

**SOCIAL ECONOMIC FACTORS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE  
OF FORM FOUR STUDENTS IN ST. ANNES KIBOKO  
SECONDARY SCHOOL MAKUENI  
DISTRICT KENYA**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF CONTINUING AND  
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INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

**BY**

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**NOVEMBER 2007**

## DECLARATION

I declare that the research report is my original work and has never been submitted to any institution of learning for any award.

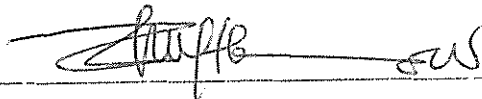
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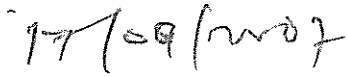
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## APPROVAL

I declare that the work has been done under the supervision of a supervisor and he has approved it for the award of Bachelor of education in science of Kampala International University.

Sign 

Supervisor's Name: Mr. Ssemugenyi Fred



## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my research work to my beloved husband Newton Maitha Mwau and my loving daughter Mercy M. Maitha.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My special thanks goes to the principal and entire staff of St. Annes secondary school, for giving me permission to carry out my research in their school.

I would also like to thank the staff of Kenya library service for allowing me to access books magazines and journals where I got my related literature review. Special thanks also goes to my husband for giving me moral and financial support while I was carrying out my research work.

Lastly I would like to thank my Kampala International University supervisor Mr. Fred for guiding me accordingly as a carried out my research work.

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## **ABSTRACT**

In summary my research was investigating how social economic factors, positively or negatively affect academic performance. The research was carried out in Makueni District Kenya between the month of January ( 2007) to March 2007. My respondents were form four students of St. Annes Kiboko secondary school. Other researchers have also researched on relationship between social economic factors and academic performance. This is what made me to decide to find out whether this was true by carrying out study in St. Annes Kiboko secondary school. I used direct observation method and questionnaires to collect my data. In statistical treatment of data, I used frequency tables, percentages and bar graphs in my data presentation. From statistical treatment of data and presentation, it is clear that economic status of parents affect their students academic performance. Family class also affect academic performance as shown on the graph under presentation of findings.

# CHAPTER ONE

## **1.0 Introduction**

Internationally, social economic factors affect academic performance either positively or negatively. In developed countries for example Japan and Britain, most people are economically stable and this promotes academic performance in that parents are able to take their children to the best schools. In the developing countries for example Tanzania, many people are economically unstable. Most parents are not able to meet their children education expenses hence poor academic performance.

## **1.2 Background of the study**

Kenya being one of the developing countries, experience the same problem. Taking one of the districts in Kenya and investigation how social economic factors affects academic performance, the study has shown that; performance, of secondary schools in final exams in Makueni district differ according to category, social and economic factors of the parents whose children join these schools.

Most of the schools are newly started (less than 10 years old) most of them are district day schools. They get their students from local primary schools and mostly those students from local primary schools and mostly those students who never performed well to secure a place in either district boarding or provincial schools due to poor economic status of their parents most of these day-schools lack adequate teachers and as a result, parents through the board of governors of the school, employ unqualified personnel to teachers for them. These

expected. This leads to poor performance of students in their final exams (National exams).

The boarding district schools perform better than district day schools. There are several reasons attributed to this.

- Parents who take their children to these schools are economically stable.
- The entry behaviour of students joining these schools is better compared to those joining district day school.
- The school can employ qualified teachers incase the government does not give them enough.
- Parents are able to buy reference materials e.g. textbooks, past papers and their answers.
- Teachers and students are motivated by their being taken for trips or being given gifts.
- Students are taken for academic tours. Provincial schools perform very well in exams.

This is because they take the best pupils through out the district during form one intake exercise. They are expensive when compared to district day and economically stable. Students from poor backgrounds are sponsored to be in these schools. They are given enough teacher by the government and if not so, they employ qualified personnel to teach their students. They have enough reference materials. There is enough teacher/ student motivation.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

People believe that, students from poor background don't perform well like those from stable backgrounds; my research was investigation the relationship between social economic factors and academic performance.

### **1.4 OBJECTIVES**

#### **1.5. GENERAL**

To investigate the relationship between social economic factors and academic performance of St. Annes Kiboko secondary school in Makueni district Kenya.

#### **1.6 SPECIFIC**

1. To find out the relationship between economic status of parents and academic performance of their students in ST. Annes Kiboko secondary school in Makueni district Kenya from January 2007 to March 2007.
2. To investigate the relationship between family class and academic performance of students in St. Annes Kiboko secondary school in Makueni district Kenya between the month of January 2007 to Marth 2007.

#### **1.7 STATEMENT OF NULL HYPOTHESIS (Ho)**

There is no significant relationship between social economic factors and academic performance of form four students of St. Annes Kiboko secondary school, makueni district Kenya.

There is no significant difference between social economic factors and academic performance of form four students of St. Annes Kiboko secondary school, Makueni district Kenya.

### **1.8 SIGNIFICANCE/ JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY**

The study was meant to improve performance in secondary schools in Makueni District Kenya which will be very important to the following people.

#### **1.8.1. Students**

With improved academic performance, students get good grades hence realizing their goals in life.

#### **1.8.2. Parents**

When students perform well, they employ themselves or get employed and support their parents.

#### **1.8.3 Teachers**

Teachers see their efforts through the performance of students. They feel appreciated and rewarded by the government through being promoted. They get presents from the parents during school education day.

#### **1.8.4 Education Administrators**

They are usually happy with the schools who perform well or improve in their academic performance. They are rewarded by the government through promotions.

#### **1.8.7 Society**

Good results means that the students realizes their goals, get employed and empower the society economically hence promoting the development of the country as a whole.

### **1.10 SCOPE / DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

This research was carried out in St. Annes Kiboko secondary school of Makueni district Kenya. It compared the performance of the school in National exams for a period of three years. The study was carried out from January 2007 to March 2007.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Introduction

Social economic factors have either contributed positively or negatively towards academic performance. Various people have carried out research and written some information related to this.

#### 2.2 ECONOMIC STATUS AND ACADEMIC PERFROMANCE

In the year late 1960's, a team led by Ken coates and Richard Silburn conducted a study of St. Ann's an inner city slum in Nottingham. The research showed how the disadvantages of poverty are passed on from one generation to the next. This "cycle of deprivation" tends to transmit the life chances of parents to their children. The following passage illustrates this process in terms of education.

St. Ann's is a depressing area. Many of the houses are damp, draughty and poorly heated. They are often run down and dilapidated and a quarter has one or more rooms, which the occupants consider unusable. The people have a sense of hopelessness and powerlessness and many are resigned to their situation believing that there is little they can do to change it. Few show any sign of optimism or self-confidence. The children of St. Ann's are on average smaller and less hardy than middle class children from the more prosperous suburbs of Nottingham. They have little stamina and are usually under the losing side when their school team plays other schools.

Their diet is poor, they have a low resistance to illness and they are often absent from school. Every epidemic, which hits the city, flourishes in St Ann's. Children go to school without breakfast or have

gone out to work before them. Many of the children have emotional problems unto two-fifths came from broken families and 16% were defined as educationally subnormal.

Coates and Sulburn argues it will be wrong to blame teachers for these results. They give the following quotations from a St. Ann's headmistress to illustrate the problem of teaching in the area. We begin by setting up what we think is satisfactory environment. We try to give these children emotional security and establish a contact between teacher and child.

Any teacher who can write in her daily report, "Today William smiled at me" has probably achieved as much as a teacher somewhere else who could write, "Today Johnny five pages of sums".

When starting school many of the children from St. Ann's has little idea about how to play with paints, water, sand or clay.

Their vocabulary was small and they had little experience of pencils, pictures or books hence lacked much of the grounding required for learning how to read. At home they lacked Jig saw puzzles and education toys found in most middle class homes, the children from St. Ann's arrived as retarded pupil in the infant school and all too often continued as such into the junior school.  $\frac{1}{4}$  could not read by the time they were 7 and less than a tenth were average readers for their age.

### **2.3 FAMILY BACKGROUND AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

Student's background contributes a lot to their learning and performance. Stable backgrounds will promote performance while the unstable ones will bring about poor performance. Some information as



how written down some information as how family backgrounds positively or negatively affect academic performance.

### **FAMILY CLASS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.**

A great many studies have considered the relationship of education and environment. Some of the most notable have listed a range of variables from quality of school buildings to local crime figures and have related them to school performance. Others have adopted a more group-centered approach and have placed greater emphasis on the social situations in which such environment factors operate.

Boocock (1966) e.g. has reviewed four such social settings. The classroom, the school as a whole, the peer ground and outside school (which includes the social economic status of the child's family).

It is clear that the relationship of family social class to educational performance is by no means the only pattern of social pressures upon the school child, successive researchers have demonstrated beyond doubts that family, class and education form an important relationship.

The middle - class family is said to be child-centered, future-oriented and interested in achievement and mobility.

It teaches children to respect property and to value neatness, thrift and punctuality.

The lower-class family on the other hand, described as adult-centered, present-oriented and interest in enjoying life with extended family peers.

It teaches children to admire toughness, physical prowess, generosity and practicality.

The influence of the family background on children's education experiences has a curious place within the field of sociology of education. On the other hand, the issue has dominated the field wielding increasingly sophisticated methodological tools, social scientists have to document, elaborate and replicate the influence of family background on educational life chances. On the other hand, until recently, research on this issue focused primarily on educational outcomes. Very little attention was given to the processes through which these educational patterns are created and reproduced.

Studies of the curriculum, the hidden curriculum social organization of the classroom, and the authority relationship between teachers and students have also suggested ways in which school process contributed to social reproduction.

Qualitative studies suggest that parental behaviour can be crucial determinant of educational performance. In addition, increasing parental participation in education has become a priority for educators, who believe it promotes educational achievement. Some researchers subscribe to the culture of poverty thesis, which states that lower class culture has distinct values and forms of social organization. Although their interpretations vary, most of these researchers suggest that lower class and working-class do not value education highly as middle-class families. Some accuse schools of institutional discrimination claiming that they make middle-class families feel welcomer than working-class and low-class families.

The social basis of education selection has been an important area of sociological concern, particularly since the Second World War. This interest not only reflects the importance attached to education as a

determinant of future life chances, but also the growing commitments to generating equality of educational opportunity.

Those concerns have led sociologists to examine the extent to which education change had actually generated more "open" and equal society liberal and Marxist accounts of post-war reforms have arrived at very different conclusions. Nevertheless, the idea of the educational 'Meritocracy' in advanced industrial / capitalists societies had become part of the taken for granted landscape of the sociologist. Indeed; the popularity of Marxist accounts of education in the late 1970s were largely a product of the frustrations of those who felt that liberal-democratic reforms has not led to an immediate and significant improvement in the life-chances of children from working class.

Origins / Lauder and Brown 1988). From a Marxist perspective, liberal refers were seen as a legitimate target for criticisms, because they were perceived as a necessary feature of late capitalist development, serving the interests of capital. The possibility that the welfare state would be dismantled or comprehensive education scrapped was not for seen.

The argument here is that we are entering a third wave in the socio-historical development of a final drive towards the "meritocracy", nor the result of a socialist. Victory for education reform. To date the third wave has been characterized by the rise of the educational gerontocracy, where a child's education is increasingly dependent upon the wealth and wishes of parents, rather than the ability and efforts of pupils. However, it does not preclude the possibility of further educational expansion. Indeed it seems likely that there will be further expansion of post compulsory education in the near future. Secondary

education, which remained a preserve of the middle classes until well into twentieth century, existed primarily to provide an education perceived to be suitable for a gentleman and in order to ensure the reproduction of social and economic elites.

The stratification system is broadly related to the highly differentiated economic and occupational structure of an advanced industrial society. The managers and professionals, the Clerks and supervisors, the skilled and unskilled manual workers. Similar modes of life generate class-consciousness at each level and differences in social status and in power between each level. Although of course, the variations in status and power between social classes are related to society's political ideology as well as to its basic economic structure, it is fundamentally the way a society earns living, the complexity of its economic and occupational structure, that gives rise to its pattern of subcultures. The story below describes the class profile of the different ethnic groups in Britain today and to see how far their differing levels of qualification can explain these profiles. In Britain the acquisition of education qualification has proved to be one of the major ways for people to reach the more advantaged positions in the class structure.

The salaried or service class, which consists of salaried employees such as managers, administrators and professionals, who enjoy typically *relative secure employment, an incremental salary scale, various fringe benefits and significant promotion chances.* These salaried people access good education for their children. This promotes the children performance good life.

The working class consists of rank and file wage. Labourers in *industry, services and agriculture.* These workers are employees but

lack the security, incremental salary and promotion prospects of the salaried. They typically have much higher risks of unemployment and fewer fringe risks of unemployment and fewer fringe benefits hence not accessing good education as the salaried.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. DESIGN**

My research design was a descriptive survey. It used qualitative techniques because the time which was given to carry out the research was very short.

#### **3.2. ENVIRONMENT**

The research was carried out in St. Annes secondary school of Makueni district Kenya.

#### **3.3. RESPONDENTS**

My research target form four students of St. Annes Kiboko secondary school. I used random sampling to choose the school I chose form four class because they are most experienced and will fill the questionnaires with easy.

#### **3.4. INSTRUMENTS**

I used direct observation and questionnaires to collect my data. Find the attached copies at the back of this booklet.

#### **3.5. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

When I was collecting my data, I followed the following procedure.

- I got a letter of introductory from Kampala International University
- I booked appointment with the school which intended to visit.
- I visited the school distributing the questionnaires.
- I made preparation visits to the school to collect the data.
- I visited the schools to collect the already distributed questionnaires.

## STATISTICAL TREATMENT OF DATA

I used frequency distribution tables and percentages in statistical treatment of my data. They made interpretation very easy even by looking at it. The table of academic performance in 2004 is given and some calculation have been done illustrating how academic performance differ from economically stable to economically unstable students. Other calculations show how academic performance differ according to family class of the students.

**Table of academic performance of students in 2004**

YEAR	A	A	A <sup>-</sup>	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
2004	40	0	0	2	1	0	4	6	10	7	8	0	2

**Source: Field survey 2007**

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

**Table 1: Economic status of parents and academic performance of their students in 2004.**

YEAR	A	A	A <sup>-</sup>	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
2004	40	0	0	2	1	0	4	6	10	7	8	0	2

**Source: Field survey 2007**

a) Economically stable getting C and above

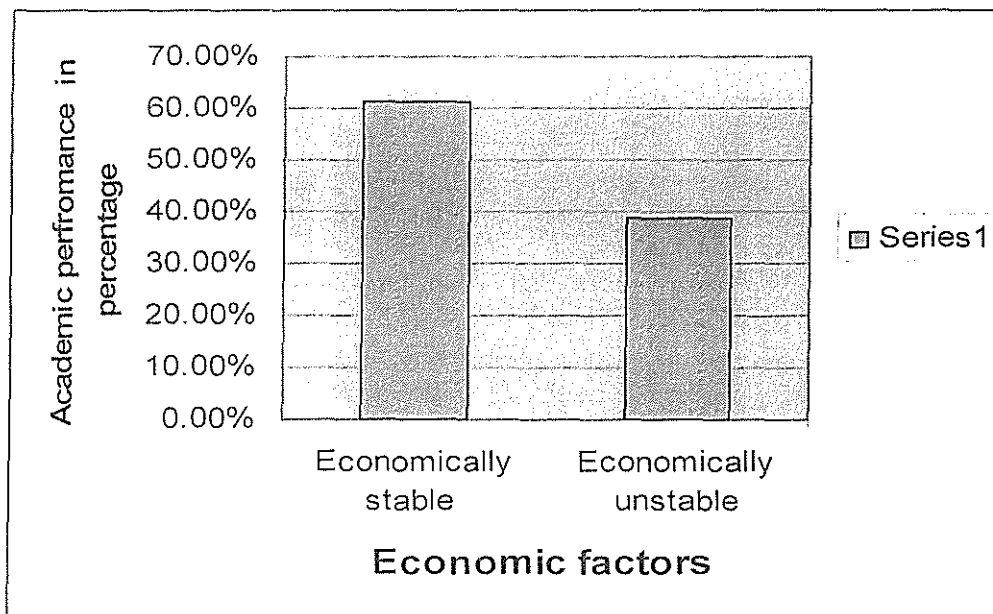
$$= 8/13 \times 100 = 61.5\%$$

b) Economically unstable

(i) getting C and above

$$4/13 \times 100 = 38.5\%$$

a) A bar graph of academic performance against economic status in 2004.



**Source: Field survey 2007**



**Table 2: Family class and academic performance of students in 2004.**

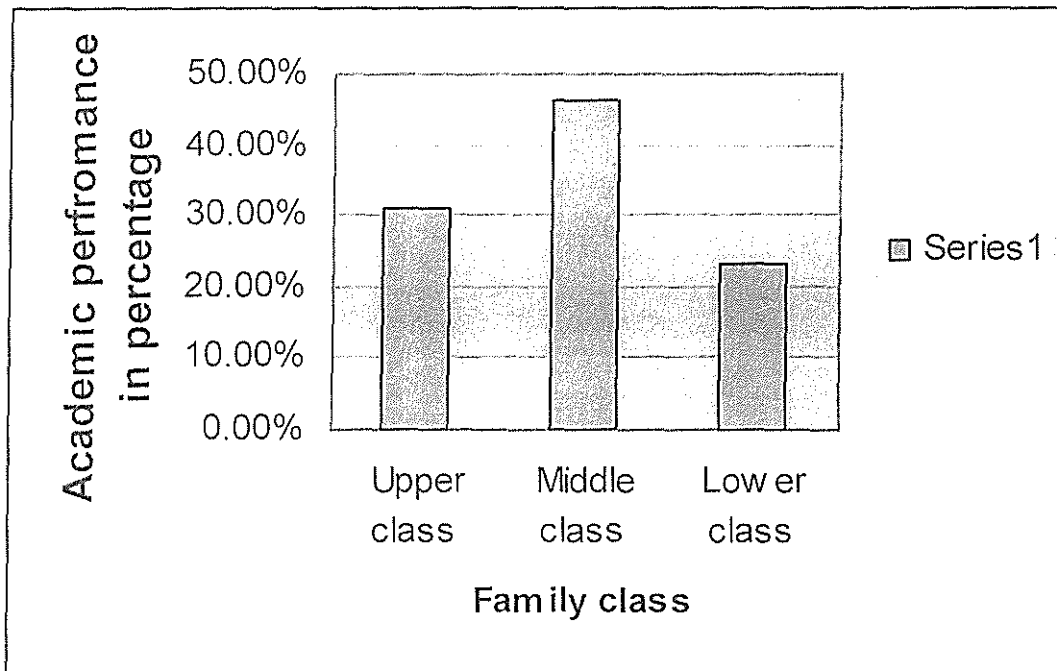
Year	Entry	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
2004	40	0	0	2	1	0	4	6	10	7	8	0	2

**Field survey 2007**

Upper class

- (i) Getting C and above  $4/13 \times 100 = 30.8\%$
- (ii) Middle class getting C and above  $6/13 \times 100 = 46.2\%$
- (iii) Lower class getting C and above  $3/13 \times 100 = 23.0\%$

**c) A bar graph of academic performance against family class in 2004**



Source: Field survey 2007

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with discussion on what has been found out, the limitation of the study, what should be done and conclusion.

### 5.1 DISCUSSION

#### **a) Economic status of parents and their students academic performance.**

After carrying out my study, I found out that students from economically stable families perform better than those from economically unstable families. This is because stable families have good diet for good health, can expose their children, the children have self confidence etc all which those from unstable families lack.

#### **b) Family class and academic performance.**

My study has shown clearly that family class affect academic performance in that students from middle class perform better than those from upper and lower class. Students from upper family class do not perform as expected because their parents are not concerned with their academic performance.

### 5.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The time given to collect the data and write the research is very short. It was very hard to gather all the required information and material for the research. My research may not be applicable as a social economic and academic performance measure to other secondary schools because it has been carried out in one class and one secondary school, within a very short time.

## **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Considering the finding made, I would recommend that parents should work hard to alleviate poverty. They should encourage their children to work hard in their academic work even if they lack some of the basic needs. I would also recommend that the government should provide enough teachers and bursaries to all schools to promote high-performance. The government should also avail food and reference materials e.g. books to all schools to supplement what their poor parents can afford.

Since my research work has some limitation, I would like to encourage other researchers to carry out a study survey and find whether there is a correlation between socio-economic factors and academic performance in other areas. From the presentation of my findings, seemingly the upper class family have no time to monitor the academic performance of their children. I would recommend that they spare some time and monitor their children academic performance as the future of their children lies solely on academic excellence and achievements.

## **5.3 CONCLUSIONS**

My research illustration clearly that social economic status of parents affects their children's academic performance. Children from poor backgrounds lack self confidence, good health due to poor diet, exposure, language etc all which promote failure. Economic factors in particular contribute majorly to academic performance of the students. Those who lack the basis in life cannot concentrate in their studies instead they spend most of the time trying to assist their parents to meet the basic needs. As a result their academic performance is compromised and they cannot achieve the best in academics.

### 1.9. DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this study the following terms are defined operationally.

- ACADEMIC - Theoretical as opposed to practical.
  
- DISTRICT - A portion of territory defined for political, judicially, educational or other purposes.
  
- Economic - Refers to the study of the way in which money, industry and trade are organized.
  
- FACTORS - Any circumstances that influence the cause of events.
  
- GRADE - A degree or step in quality, rank or dignity.
  
- IMPROVE- To raise in value.
  
- PERFORMANCE - Manner of or success in working
  
- QUESTIONNAIRE - Prepared set of questions to obtain data on which to base a report or an account.
  
- SOCIAL - Relating to society you can use it to indicate that relates to a leisure activity which involves people meeting each other.