School for their great support during the research period that made this project what it is.

In a most sincere way, I would like to acknowledge my colleague, Getrude Busienei for her encouragement and moral support that she provided to me during the entire program.

I also thank Mr. Kosgei, Mr. Kango and Mr. Maiyo for spending time in proof reading the scripts and giving suggestions in data analysis. To all I say thank you.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study was a descriptive survey method that determined the Academic Performance in Biology, subject of Leseru Secondary School in Uasin-Gishu District Kenya.

This study was conducted in Leseru Secondary School in Turbo Division Uasin Gishu District, Kenya. The School is situated 17 Kilometers West of Eldoret town along the Kenya-Uganda road.

This study included 65 students wherein 23 third year students and 42 fourth year students. Among the 65 students 24 are male and 41 are female students.

In the study was researcher-made instrument which was a record sheet that contained the profile of the respondents as to age, gender and academic level.

The researcher wrote a transmittal letter to the principal of Leseru Secondary School in Turbo division asking for permission to conduct the study in his institution.

Once the permission had been granted the researcher took the record sheet to the School Academic Committee Department to be filled.

Once the record sheet had been filled, the researcher went ahead to calculate the frequencies and percentages to determine the profile of

the respondents as to age, gender, academic level and level of academic performance.

The paired or related t-test was used to test for significant difference in the level of academic performance between male and female students.

The research findings shall be beneficial to the Ministry of Education, the Provincial Director of Education, District Education Officers, School Principals, \teachers, parents and students in establishment of factors affecting academic performance.



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## **THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Rationale of the Study**

The overall performance of biology in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E.) in Uasin Gishu District has been below average for the last five years. Academic performance of girls is a matter of concern to the Ministry of Education. Boys performs far much better than girls in Biology. The general overall performance of girls among the top best one hundred students in every province is dismal.

Science and Mathematics is an area of necessity as engines of development for any given country. Education is a crucial weapon in fighting debilitating poverty, ignorance and disease. Good education could improve quality of democracy, create internal competitiveness and improve confidence in the society.

The researcher who is a graduating student in the faculty of education at Kampala International University is fully aware that being a future teacher should determine the academic performance in biology subject in Leseru Secondary school.

## **Theory**

This study is based on the theory of Professor Saitoti (2006), which states that "the academic performance in both mathematics and Sciences was still below average" He raised concern over consistent academic performance of the two subjects saying it was a matter of great concern to the Ministry. Announcing the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E.) results, he said girls performed dismally. Out of the examinations 32 subjects, they performed well only in five subjects namely English, Kiswahili, Arts and Design Home Science and German.

"Academic performance of girls is a matter of concern to my Ministry" said Saitoti. He asked the Director of Education, Mrs. Naomi Wangari to address the matter urgently. He added that many girls when given an option shun Biology, Physics and Chemistry.

The minister said the overall performance in Science and Mathematics was below average and urged teachers to ensure that there is improvement in the subjects. "Mathematics and Sciences are necessity as engines of development for our country". He added that it is the government commitment to address issues of performance access education and gender parity.

School systems needed to equip learners not only with academic knowledge but also practical skills for life- survival in case one did not proceed to higher levels of academics. Performance index was obtained by considering each candidates seven best performed subjects that meet the awards of Criteria. Despite the high percentage of boys in the examination the number of girls registering for examination increased at a high rate than that of boys. Saying that education is a crucial weapon in fighting debilitating poverty Ignorance and disease, the minister Observed that good education could improve quality of democracy create internal competitiveness and improved confidence in the society. The improvement in content and methods of teacher delivery and asked teachers to continuously equip themselves with sufficient knowledge and skills for their entire professional life.

Regular in servicing will be made priority if improvement will be made a priority if improvement in performance in mathematics and sciences has to be raised. The improved performance in the key subjects was an indication that the interventions being made in Secondary education, including provision of science equipment and grants to establish laboratories were beginning to bear fruits. The improvement was attributed to the changes made in the new curriculum.

### **Review of the Related Literature**

According to Kalonzo (2001), the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examination results showed an improvement in 14 subjects that recorded a decline include Biology, Physical sciences Geography, History and Government, Hindu Religious Education and Social Studies. But performance in sciences and Mathematics was still very low compared to other subjects. Boys performed far much better than girls in most subjects. Even the general overall performance of girls among the top best two hundred students in every province is dismal. Performance in sciences mathematics English and Kiswahili was still below the expectation. Although boys performed better than girls in most of the subject the number of girls who scored overall mean grade A minus increased from 156 in 2003.to 188 in 2004.

Girls not well informed about what to expect during menstruation get extremely worried isolated and moody .As a result they lose school work concentration. Some girls especially in rural areas and urban slums, perform below average in class due to the changes brought about by sexual maturation (Mugenda, 2003).

The results showed a declining performance in the key subjects; English, Kiswahili and Sciences against an improvement in social sciences especially History and government Geography and social Education and ethics.

Last year, boys performed better than girls in the 67 out of 76 examinable subjects. Nationally, there were 11 girls among the top 50 students. There is confidence that girls' academic performance would improve because their number would improve because their number has been increasing at a relatively higher rate than of boys (Henry, 2002).

The low academic level of the trainees lowers the overall performance by the teaching force and the status of the profession, which is perceived as the employer of the last resort (Aduda, 2000).

It appears as if female success is viewed as a corollary to male failure. Rather than celebrating girls' achievement and aspirations, we have to know a discourse of male advantage in which boys are viewed as falling behind in academic performance. The discourse has also powerful class and racial dimensions, with the impact of male working class under-achievement interpreted as a threat to law and order, and male middle class under achievement as deriving from problems of "attitude", Complacency and arrogance.

In contrast for middle class male youth, the threat is not menace and lawlessness but male indolence and masculine culture. A male sixth former's account for his own academic performance provides flavor of the perceived causes of the male failure.

In both cases female equivalence are portrayed as more industrious and conscientious, better behaved, more passively compliant, and implicitly, more imaginative and boarding. Although there is little

evidence that girls improvement in examination has been at the expense of that of boys, the predominant gender discourse in education in the middle 1990s is that male underachievement (Mac An Ghail, 1994).

There is some serious and important work which seeks to identify and explain the nature of masculinity, how boys' lives have changed and are changing, and how these can be connected to the schooling of boys and girls. The aim of these studies are to explore the range of masculinities that exist, and how they are produced, alongside femininities, with culture and schooling; in particular the relationship between racism, gender and masculine identity within schooling (Connell, 1995).

One of the first prejudices I encountered with the consistent attempt in the research literature, as well as more popular, to ascribe girls' good performance to hard work, diligence and good behavior. Boys by contrast, were held to have the kind of potential that leads to brilliance, even if their current classroom academic performance exhibits no tangible evidence of it.

To suggest that girls too might be rather bright seemed to be a very threatening idea (Walkerdine, 1994).

In 20 years, the predominant gender discourse was that of female under achievement. This was a period following the emergence of the Civil Rights and Women's Movement in the United States, and when changing ideas about equality swiftly, across the Atlantic, British

educationists were relatively slow in transforming these ideas into practice. Thus where girls did badly compared to boys, for example in some aspects of Mathematics and Sciences, prevailing explanations focused on Biology and so called innate gender differences (Sex Discrimination Act, 1975).

More recently, contrast the gender educational discourses of the two periods in Australia, seeing the favor about boys as part of the struggle to regain ground lost to feminists in the 1980s and 1990s.

Against this backdrop of moral panic around boys and confusion as to whether boys' academic performance has indeed deteriorated as girls', academic performance has improved, this article explores achievement patterns of girls and boys and the discourses within which they have been constructed and deconstructed. It first considers a framework for looking at educational discourse of equality, and then reports on past and current changes in patterns of gender achievement and inequality, and end with a discussion of policy, implications and future possibilities (Foster, 1995).

At primary level in the mid 1990s assessment focused on the core subjects (English Mathematics and Sciences) and in the main girls have been achieving at a higher level overall especially in English with boys more likely at the extremes.

The resulting change in the higher examination entry and academic performance pattern of girls has caused the shifts picked up by the press. Thus there has been an increased entry and a closing gender



academic performance gap in most subjects at G.C.S.E, apart from Chemistry and Economics which are still largely taken by boys and Social Sciences, which is largely taken by girls. Male students continue to achieve relatively less well in English and Arts, Humanities, Modern Foreign language and perhaps more unexpectedly Technology. Single sex girls' schools continue to be particularly successful in examination performance.

At A- level sex-stereotype pattern of examination entry and academic performance tend to re-emerge. There is higher male entry into Science (Physics, Technology, Computer Studies, Biology and Mathematics) and the level of male entry into English and modern foreign languages is also high than previously, Significantly, there is a higher female entry for Arts and Humanities.

Male gain higher A-level grades than female in nearly all subjects, especially in Mathematics, Chemistry, Technology, History, English and Modern foreign Languages. However this grade superiority is being gradually eroded with a marked improvement in female academic performance at A-level particularly in Biology, Social Science, Arts and Design. For those students seeking vocational rather than academic qualifications, subjects and course choice has remained sex- stereotyped with girls and boys choosing different subjects and girls being less likely to gain higher awards (Dearing Report, 1993).

The achievement gap between the genders in Mathematics and Science is not nearly as great as is the situation with which to read

and write, but the myth persists in terms of self-esteem and opportunities provided. Whereas in elementary schools, 31% of women feel they are "good" at mathematics. Only 18% feel that way by the middle school level. All have been high achievers in general in order to be admitted. In the year of study, though 57% of the male admitted had taken four years of mathematics, only 8% of the female had. With the four years of mathematics courses, students there are not eligible for calculus sequence, would rather attend Chemistry or Physics and are disadvantaged for Statistics and Economics. Because they could not take the entry level courses, they were eligible for 10 out of 12 "colleges" and 22 out of the 44 majors the Universities offered. Many of the high achieving men had disadvantaged themselves but 9 out of 10 of the women had (Sadker, 1994).

With respect to the basic education school offer, gender differences in academic aptitude if they exist, need have no effect. There are no gender differences sufficient to prevent boys and girls from having equal degrees of excellence in all the areas within the general curriculum.

In an excellent educational system, everybody wins. Good education is the key. But the school has led to the culture on this one (Friedman, 1995).

Apparent low male academic performance was seen as caused in particular by disappearance of traditional family roles such as man as a breadwinner, woman as home maker. The family occupied a Central

position in New Right discourse as a defense against socialism and state power.

An increase in violent crime, legitimacy, and economic inactivity significantly have contributed to the creation of under class (Murray, 1994).

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study would benefit the following:

Ministry of Education would identify the factors contributing to academic performance and this would help in finding possible solutions.

The Provincial Director of Education would be able to identify the factors which affected academic performance and organize seminars and workshops to address the issue.

District Education Officers would be able to get useful information which would guide him when investigating the causes of poor academic performance in Biology subject in secondary schools.

Principals would be able to realize the factors that affected academic performance and find a way of overcoming them.

Teachers would be able to identify areas of weakness and formulate methods to solve the problem.

Parents would be able to identify areas of weakness that contributed to poor performance of their children and find ways of solving the problems.

Students would be given solutions which would enable them to improve their academic performance in Biology subject.

Future researchers would be able to have reference materials that would assist them in finding more information about this topic.

### **Objectives**

**General:** The study would determine the academic performance in Biology subject in Leseru Secondary School in Uasin – Gishu District, Kenya.

**Specific:** The study sought to:

1. determine the profile of the respondents as to:

1.1 socio demographic data

1.1.1 age

1.1.2 gender

1.1.3 academic level

2. determine the level of academic performance in Biology subject

3. determine if there is a significant difference in the level of academic performance between male and female students

### **Statement of the Null Hypothesis**

There was no significant difference in the level of academic performance between male and female students.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Design**

The study was a descriptive survey method that determined the academic performance in Biology subject of Leseru Secondary School in Uasin – Gishu District, Kenya.

### **Environment**

The study was conducted in Leseru Secondary School in Turbo Division, Uasin Gishu District, Kenya. The school is situated 17 km West of Eldoret town along the Kenya- Uganda road.

### **Respondents**

The study included 65 students wherein 23 third year students and 42 fourth year students.

### **Instrument**

In the study was a researcher made instrument which was a record sheet that contained profile of the respondents as to age, gender, academic level and level of academic performance.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher wrote a transmittal letter to the principal of Leseru Secondary School in Turbo Division, asking for permission to conduct the study in his institution.

Once permission had been granted, the researcher took the record sheets to the School Academic Committee Department to be filled.

Once the record sheets had been filled, the researcher went ahead to calculate the frequency and percentage to determine the profile of the students as to age, gender, academic level and level of academic performance.

### **Statistical Treatment of the Data**

The frequencies and percentages were used to describe the profile of students in terms of age, gender, and academic level and level of academic performance. The Formula used is:

$$f/n \times 100$$

where:    f        =    frequency  
              n        =    total number  
              100     =    constant

The paired or related t-test was be used to test for significant difference in the level of academic performance between male and female students. The Formula used is:

$$t = \frac{\bar{d} - d_0}{sd / \sqrt{n}}$$

where:    t        =    computed value of the t – test statistic  
               $\bar{d}$        =    mean difference  
               $d_0$      =    assumed difference  
              sd       =    standard deviation of the differences  
              n        =    total number of students

## **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

After data was collected descriptive statistics was used to analyse and present the data. The analysed data was presented using frequencies and percentages, pie chart and bar chart to describe the profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, academic level and level of academic performance.

The paired or related to-test was computed and used to test for significant difference in the level of academic performance between male and female students.

The data, was also presented by means of discussions and explanations of the resultant findings. All the data was collected from the Academic Department and from them conclusions were drawn.

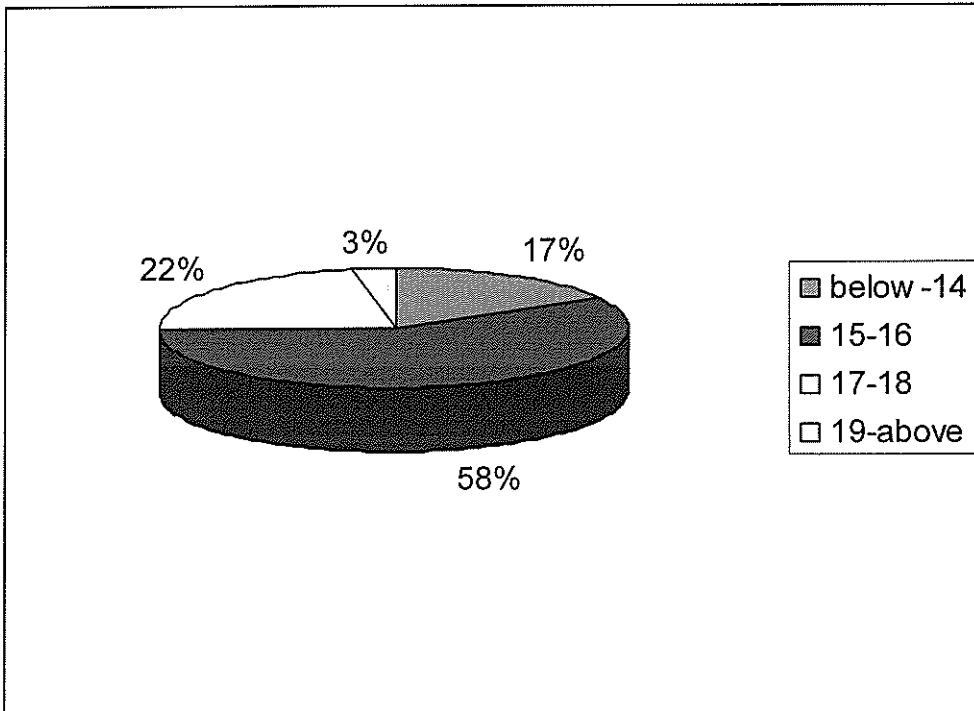
Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Age		
19 – above	11	17
17 – 18	38	58
15 – 16	14	22
below – 14	2	3
Total	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>
Gender		
Male	24	37
Female	41	63
Total	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>
Academic Level		
Third Year	23	35
Fourth Year	42	65
Total	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>



**Figure 1**

A pie chart showing the percentage frequency in relation to age



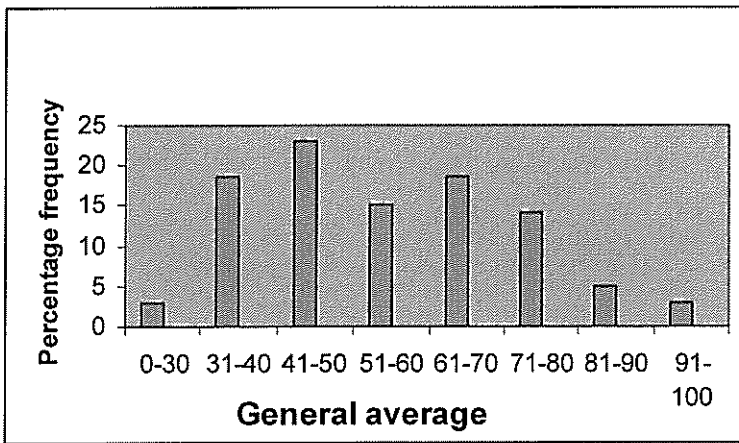
As Figure 1 shows, a higher percentage of students are between the age of 17-18 years (58%). 22% are between the age of 15-16 years and 17% fall in the category of 19 years and above. Few students (3%) are 14 years old and below.

As shown in Table 1, majority of the students are females (63%) and the minority group are the male students (37%). Many students are in fourth year (65%) while few students are in third year (35%).

Table 2: Level of Academic Performance

<b>Category</b>		<b>Exact Limits</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
91 - above	excellent	91.5 - above	2	3
81 - 90	very good	81.5 - 90.5	3	5
71 - 80	good	71.5 - 80.5	9	14
61 - 70	fairly good	61.5 - 70.5	12	18.5
51 - 60	average	51.5 - 60.5	10	15
41 - 50	fair	41.5 - 50.5	15	23
31 - 40	poor	31.5 - 40.5	12	18.5
0 - 30	very poor	0.5 - 30.5	2	3
Total			65	100

Figure 2: Bar chart showing percentage frequency in relation to General Average.



As shown in the bar chart, very few students scored 91 marks and above, this represented 3% of the total enrolment. Only 5% scored between 81-90 marks.

Majority of the students scored between 41-50 marks which accounts for 23% of the total enrolment. Equal number of students scored between 61-70 marks and 31-40 marks, that is 12 students in each case.

Only few students (3%) of the total enrolment scored 30 marks and below.

Table 3: Significant Difference in the Level of Academic Performance between Male and Female Students

Category	Mean	Computed t-value	Critical t-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Male and					

## **CONCLUSION**

From the research findings, the researcher would reach make a deduction that there is need to have thorough guidance and counseling And this should not only be given to learners by the teachers but even the parents and every member in the community within the literate group - such that learners come to know the importances attached to science subjects.

## **RECOMMENDATION.**

Actions should be taken to address the problem based on research findings. Solving specific problems could involve designing and implementing an intervention or project. For example, SMASSE programme could be initiated in all Secondary Schools to improve performance of Science subjects in Kenya.

There is need to provide students with counseling services to create a positive attitude towards Science subjects.

Further research can be done in order to assess the academic performance of students in Biology subject.

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

For the purpose of this study, the following terms were defined operationally:

Academic level referred to categories of students either as third years or fourth year.

Academic performance referred to the marks obtained by students during 1<sup>st</sup> term by third year and fourth year students in Biology subject.

Biology subject was a unit done in secondary schools by third year and fourth year students

The profile was description of relevant information about Biology students in respect to age, gender and academic level.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **TRANSMITTAL TO THE PRINCIPAL OF LESERU SECONDARY**

#### **SCHOOL**

Busienei Leonida  
Kampala International University  
P.O. Box 20000  
Kampala, Uganda  
May 4, 2007

Mr. Kitui  
Principal, Leseru Secondary School  
P.O. Box 3062  
Uasin – Gishu District, Kenya

Dear Sir,

#### **Re: Research record sheet**

I am an in- service student at Kampala International University. I am carrying out a research on academic performance of students in Biology subject at secondary school level, which is to be submitted to the Faculty of Education as a partial fulfillment for the award of degree in Education Science.

I am therefore writing to request you to grant me permission to conduct the study in your institution by allowing the school Academic Committee Department to fill the record sheet. I look forward to your cooperation and I promise to keep all the information confidential.

Respectively yours,

**BUSIENEI LEONIDA**



## APPENDIX B

### RECORD SHEET

Student No.	Age	Gender	Academic Level	General Average	Interpretation
1	16	M	III	94	Excellent
2	16	M	III	91	Excellent
3	14	M	III	88	Very good
4	17	F	III	84	Very good
5	15	F	III	84	Very good
6	16	M	III	80	Good
7	18	M	III	79	Good
8	15	F	III	78	Good
9	16	M	III	75	Good
10	18	F	IV	74	Good
11	18	F	III	73	Good
12	17	M	IV	72	Good
13	18	F	III	71	Good
14	15	F	III	71	Good
15	16	F	III	70	Fairly good
16	16	F	III	69	Fairly good
17	18	F	IV	68	Fairly good
18	18	F	IV	67	Fairly good
19	15	F	III	67	Fairly good
20	14	M	III	66	Fairly good
21	18	F	III	66	Fairly good
22	16	F	III	66	Fairly good
23	17	F	IV	64	Fairly good
24	18	F	IV	62	Fairly good
25	18	F	IV	61	Fairly good
26	18	M	IV	61	Fairly good
27	18	M	IV	58	Average
28	18	M	IV	58	Average
29	17	M	III	58	Average
30	17	M	IV	57	Average
31	19	M	IV	56	Average
32	18	M	IV	54	Average
33	19	M	IV	54	Average
34	17	F	III	53	Average
35	16	F	III	52	Average

<b>Student No.</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Academic Level</b>	<b>General Average</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
36	19	M	IV	51	Average
37	18	M	IV	49	Fair
38	18	M	IV	49	Fair
39	17	F	IV	49	Fair
40	18	M	IV	49	Fair
41	19	F	IV	49	Fair
42	18	F	IV	47	Fair
43	17	F	IV	47	Fair
44	18	F	IV	46	Fair
45	19	F	IV	45	Fair
46	15	F	III	45	Fair
47	17	F	IV	44	Fair
48	16	M	III	42	Fair
49	18	F	IV	41	Fair
50	20	M	IV	41	Fair
51	18	F	IV	41	Fair
52	17	F	IV	40	Poor
53	18	F	IV	38	Poor
54	17	F	IV	38	Poor
55	18	M	IV	37	Poor
56	17	F	IV	36	Poor
57	17	F	IV	35	Poor
58	18	M	IV	35	Poor
59	19	F	IV	35	Poor
60	20	F	IV	34	Poor
61	19	F	IV	34	Poor
62	18	F	IV	34	Poor
63	16	F	III	33	Poor
64	20	F	IV	25	Very poor
65	19	F	IV	22	Very poor

**APPENDIX C**

**DATA PRESENTATION**

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Age</b>		
19 – above	11	16.9
17 – 18	38	58.5
15 – 16	14	21.5
below – 14	2	3.1
Total	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	24	36.9
Female	41	63.1
Total	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Academic Level</b>		
Third Year	23	35.4
Fourth Year	42	64.6
Total	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2: Level of Academic Performance

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
92 - above excellent	2	3
82 - 90 very good	3	5
72 - 80 good	9	14
62 - 70 fairly good	12	18.5
52 - 60 average	10	15
42 - 50 fair	15	23
32 - 40 poor	12	18.5
0 - 30 very poor	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3: Significant Difference in the Level of Academic Performance  
between Male and Female Students

<b>Category</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Computed t-value</b>	<b>Critical t-value</b>	<b>Decision on Ho</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Male and Female					



## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

### **PERSONAL BACKGROUND**

Name : BUSIENEI LEONIDA  
Registration Number : BED/7096/51/DF  
Age : 34 YEARS  
Gender : FEMALE  
Civil status : TEACHER  
Address : P.O BOX 4257 ELDORET  
Date of birth : 12/09/1972  
Contact number : 0722 385379

### **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

College : EGERTON UNIVERSITY  
Secondary : KAPYEBERAI GIRLS SECONDARY  
Elementary : TULWET PRIMARY

### **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

Bachelor of Science in Education

"ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN BIOLOGY SUBJECT OF  
LESERU SECONDARY SCHOOL IN UASIN- GISHU DISTRICT, KENYA"