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**ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCE ON STUDENT ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS
IN WEST POKOT DISTRICT,
KENYA**

**BY
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BED/10098/52/DF**

**A RESEARCH REPORT PRESENTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF OPEN
AND DISTANCE LEARNING AS A PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR
THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS WITH EDUCATION
OF KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

APRIL, 2008

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this work is my original work and has never been presented to any other university for award of any academic certificate or anything similar to such.

Signature Chepsergon

CHEPSERGON J. HELLEN

DATE : 30TH APRIL, 2008

APPROVAL

This proposal has been under my supervision as a university supervisor.

SIGNATURE

.....

MS. NAKAWUNGU FARIDAH

DATE: 01/05/08.....

DEDICATION

This work is affectionately dedicated to my beloved husband Mark Kipkurui Yego and our dear children Dorcas, Kosgei, Kibet and Jeruto for their support patience and understanding during this period of study not forgetting all those who constantly wished me success.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My gratitude first goes to God who given me the strength and courage to undertake this research.

I also owe a lot of appreciation to all those assisted me in carrying out this research. I am grateful to my supervisor Ms. Faridah Nakawungu who tirelessly went through my work and inspired me to dig deeper into the core of the matter. Her kind criticism, patience and understanding, assisted me a great deal.

I am indebted too, to my relatives Mark Kiptui and Priscillah Chepsergon who gave me encouragement in time of difficulties. Thanks also go to all those lecturers in the education Department who impacted professionalism into my work, I also express my sincere thanks to Lydia Chebet and Francis Kipchumba who tolerated my handwriting and typed work neatly.

I wish to thank my family for their love, financial support and inspiration during my stay in Kampala International University (K.I.U).

Finally, I would like to thank all my respondents and those within a short notice without which this work would not have been possible.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL

ABSTRACT

This study examined the environmental influence on the student academic performance in Kapenguria Division, West Pokot District.

The objectives of the study were to identify and analyze the effects of environmental influence on academic performance. It also aimed at suggesting measures to remedy the situations.

Qualitative and Quantitative Designs were employed where convenient sampling was applied to select the five secondary schools used for the study.

The main instruments used in the data collection were the questionnaires; the data collected was analyzed manually where the researcher used descriptive and quantitative analysis, which included percentages and frequencies.

The findings of the study included among others the fact that the cattle crisis and other environmental factors have negatively influenced the student's academic performance in secondary schools in the district.

This research recommended among other a Policy that should be a strategy towards the improvement of schools in this part of Kenya highlighted in this paper are addressing mainly to the Kenyan policy makers in general, and to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology in particular.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
APPROVAL.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
AKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	2
1.3 Objectives of the study.....	3
1.3.1 General objective.....	3
1.3.2 Specific objectives will be to;.....	3
1.4 Research questions.....	3
1.5 scope of the study.....	4
1.6 Significance of the study.....	4
CHAPTER TWO.....	5
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	5
2.0 Introduction.....	5
2.1 Peace and security and academic performance.....	5
2.2 Geographical location and academic performance.....	6
2.3 School buildings and academic performance.....	7
2.4 Climate and academic performance.....	8
CHAPTER THREE.....	9
METHODOLOGY.....	9
3.0 Introduction.....	9

3.1 Research design	9
3.2 Area of study and population.....	9
3.3 Sample selection.....	10
3.4 Source of data	10
3.4.1 Primary data.....	10
3.4.2 Secondary data.....	10
3.5 Data collection methods	10
3.5.1 Instrument.....	10
3.6 Data analysis and interpretation	11
3.6.1 Data analysis tools	11
3.6.2 Data interpretation	11
3.7. Conclusion.....	11
CHAPTER FOUR.....	12
PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS.....	12
4.0 Introduction	12
4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.....	12
4.1.1 Sex of Respondents	12
4.1.2 Age of Respondents.....	13
4.1.3 Class of Respondents.....	13
4.2 peace and security and academic performance.....	14
4.2.1 Peace and security is a cause of poor performance	14
4.2.2 Cattle rustling and academic performance	14
4.3 School Type and Academic Performance	15
4.3.1 Class Work and Academic Performance	15
4.3.2 Examination and Test frequency and academic	16
4.3.3 Respect of teachers and academic performance	17
4.3.4 Absenteeism, class dodging and other acts of indiscipline	18
4.4 Geographical location and academic performance of	19

CHAPTER FIVE.....	21
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	21
5.1 Introduction	21
5.2 Summary.....	21
5.3 Conclusion.....	22
5.4 Recommendations	23
BIBLIOGRAPHY	25

the district. Secondary education is designed to provide children with the academic knowledge and skills they need to function successfully in society and to prepare them to pursue further education, to enter the work force to be responsible active citizens.

Therefore these factors have led the researcher to study the situation on environmental influence on student's academic performance in secondary schools and find out ways to improve the situation.

The researcher has lived and studied almost all her life in the area of study. She has taught in the area for more than 15 years and researched on the same area at a diploma level which makes her an expert in the area.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Environmental influence has been a challenge to many aspects of education and learning in West Pokot secondary schools. This challenge was present in the area even before the introduction of the formal type of education when schools were introduced by the missionaries. Although the government has a great plan for bringing about the desired changes and improvement in the system of education, it is at this stage having severe constraints in achieving it fully due to the environmental influence in the district. It's therefore, quite a challenging factor to student's performance.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 General objective

The general objective of the study is to investigate environmental influence and the student's academic performance in West Pokot Secondary schools, Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific objectives will be to;

1. Determine the profile of respondents of respondents as to; social demographic data.
 - 1.1 Age
 - 1.2 Gender
 - 1.3 Education level

2. Determine the environmental factors influencing the academic performance.
 - 2.1.1.1 Peace and security
 - 2.1.1.2 School type
 - 2.1.1.3 Geographical location
 - 2.1.1.4 Buildings conditions
 - 2.1.1.5 Climate

1.4 Research questions

- 1) What is the profile of respondents in relation to age, gender and academic performance?

- 2) What are the environmental factors that influence academic performance?

3) What is the relationship between environmental factors and academic performance?

1.5 scope of the study

The study was carried out in West Pokot district which is located in the North western region of Kenya bordering the Republic of Uganda in the West; Turkana district in the north, and Transnzoa in the south. The research will be limited to the objectives of the study.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study will benefit the following disciplines:

Will provide information to policy makers in the education Ministry, administration of schools; teachers, parents and other stakeholders who will enable them make improvements in education by allocating schools in performance friendly environment.

It will help students together with their parents to identify schools in which children will study freely without environmental interference.

It will also contribute to the existing literature about environmental factors and their effect on academic performance and provoke further research in this field.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature as an account of the knowledge and ideas that have been established by accredited scholars and experts in the field of study. It is guided by the objectives of the study outlined in chapter one

2.1 Peace and security and academic performance

Peace and security are major environmental factors to consider in the academic performance. with out peace, students can not settle however much they are taught in class. Students in pastoral and war affected areas never settle to their books and are ever wonders in education (George Omoso, Daily Nation 20, March, 2007). The article on pastoralists' crisis further strengthens the fact that parents in pastoral communities do not consider education the first priority. The "after all even if they do not study" attitudes has affected the kids in schools since their minds are poisoned at an early stage.

The cattle rustling attacks do only affect performance in class terms only, it also cause many school drop outs and absenteeism level numbers rise every day.

Environmental research has shown the importance socio-economic status of the type of school a child attends in influencing educational outcomes. While research in the US has found that SES variables continue to influence educational attainment even after controlling for different school types, the school context tends to affect the strength

of the relationship between SES and educational outcomes (Portes and MacLeod, 1996).

Similarly, in Britain (Sparkes, 1999), shows that schools have an independent effect on student attainment. While there is less data available on this issue in Australia, several studies using the longitudinal surveys of Australian Youth have found that students attending private non-Catholic schools were significantly more likely to stay on at school than those attending state schools (Long et al, 1999; Mark et al, 2000). Students from independent private schools are also more likely to achieve higher end of school scores (Buckingham, 2000). While school-related factors are important, there is again an indirect link to SES, as private schools are more likely to have a greater number of students from high SES families, select students with stronger academic abilities and have greater financial resources. The school effect is also likely to operate through variation in the quality and attitudes of teachers (Sparkes, 1999). Teachers at disadvantaged schools, for instance, often hold low expectations of their students, which compound the low expectations students and their parents may also hold (Ruge, 1998).

2.2 Geographical location and academic performance

Students from poor geographical located areas like mountainous and hilly, areas are more likely to have lower educational outcomes in terms of academic performance and retention rates than students from areas where the topography allows near schools construction (Cheers, 1990; HREOC, 2000). Despite an adequate number of educational facilities in rural and remote areas, school children from these areas remain disadvantaged by walking long distances to school every day

and reach school at late. This causes a delay in curriculum or other late students being left behind by others. In addition, inequity exists with regard to the quality of the education that rural students receive, often as a result of restricted and limited subject choice. Furthermore, students may also have limited recreational and educational facilities within their school (HREOC, 2000)

Jonnassen and Grabowki (1993) have proposed a model divulging how the broad range of student's individual differences can affect learning. According to these researchers, a geographical metaphor, the mind is compared to a landscape consisting of peaks and valleys. Just as topography within a region is highly variable and unique, so is an individual's mental landscape. The peak in Jonnassen and Grabowki's metaphor represents trait strengths, whereas the valleys represent the absence of specific learning abilities. "The relief of an individual's landscape treats abilities and personality variables as unipolar values. The particular combination of aptitudes and traits possessed by each individual is reflected in the individual's cognitive styles, personality, and learning styles" (Jonnassen and Grabowki, 1993, p. xi). The of individual difference is analogous to mapping the relief on individual's mental landscapes.

2.3 School buildings and academic performance

According Cash, C in his material "A study of the Relationship between school Building Condition, Students Achievement and Behaviour". (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1993), class environment is one of the artificial environmental major factors that influence the academic performance. lower educational attainment has also been found to be associated with children studying from a filthy

environment and under trees compared to those permanent built classes (Sparkes, 1999). This may be due to the effects of overcrowding, poor access to resources and a lack of social networks, and in this sense, housing type may also be a measure of neighborhood influence. A recent Australian study based on 17 1 year 12 students from 10 state schools, found that neighborhood effects were an important influence on students' educational plans to continue further, after controlling for a range of individual and family socio-economic characteristics (Jensen and Seltzer, 2000). Measure of the neighborhood included the level of neighborhood noise environment, the unemployment rate, an index of educational attainment and the percentage employed in professional fields. Poor results were due to spillover effects such as peer group influence, the presence or lack of job networks and role models or whether the neighborhood variables were acting as proxies for school quality or housing type.

2.4 Climate and academic performance

According to Lackney .J. A (1999), climate has the ability to affect academic performance results from the causality between rain, drought and rustling. The pastoral communities move from place to place to raid other areas for cattle in response to food shortages in their communities. All these are among the pastoral communities which affect academic performance are a result of food and water crisis.

However too much rainfall negatively affect academic performance in that too much rainfall lead to destruction of muddy roads, as well as leaking roofs in mainly bad thatched buildings.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the method and procedure used in the study. This includes the research design, area of study, sample selection, instrument and procedure of data collection and analysis.

3.1 Research design

Since the study was largely an evaluation one seeking opinions and attitudes, the researcher used a descriptive research design, adopting a cross sectional survey. The descriptive survey attempts to picture or document current conditions or attitudes to describe what exists at the moment Mouser & Katton (1989). A cross sectional survey design was particularly chosen because the study is concerned with gathering perceptions from a cross section of respondents.

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis. Most of the findings were analyzed qualitatively. The quantitative measures and analyses were applied to test the hypothesis of the study.

3.2 Area of study and population

The study was conducted in West Pokot district, Kenya. The population of the study included students of the selected schools found in West Pokot and some of the teachers found in those same schools

3.3 Sample selection

Using a convenience sampling technique, a total of sixty (56) respondents, was selected for the study. The required sample was arrived at after distributing 90 questionnaires and only 56 six were returned for the data analysis.

3.4 Source of data

3.4.1 Primary data

The primary data used was from the students and Teachers who participated in the study.

3.4.2 Secondary data

The secondary data about the environmental factors affecting students performance comprised of information from the following;

Finance of Education Annual Reports;

West Pokot Education Department annual reports;

Library Publications and Articles;

Media Publications and reports and;

The Internet

3.5 Data collection methods

3.5.1 Instrument

A questionnaire structured to give information by way of content and purpose will be the main instrument of data collection. A 3-point Likert Scale (1-agree, 2-Disagree and 3-not sure) was used for the questionnaire.

After the necessary introductions and outlining the objectives of the study to the authority in the areas of the study, the researcher was granted permission to carryout this research in the places of interest for the study. Which the assistance of two (2) trained researcher assistants, questionnaires were administered to the selected respondents

3.6 Data analysis and interpretation

3.6.1 Data analysis tools

Data from each questionnaire was categorized and edited for accuracy and completeness of information. This is to ensure that all questions are answered. All the questions were pre coiled. After this process, the statistical packages for social science (SPSS 12.0 version) computer programme were used to produce frequencies and percentages.

3.6.2 Data interpretation

Analyzed data from the questionnaires were presented in chapter four (4) in form of tables showing frequency counts and percentages. This information was further triangulated with information from secondary sources for meaningful interpretation and discussion.

3.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher has presented the research techniques and procedures adopted in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation, interpretation and discussion of the field results. Results are presented in tables and in form of frequency counts and percentages.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

4.1.1 Sex of Respondents

During the survey 60 male respondents (67%) were given the instruments, while 30 female respondents (33%) were given the instruments. This selection was aiming at fair gender coverage. Out of 90 instruments distributed, 44 were returned by males giving 78.6% while females returned only 12 which is 21.4% as illustrated by table 2 below.

Table 2: Distribution of the Respondents by Sex

Sex	Respondents	Percentage
Males	44	79
Females	12	21
Total	56	100

Source: Fieldwork west Pokot District (2008)

4.1.2 Age of Respondents

Age	Respondents	Percentage
13-17	20	35.7
18-21	30	53.6
22- above	6	10.7
Total	56	100

Source: Fieldwork west Pokot District (2008)

The majority of the respondents were in the age bracket of 18-21(53.6%). This implies that most respondents were got from upper classes of form three and form four. This was done to get some kind of objectivity in the answers expected.

4.1.3 Class of Respondents

class	Respondents	Percentage
Form one	15	26.8
Form two	15	26.8
Form three	11	19.6
Form four	15	26.8
Total	56	100

Source: Fieldwork west Pokot District (2008)

4.2 peace and security and academic performance

4.2.1 Peace and security is a cause of poor performance

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	30	53.6
Disagree	20	35.7
Not sure	6	10.7
Total	56	100

Source: Fieldwork west Pokot District (2008)

Out of the total number of respondents who responded to the question 30(53.6%) agreed with the statement that there poor performance is as a result of the volatile security situation in this part of Kenya. 20(35.7%) did not agree with the statement while only 6(10.7%) respondents were not sure what really causes there poor academic performance.

4.2.2 Cattle rustling and academic performance

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	40	71.4
Disagree	10	17.9
Not sure	6	10.7
Total	56	100

Source: Fieldwork west Pokot District (2008)

With regard to cattle rustling 40(71.4%) of the respondents are of the view that it is the cause of the poor performance of students where as 10(17.9%) Of the respondents think cattle rustling has got nothing to do with the performance of the students. Only 6(10.7%) of the respondents are not sure whether cattle rustling has got any thing to do with students' performance or not.

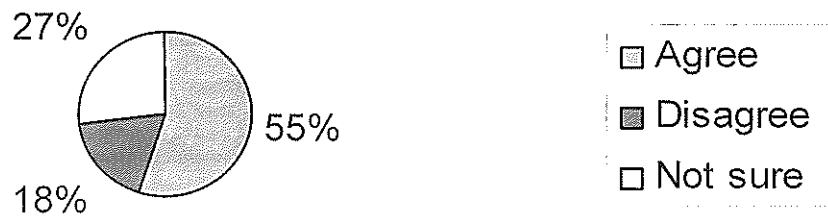
4.3 School Type and Academic Performance

4.3.1 Class Work and Academic Performance

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	30	53.6
Disagree	10	17.9
Not sure	16	26.6
Total	56	100

Source: Fieldwork west Pokot District (2008)

class work and academic performance



Out of the total number of respondents interviewed 53.6% of the respondents agreed with the statement that class work given to students has got a direct influence of the performance of students. 26% of the respondents were not sure while 17.6% of the respondents disagreed that class work has got anything to do with students' performance

4.3.2 Examination and Test frequency and academic performance

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	56	100
Disagree	-	-
Not sure	-	-
Total	56	100

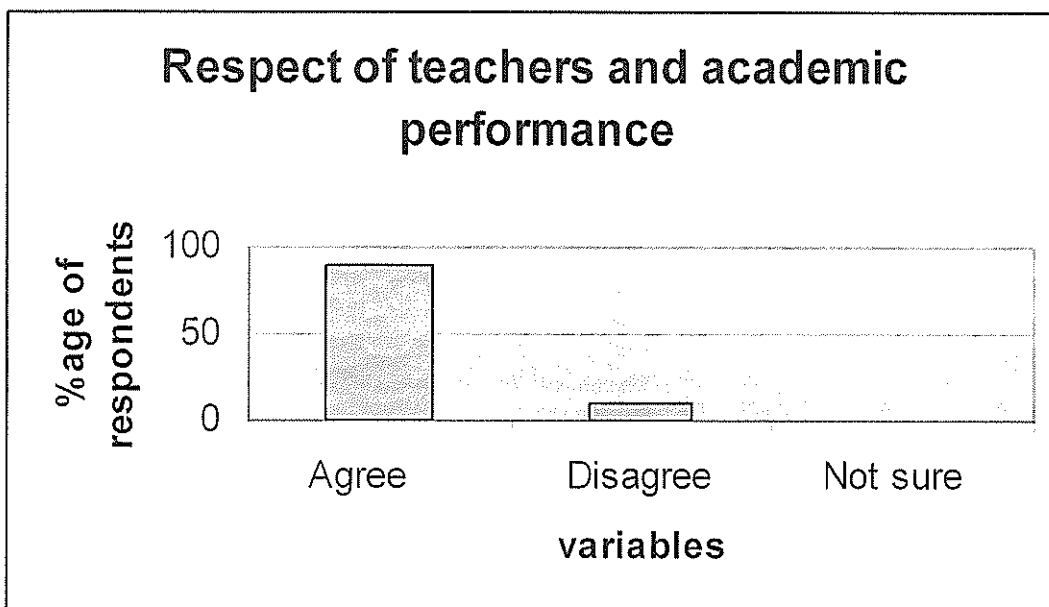
Source: Fieldwork west Pokot District (2008)

In regard to examination and test frequency all the respondents agreed that it is responsible for shaping the performance of students in that the more frequent the students do the tests and examination the better prepared they become and hence improves their overall performance.

4.3.3 Respect of teachers and academic performance

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	50	89.3
Disagree	6	10.7
Not sure	-	-
Total	56	100

Source: Fieldwork west Pokot District (2008)

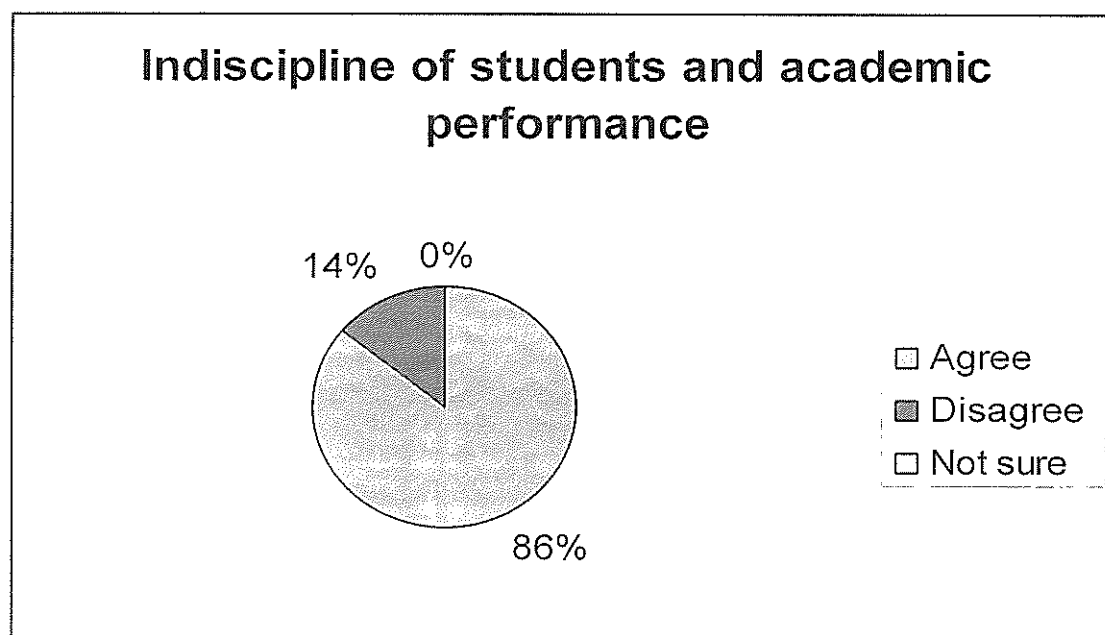


A question was asked to the respondents if respect for teachers by students affect their academic performance; 50(89.3%) of the respondents were in agreement with the statement while only 6(10.7%) of the respondents were in disagreement with the statement.

4.3.4 Absenteeism, class dodging and other acts of indiscipline by the students

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	48	85.7
Disagree	8	14.3
Not sure	-	-
Total	56	100

Source: Fieldwork west Pokot District (2008)

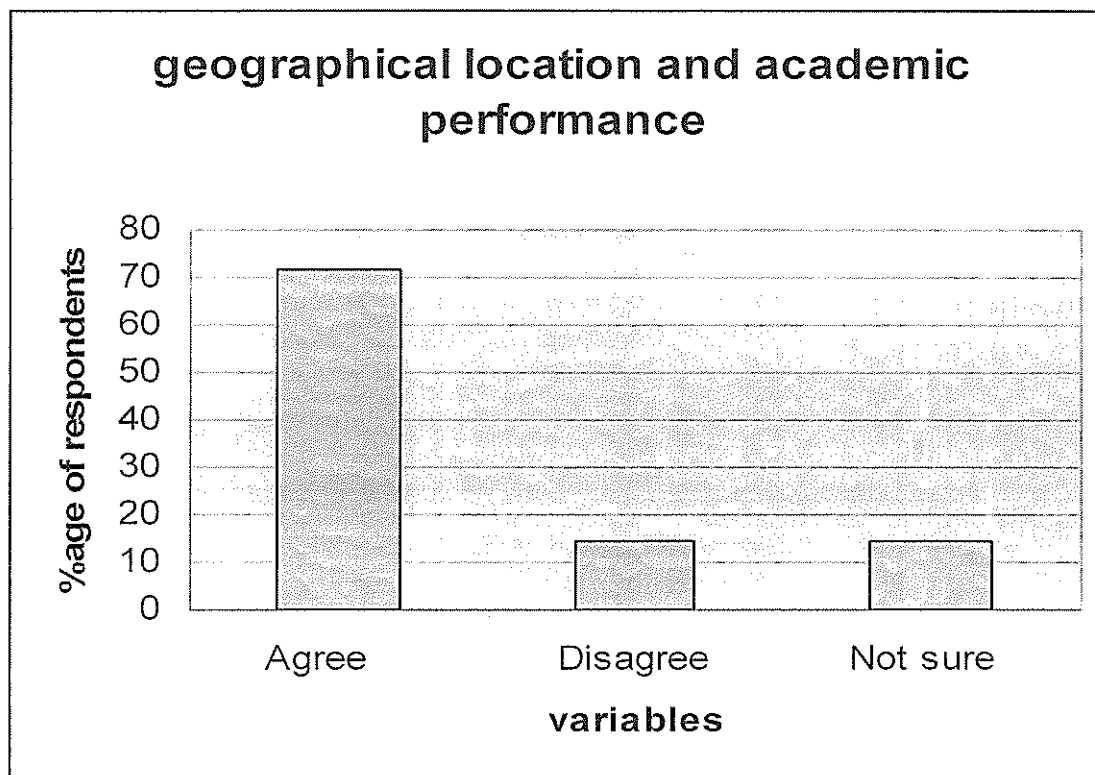


Almost all respondents agreed that all kinds of indiscipline by the students are the leading causes of poor academic performance of students in this part of Kenya. Only 8(14.3%) of the respondents did not agree with the statement.

4.4 Geographical location and academic performance of students

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	40	71.4
Disagree	8	14.3
Not sure	8	14.3
Total	56	100

Source: Fieldwork west Pokot District (2008)



With regard to the geographical location of the school, 40(71.4%) of the respondents were of the view that the longer the students have to walk to school the more likely some will miss out on some days and the poorer such students will perform in class. Also some other respondents concurred that since some schools are located in mountainous areas some students find it difficult to go to school and hence this affects there academic performance.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the conclusions from the study and the recommendations made are presented. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis.

5.2 Summary

Chapter one gives a background to the study and problem statement, three objectives and three research questions were given

Chapter two is a review of related literature, and the literature was reviewed under four themes and linked to the problem under study.

Chapter three explains the method and procedures used in the study which included the research techniques and design, population and sample size; sampling method and procedure; sources and types of data collection methods; data collection instruments and procedures.

Chapter four is a presentation, interpretation and discussion of the field results. Hence data was analyzed, interpreted and discussed in line with the study objectives and research questions. While linking to the existing literature, Results included demographic characteristics, frequency counts and percentages.

Chapter five presents the summary conclusions and recommendations to the study.

5.3 Conclusion

The aim of this report was to investigate the influence of environmental factors on the academic performance of students in West Pokot District of Kenya.

The first question asked in this study was: what is the impact of Peace and security in the area on the academic performance of students? According to research findings, it is apparent that the majority of the respondents thought that the volatile peace situation of the place impacted negatively on the academic performance of the students in the area. This forced many of the students either not to attend school or go there once or twice in a week. This meant that their academic grades were always going to be poor compared to their counterparts from other regions of Kenya.

My second question was: Does Cattle rustling affect academic performance of students in the area? The findings reported that indeed that cattle rustling has got a negative impact on the performance of students in that children who are supposed to be in school prefer to take a shorter route of getting wealth by engaging in cattle rustling instead of going to school. Even a few who choose to go to school are absent in some days away to practice cattle rustling. This only meant that the grades in school of these children will always be bad.

This leads me to my third question: Can Class Work affect the Academic Performance of students? The majority of respondents felt that actually class work really affects the performance of students in that those who do not do work in class will most likely will not have notes to read and hence prepare for exams. This will only mean that

there performance in exams is not expected to be good since they did not have what to read to pass the exams.

Finally, my fourth question was on Respect of teachers and academic performance of students: Here most of the respondents were the teachers them selves who stressed the importance of discipline and respect of teachers from the students. This they said leads to students being attentive in class and hence improves the grades of the student.

5.4 Recommendations

Policy: There should be a strategy towards the improvement of schools in this part of Kenya highlighted in this paper are addressing mainly to the Kenyan policy makers in general, and to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology in particular.

Quality assurance programs should seek explicitly to evaluate the link between the schools' development strategies and the outcomes achieved. There is need on the part of the Inspectorate to strengthen the existing mechanisms of ensuring educational quality in rural Districts of Kenya.

Furthermore, the Inspectorate should look critically at the claim by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology that schools are concerned primarily with quality assurance. The possibility that they prevent sufficient attention being given to the improvement process may not be ruled out.

Additionally, a fundamental pre-requisite for programs and support services to achieve continuous improvement in their performance is a system for routinely monitoring the effectiveness of their impact on

schools. Such monitoring must be embedded into the existing normal fabric of the school operating practices and programs.

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

DATE: 12/3/2008

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR MS/MRS/MR HELLEN J. CHEPSENGON

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:

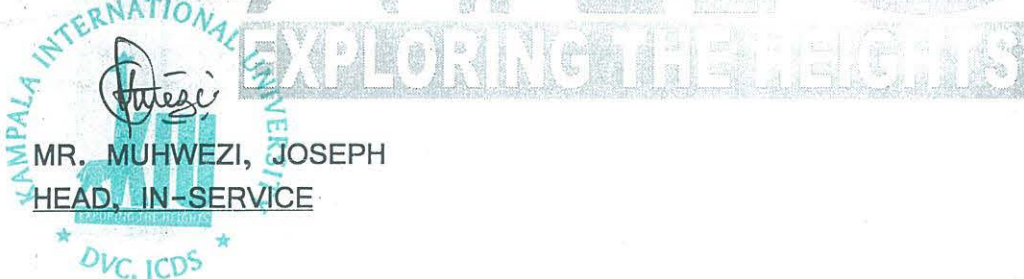
THE ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCE
ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SEC. SCHOOLS
OF WEST POKOT DISTRICT, KENYA.

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. MUHWEZI, JOSEPH
HEAD, IN-SERVICE



APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS.

Please answer freely and sincerely in the spaces or tick the most appropriate alternative where applicable. The information required is only for academic purposes in a research undertaking. Your response will be taken as confidential as possible. Thank you.

Age

- a) 25-30 b) 31-35
c) 36-40 d) Above 40

Sex

- a) Male b) Female

Highest qualification attained.

- a) Certificate b) Diploma
c) Degree d) Other

State whether you are a

- a) Trained teacher b) Licensed teacher

Teaching experience

- a) 1-5yrs b) 6-10 yrs
c) 11- 15yrs d) 10yrs and above

Please indicate the number that is appropriate to you or your situation on the right side boxes using the rates given below;

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

Item	Response
Does environment have a strong impact on the academic performance?	
Does the environment affect teachers teaching schedule?	
Is the community perception towards education affected by the environment they live in?	
Does your geographical location affect academic performance?	
Is the area topography related to late coming?	
Do the kinds of facilities you have affect performance?	
Are the facilities enough to uplift the performance?	
Does the climate change in the teaching schedule?	
Are cultural traits a hindrance to education?	

Which types of insecurities do you normally experience in your school and home locations?.....

APPENDIX III

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Please kindly spare your valuable time. Respond the following questions. The information is solely for academic purposes. You are assured that the information/answers given shall be treated with utmost confidentiality therefore do not disclose or write your name on the questionnaire.

Background Information

Age

a) 13-17

b) 18 – 21

c) 22-25

d) 25 above

Sex

a) Male

b) Female

Class

a) Form one

b) Form two

c) Form three

d) Form four

Please indicate the number that is appropriate to you or your situation on the right boxes, using the rates given below.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

Environment and academic performance

1	Students regard peace and insecurity a cause for poor performance.	
2	Do cattle rustling affect class performance?	
3	Is your community perception towards education affected by insurgence?	

Does your school type affect?

1	Class work	
2	Absenteeism	
3	Class dodging	
4	Acts of vandalism	
5	Disrespect for teachers	
6	Examination and tests frequency	

Does your geographical location affect?

1	School attendance	
2	Class work	
3	Teachers' attendance	

Facilities and building conditions in school and academic performance

1	We have adequate classrooms	
2	Big for enough fresh air to facilitate good study conditions	
3	The available facilities are adequate for studies	

Does climate affect?

1	Teaching	
2	School attendance	

APPENDIX IV

PLAN FOR DATA PRESENTATION

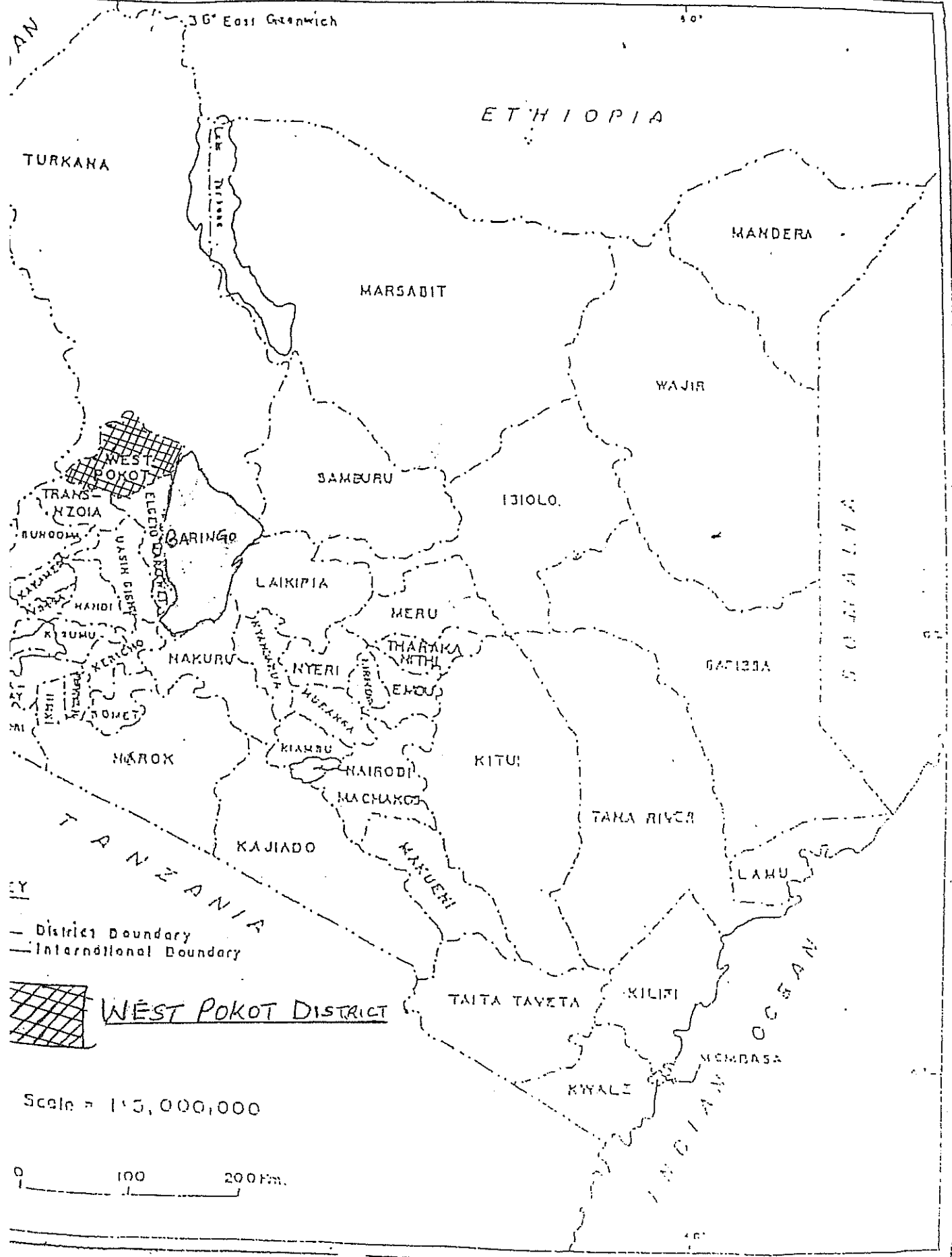
Table 1
Profile of respondents

CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
AGE		
13-20	25	50
21-28	5	10
28 above	20	40
TOTAL	50	100
GENDER		
MALE	25	50
FEMALE	25	50
TOTAL	50	100
ACADEMIC LEVEL		
SECONDARY	30	60
COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY	20	40
TOTAL	50	100

Table 2
Respondents by occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Students	30	60
Teachers	20	40
Total	50	100

LOCATION OF THE DISTRICT



— District Boundary
- - - International Boundary

WEST POKOT DISTRICT

Scale = 1:5,000,000

0 100 200 Miles