



Original Article

Parents' Economic Status and Academic Performance in Public Primary Day Schools in Multinational Tea Estates Kericho County, Kenya

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12 June 2020 Dynamism in family finances, family type, and style of parenting has been associated with the well-being of a child. Poor performance usually indicates

Keywords: that some factors may be of the cause other than those found in schools since all schools in the republic of Kenya are given funds, teachers, and other resources equally. The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of

Parents' Economic Status, Academic Performance, Correlation Research Design, Tea Estates, Public Primary Schools.

parents' economic status and pupils' academic performance in public primary tea estate schools in Kericho County. The research utilised social learning theory to bring the conceptualisation of the role of parents and family in enhancing academic performance. The study adopted a correlation research design. The study targeted 336 standards seven and eight pupils and 55 parent association members, 5 deputy headteachers and 5 headteachers from 5 schools from the selected schools in the tea estates in Kericho County. A sample population of 101 pupils, 55 parent Association members, 5 parents as well 5 headteachers, and 5 deputy headteachers were obtained using a stratified random sampling technique. The sampled 101 pupils were given questionnaires, while 55 parents association members, 5 headteachers, and 5 deputy headteachers were interviewed by the researcher. Both questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data from the field. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics where percentages and means were utilised. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used as inferential statistics. Qualitative data were analysed through content analysis. Financial based problems attributed the highest issues that affect the parents in the estate for over-dependence wages and salaries that can sustain basic needs. Therefore, the study concluded that parent economic status had a significant effect on the pupil's academic performance. The study recommended that there is a need for the multinational tea estates to consider

assisting the children financially in estates through corporate social responsibility.

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INTRODUCTION

Knowledge and education have become more like basic needs in the current world rather than secondary needs. Performance is then crucial based on the fact that most of the education systems are based on passing through some evaluation or test with the entire system. Poor economic growth in Kenya has led to persistent poverty among Kenyan households. Children from poor family settings combine schooling and other activities such as household chores, farm work, work outside homes and family business (Moyi, 2011). Omar (2012) who researched in Kenya also found that most parents are poor and most are unemployed making it difficult for them to source money for school fees.

In January 2003, the Kenyan government introduced Free Primary Education (FPE). Enrolment in public primary schools went up by 1.3 million children, from a total of 5.9 million to 7.2 million children in 2002/2003 and 1.4 million more children with 8.2 million children in 2003/2010. Lower academic performances and completion of fewer years of school and career aspiration were associated with adolescents from lower socio-economic status backgrounds and ethnic minorities

in America. Children from high occupational statuses are known to model their parents' positive schooling experiences and higher occupations (Dubow, Boxer & Huesmann, 2009). On the contrary, children from low-income parents may model their parents' lower levels of educational attainment (Obonyo, 2018). The majority of investigation done on the performance of education has concentrated on school factors while home factors also represent student's immediate environment which should also be investigated.

According to Gabriel *et al.*, (2016), more than one million children were still out of school because of socio-economic status and cultural factors. The parents of children who were constantly absent were unemployed and of low economic status. The researchers noted socio-economic challenges affecting the children of the unemployed and low statuses as limited resources at school, and to household, buying food and enabling a cognitive enriched learning environment at home.

Even though there is an increase in enrolment, some schools are registering low marks that are far below the national average (Glennerster *et al.*, 2011). A cross-sectional data from 2013 to 2018 of

schools in the Kericho County representing multinational tea companies' estate schools with a mean score of 244.90, this was below the national mean score of 271.29 within the same periods. Studies done elsewhere indicate that school environments and home-based factors lead to poor academic performance. These studies have been done elsewhere, but little has been done in Kericho County. Therefore, it was necessary to carry out a study on parents' economic status factors that influence academic performance in public primary schools in multinational tea estates in Kericho County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several countable scholars have empirically discussed parent economic status factors and their influence on the performance of students (Akeri, 2015; Chinyoka & Naidu, 2014). But most of these researches are based on child labour, family welfare, family set-up and education level in the family, social-economic status, professional qualification and home chores, among other factors. The research concentrated on parents' income levels, parent education level, parenting styles and family type, which have not been researched.

Akeri (2015) found that household income determines academic performance. Children from poor households are turned away because of failure to meet some costs, both direct and hidden. In some cases, some parents withdraw their children from school because of increased demand for household income.

Wali (2016) suggests that parents' occupation indirectly reflects their intellectual ability which is inherited by their children. The high-income parents as the case in Kenya: take their children to boarding schools where they get the best education resources like getting enough time while in boarding, enough course and supplementary books as well as teachers. Low-income parents take their children to public schools where truancy is common. The children could be sent home to replace old or buy new school uniforms, bring money to pay teachers employed by parents and pay for monthly or end term exams. Sometimes, many children are affected by being out of classrooms, thus delaying syllabus coverage, hence poor

performance. Wali (2016) notes that parents from low social-economic status households and communities develop academic skills more slowly compared to children from higher social-economic groups.

Juma (2016) found that parents from higher-income families take their children to school earlier - Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) level than their counterparts. Currently in Kenya, the Free Primary Education system where teachers, construction of classrooms, providing facilities like desks and most other resources to all public primary schools does not include ECDE which are three levels namely baby, nursery and introductory classes. Juma (2016) observed that lower-income parents, on the other hand, prefer their children to start school at a later time that is from grade one onwards where free primary education begins.

Usman, Mukhtar and Auwal (2016) investigated the socioeconomic status and academic performance in Nigeria Educational System. For a long time, Nigeria has been concerned about academic achievement, but in recent years parent socio-economic status has influenced achievement and quality of education. Private schools are rising with high performance and demand high payment for students to join creating links between the socio-economic status of the parent and performance of students. Hence parental socio-economic, parent involvements, family size, socio-stability, social stratification, and interest in education are some of the home-based factors that should be considered in student academic achievement. The study investigated the effect of parent socio-economic status on the achievement of the students. A random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 80 students from four secondary school Kano State, Nigeria. Questionnaires were used in collecting data where correlation analysis was utilised. The students were intimated with goals of the research, confidentiality of their responses and how to respond to the questions or items on the questionnaire. The findings indicated that a statistically significant relationship between the parent's socio-economic and students' academic achievement ($p < 0.05$). The study recommended that the government should sensitise the public on the need to have gender equality in education,

school fees regulation, parents' educational expenditure and incomes.

Odoh, Ugwuanyi and Chukwuani (2017) examined the parents' economic status and academic performance of accounting students in Nigerian universities. It was motivated by the problem of a steady decline in the performance of some classes of accounting students in the country, occasioning concerns amongst well-meaning citizens. The specific objective of the study was to ascertain the extent to which parents' socio-economic status is related to the academic performance of students in Nigerian universities. The scope of the study was narrowed to students in the Department of Accountancy, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Descriptive survey design. Was adopted for the study. The population of the study is 150 final year students in the Department of Accountancy at the University of Nigeria. The sample size of 60 was selected using a non-probability purposive sampling technique. Data analysis was done with inferential statistics (Chi-square, X^2). Results obtained indicate that parental socio-economic status was significantly related to the academic performance of students in accounting studies in Nigeria that parental income level is positively and significantly related to students' academic performance in accounting studies in Nigeria. It was then recommended, among other things that the government should come up with policies for a better socio-economic climate for parents in Nigeria, which assisted boost students' academic performance in the country.

Gabriel et al. (2016) establish relationship parental socio-economic factors and academic achievement of students in Westland District in Nairobi County. The study utilised the Classical Liberal Theory of Equal Opportunity and social Darwinism. A descriptive survey design was used where a sample of 125 respondents comprising of 91 students, 18 teachers and 16 parents was used. Questionnaires, interview schedules and focus discussion was used in collecting data. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analysing questionnaires. An interview schedule was used to analyse thematic techniques. The results indicated that physical and instructional resources were inadequate or in poor condition. There was a strong negative correlation between the occupation of parents and the ability to

finance education. There was a positive correlation between good parent-teacher relationship and their involvement in their children's academic achievement. The study concluded that parental occupation and involvement in learning activities had an effective parent-teacher relationship were facilitating factors. Parents' low ability to finance education, coupled with the poor status of physical and instructional resources were inhibiting factors to students' academic achievement. The study recommended the government to strengthen the partnership between strategic education development partners to mobilise physical teaching and learning resources to strengthen education. Scholarship and control of unemployment should be enhanced to improve parents' socio-economic status.

Gobena (2018) established the family socio-economic status and academic achievement of students. The study used a descriptive survey research design was employed where a sample of 172 students was selected from the College of Education and Behaviour Sciences students. The findings indicated that family income had no significant effect on the academic performance of students. There is a significant negative relationship between sex and the academic achievement of the student. Family education level affected the academic achievement of students significantly. The study recommended that the government should encourage families to support their children access to education. The government has the prerogative to ensure equal education for both high and low economic status. This is by harmonising the curriculum and giving equal resources to public schools as those of the private schools.

Abdu-Raheem (2015) did research to determine parents' socio-economic status on secondary school students' academic performance in Ekiti State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, targeting Junior Secondary School students in Ekiti State. Questionnaires were utilised to collect from a sample of 960 students from 20 secondary schools that were randomly selected. Regression analysis was used for testing the hypothesis. The results indicated that parents' socio-economic status had a significant effect on the academic performance of secondary school students. The study recommends that parents who are illiterate or have low literacy

levels should ensure that their children are provided with home lessons during holidays and weekends. The government should embark on programs or formulate policies that can bridge the gaps between children of the rich and the poor academically.

Some of the empirical literature on parents' economic status focusing on household income on academic performance include Akeri (2015); Wali (2016) and Juma (2016). Wali (2016) concentrates on the parent's occupation on a child's education. Juma (2016) concentrated on the ECDE level rather than primary. Usman, Mukhatar and Auwal (2016) concentrated on the socio-economic status of the parents based on the Nigeria Educational System. Similarly, Odoh, Ugwuanyi and Chukwuani (2017) did in Nigeria but concentrated on University education. Gabriel et al. (2016) selected respondents from secondary school rather than primary. Gobena (2018) did on the family socio-economic status on students' academic achievement. Abdu-Raheem (2015) did their study in Ekiti state in Nigeria, where the stud used purposive sampling of 48 students from 20 secondary schools. The current study was done in Kericho County, targeting public primary schools within the tea estate. Parental income level was used to determine whether it affects the performance of public primary schools in the tea estates in Kenya.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The correlation research design was deemed appropriate as it is often identified with studies that yielded data that can be used to examine relationships among variables (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2011). The research targeted 5 primary schools within the Chagaik zone representing the

Table 1 below.

Table 1: Parents Economic Status Descriptive Statistics

Statement	n	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Your parents work in the tea estate and dependent on the income from the multinational company	90	1	5	3.2889	1.47064
The income is sufficient for school and running home expenses	90	1	5	3.6667	1.16117
Family has manageable family expenses based on the size and income level	90	1	5	3.1556	1.26234
Your family has financial problems most of the time	90	1	5	3.000	1.28954

multinational tea estate within Kericho County which are Mosobet, Kerenga, Tagabi, Kiptetan and Jamji primary schools. The target population was 336 standards seven and eight pupils, 55 members of parent association (PA), 5 head teachers and 5 deputy headteacher making a total of 401 respondents. The sample size was 101 pupils, 55 parents' association members, 5 headteachers and 5 deputy headteachers. The pupils were selected using a simple random sampling technique based on the proportion of standard seven and eight pupils. Census was used to select 55 members of parents' association, 5 headteachers and 5 deputy headteachers from the 5 primary schools within the multinational tea company in Kericho. Questionnaires were administered to pupils while two types of interview schedules were used for parent and headteacher. Mean, percentage and standard deviation were used to obtain descriptive statistics interpretation. Pearson correlation coefficient was used as inferential statistics where Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) assisted in analysis. The interview schedules were analysed using thematic analysis. The results from the interview were grouped into themes where the content was analysed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire, interview for both parents and headteachers, were analysed to examine the parent economic status on academic performance. The return rate was 90.1% representing 90 respondents for questionnaires and 100% for both interviews. The results from the three instruments were triangulated to investigated the parent economic status and academic performance. Descriptive statistics results were obtained through mean and standard deviations which are discussed as per

You are affected by the income of your parent when studying in school 90 1 5 2.6333 1.40984

The results from that majority of the parents worked in the tea estate and depended on the income from the multinational tea companies. A mean of 3.2889 indicated that the majority did work in tea estates where the multinational company formed the main source of finance. Its variations are dependent on multinational companies and are low with a standard deviation of 1.47064.

According to the results, the income was moderately sufficient for school and running home expenses (mean of 3.6667). Based on the response of 90 respondents, the standard deviation of 1.16117 revealed relatively low variation. Therefore, the income was moderately sufficient mean it was not adequate for running home expenses and meet school expectations.

In response to whether the family had manageable family expenses based on the size and income level; the results showed that it was to a small extent of manageability (mean of 3.1556). The variations on the manageability family were low on size and income level (standard deviation of 1.26234). Therefore, the payment from the job done is sufficient to take care of basic needs. There is a need to empower people within the estate to ensure that there were sufficient resources. According to the responses, the family had financial problems most of the time to a small extent (mean of 3.0000). Financial issues associated with the socio-economic problem directly affect the pupils. A standard deviation of 1.28954 showed that the variation in financial problems was low. Family financial problems should be solved by the source of finance which is mainly the employer by reviewing the compensation packages.

The results also revealed that to a small extent pupil were affected by the income of their parents when studying in school (mean of 2.6333). A standard deviation of 1.40984 was found, which revealed that the effect on pupils was low on parent's income. Hence, the parent's income does not have a direct effect on the pupil's studying in school. Though the resources and basic need affect psychologically affecting the study pattern of the pupil.

Correlation analysis of parental economic status on parent literacy, parenting structure and family types is presented in *Table 2* below.

Table 2: Parental Economic Status Correlation Analysis

		Academic Performance
Parental Status	Pearson	.594**
	EconomicCorrelation	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005
N		90

The results from *Table 2* indicated that parental economic status had a significant effect on academic performance ($P = 0.005 < 0.05$). The correlation between parental economic status was positive on academic performance ($R = .594$). This implied that with the improvement of parental economic status leads to improvement in academic performance. Parental economic status had positive significant relationship with parent literacy ($P = .017 < .05$, $R = .251$). Therefore, the increase of literacy of the parent improves the parent's economic ability and status.

The interview given to the parents showed that families dependent on parent's income to a greater extent mean of 4.000. The variation was also low with a standard deviation of 0.75593. It implies that the income generated from the parents was highly dependent on for daily running of the family needs. It also found that children were to a great extent affected by the amount of income (mean of 3.7500). The variation of the effect parents' income on the pupil was low (standard deviation of 0.70711). This shows that parents' income was associated with the pupils psychological being.

The interview given to the parent was unstructured and the response was coded as per head or deputy headteacher from 1 to 5. In response to the question, Do most of the parents have problems with paying fees (activity) for their children revealed all the respondents agree that they have fee problems. Headteacher 1 indicated revealed that "most of the family are over-reliant on money from tea estate, which makes it difficult to raise school fees."

Deputy headteacher 3 pointed out that, “the majority of children are always sent home for fees which have affected the pupil concentration in schools as well as psychological torment to them.” All the respondents pointed out the problem of fee-based on over depending on salary and wages from the multinational companies. The effect of parents’ income has significantly affected pupils psychological in academics.

“Have there been reports of financial problems by pupils?”; all the headteachers and deputy headteachers reported financial problems. The problems were solved through support from the multinational company sponsorship, supporting through teachers’ welfare kitty and others were allowed to continue with a promise of the parent to pay at a later date. Headteacher 2 claimed that,

“There have been a number of pupils who have problems with fee as well as the inability to have basic needs. We have sorted the problems by recommending them for sponsorship for such pupils to the management of the multinational tea company”.

Deputy headteacher 1 reiterated that

“Yes, this issue sometime does not have a solution and we allow the pupils to continue with a promise that they were clear before the end of the term. We sometimes recommend the pupils to County Government and management of the multinational companies for support”.

Usman, Kukhtar and Auwal (2016) concurred that parent economic status affected the academic performance of the student in Nigeria Educational System. The current research finding was associated with low income earning from the multinational tea companies that affected the school fees and even necessities. Even though Usman *et al.* (2016) findings are not associated with employment in the tea estates, the challenges were similar to the current research where school fees and educational resources were major challenges.

Odoh, Ugwuanyi and Chukwuani (2017) also were in line with the current research that parent economic status significantly affects academic performance. Despite the research done on accounting students, Nigeria University, similar

problems were cited that the socio-economic condition of the parents is transferred to the student.

Gabriel *et al.* (2016) found that ability to finance education had a positive effect on good parent-teacher relations as well as children’s academic achievements. The finding showed no direct link of parent economic status but indicates that low ability inhabits the ability of parents to finance education, provide physical facilities and provide instructional resources are necessary for academic performance. This concurs with the current research that parents with low-income transfer the problem to school fees, provision of basic needs as well as learning material affecting the pupil’s academic performance significantly.

On the contrary, Gobena (2018) found that family income did not have a significant effect on a student’s academic performance. It recommended that students from poor economic status should be accorded equal treatment with those from high economic status. This was different from Abdu-Raheem (2015) found that socioeconomic status affected significantly on secondary student’s performance. Therefore, the parent economic status is important, especially where the economic status is directly linked with the provision of basic as well as schools on the performance of the student.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The majority of parents worked in the tea estate and dependent on the income they got from the multinational companies. The results showed that the tea estate has assisted in providing a source of finance through employment, especially in plucking tea from the estates. The income from employment was found to be sufficient for school as well as running home expenses to some extent. In a moderate extent, the family expense is manageable based on the family size and income levels. Despite the finance been sufficient for family expenses and pay school fees, the families are facing financial challenges most of the time. It implies that their salaries and wages are not sufficient for the family. The income of the parent did affect the studies of their children.

The interview results indicated that pupil's dependent on parents' income from employment. The amount of income affects the children on pupils' academic performance. There existed fee problems among the pupils which have affected their studies to some extent for over depending on salary and wages from the multinational company. Sponsorship, teachers' kitty and other support are some of the few aids for parents who are not able to support their children. Sometimes the pupils are lockout of education based on school fees. Therefore, parent economic status had a significant effect on the pupil's academic performance.

The study concluded that parental economic status plays a significant role in academic performance. This is because the income of the parents controls the ability to run home expenditure. It also facilitates school fee payment and ensures that basic needs are attained by the pupil. Despite the sufficiency of finance in covering basic needs and pay school fees, the majority of the parents have challenges in finance based on emergencies and other problems. Therefore, parental economic status significantly pupil's affect academic performance.

The study recommends that strategic partnerships between schools within tea estates with the multinational tea companies to enable students with fee problems to be assisted through the corporate social responsibilities of the companies. The tea companies should assist parents that have a financial problem from the perspective of the schools. This would not only assist the family but would uplift the livelihood of the family at a later stage. The finding revealed that parent's economic status has a significant effect on the pupil's performance. The study also recommends to the County of Kericho to intervene through increasing bursary allocation to children from estates. This based on poor salary and wages that allow a hand to mouth financial consumption. There is a need for the student despite low economic to continue with both primary and secondary studies. Through this bursary, the student is assisted to better their lives. The study also advocates the multinational to consider the burden of school fees and review the salaries according to the economic situation. This would allow pupils to obtain their basic needs as well as pay school fees.

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