

**PARENTAL PERCEPTION ON SELECTED FACTORS ON ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KAMARA  
DIVISION OF NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA.**

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Requirements for the Award of Degree of Master of Education in  
Sociology of Education of Egerton University**

**EGERTON UNIVERSITY**

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## **DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **Declaration**

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for the award of degree, in any other university.

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This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as University Supervisors.

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## **DEDICATION**

I wish to dedicate this work to my family members who tirelessly supported me throughout the whole period of writing up this thesis through to fieldwork. Their prayers and material support really saw it to its success. They are my wife Caroline, children Boniface, Brian and Shadrack.

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## ABSTRACT

Academic performance has become instrumental in determining a child's future in this highly competitive world. All over the world, education is considered to be a benchmark over which economic development and economic growth of a country depends upon. This study stems from a practical view that there have been complaints that pupils' academic performances have been fluctuating in Kamara Division. The purpose of the study was to examine parental factors influencing academic performance in Kamara Division. Specifically, the study sought to: identify whether parental level of education, involvement and expectations influence academic performance in Kamara Division. The study was informed by The Social-Ecological Theory which emphasizes the complex environmental system where people live and operate. The study was carried out in Kamara Division which has a total of 30 public primary schools. Three hundred and sixty parents who are members of school committees, 30 head teachers and one Education Officer in the Division formed the target population. Stratified sampling was used as schools were classified according to the zones. Simple random sampling was used to select the schools that were included in the sample. The study used a sample size of 108 parents. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data from parents while interview schedule was used to collect data from nine head teachers and one Education Officer. The researcher discussed the items in the instrument with the supervisors and experts from the department after which all the changes were made. On the other hand, the reliability of the instruments was determined by Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha method where a reliability index of 0.821 was obtained which is considered suitable for this study. Descriptive statistics was used in analyzing data. The study found that parents who are educated understand the importance of giving their children quality education; literate parents often visit their children at school to assess their progress; and literate parents respond to schools needs like payment of school fees more effectively than illiterate parents. Secondly, parents support their children by providing school basic needs and parental involvement influence academic performance. Finally, parents have a lot of expectations in their children to perform well; that the level of expectations they have on their children influence their academic performance; they perceive their children as capable and can perform better and they visit their children in school and encourage them to work hard. The study recommended that there is need for the school management to create awareness to these parents in order for them to realize and appreciate the importance of their participation and how it may influence their children's academic performance.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>AEO:</b>	Area Education Officer
<b>FPE:</b>	Free Primary Education
<b>JSS:</b>	Junior Secondary School
<b>KCPE:</b>	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
<b>KCSE:</b>	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
<b>NACOSTI:</b>	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
<b>SES:</b>	Social Economic Status
<b>SPSS:</b>	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
<b>SSS:</b>	Senior Secondary School
<b>USA:</b>	United States of America

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Education is the process of developing the capacities and potentials of the individual so as to prepare that individual to be successful in a specific society or culture (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Education is a continuous process which begins at birth and continues throughout life. It is constant and ongoing process. Schooling generally begins somewhere between the ages four and six when children are gathered together for the purposes of specific guidance to acquire and develop skills and competencies that society deems important. In the past, once the formal primary and secondary schooling was completed the process was completed. However, in today's information age, adults are quite often learning in informal setting and through distance learning throughout their working lives and even into retirement. This therefore stresses the importance of education worldwide and as a result, pupils need to be given quality and equitable education which can only be achieved when education obstacles are minimized (Aremu, 2000).

A modern society cannot achieve its aim of economic growth, technical development and cultural advancement without harnessing the talents of its citizens. One of the major tasks of education is to help children to develop the skills appropriate to the age in which they live and those skills which promote a lifetime of learning (De Civita, Pagani, Vitaro & Tremblay, 2004). Educationists and counsellors in educational settings are often confronted with students who appear to have above average scholastic aptitude but are very poor in their studies. A recurring question baffling them has been why some students succeed in their study while others do not. This question is sometimes considered to be closely related to learning than teaching (Richardson, 2009).

The world is becoming more and more competitive. Quality of performance has become the key factor for personal progress. Parents desire that their children climb the ladder of performance to as high a level as possible. This desire for a high level of achievement puts a lot of pressure on students, teachers, and schools and in general the education

system itself. In fact, it appears as if the whole system of education revolves round the academic achievement of students, though various other outcomes are also expected from the system. Thus, a lot of time and effort of the schools are used in helping students to achieve better. The importance of scholastic and academic achievement has raised important questions for educational researchers such as; to what extent do the different parental factors contribute towards positive academic performance? (Ramaswamy, 1990).

Thus, a family as a basic unit of the society plays a vital role in the socialization and later education of its members. Grant and Hallman (2006), for instance found that higher parental/household head level of education is associated with increased access to education, higher attendance rates and lower drop-out rates. A number of reasons are put forward for the link between parental education and retention in school. Some researchers indicate that non-educated parents cannot provide the support or often do not appreciate the benefits of schooling (Pryor & Ampiah, 2003). The family lays the foundation of education before the child goes to school. Parental involvement with the schools has become a major educational issue in the 1980s in the USA, an era of concern about the quality of education, (Kathleen, 1989). Student achievement has always been an important issue in education amongst educators, administrators and parents such that in USA, the current push is to increase student academic performance in order to meet federally- mandated standards, (Benoit, 2008).

While parental expectations and aspirations directly affect student achievement, they also play an important part in students' development of their own beliefs and expectations. Research has demonstrated that parental expectations and aspirations significantly predict student expectations and aspirations (Benner & Mistry, 2007). According to Epstein (2009), parental involvement is the most powerful influence in a child's education. It can have various effects on students, both academically and behaviorally. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to establish the influence of parental factors on pupils' academic performance in Kamara Division.

The government of Kenya has invested heavily in education particularly at primary and secondary levels. However, many schools continue to register poor results in national examinations. Since the government is providing free funds for all public primary schools and head teachers being trained on the management of these funds, it is expected that academic performance should improve. In Kamara Division for instance, pupils' academic performance has recorded a mixed results in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) from 2007-2011. The following is a summary of how pupils have been performing in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Kamara Division

**Table 1: Summary of KCPE Results (2007-2011)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Mean Scores</b>	<b>Maximum score</b>
2007	243.27	500
2008	247.61	500
2009	235.40	500
2010	232.84	500
2011	227.72	500

*Source:* AEO Kamara Division (2013)

The statistics provided in Table 1 clearly indicated that performance in KCPE in Kamara Division has deteriorated over the years. Nevertheless, good results are a product of various factors such as school, home, and other environmental factors. However, this study sought to examine parental factors influencing academic performance among pupils in Kamara Division of Nakuru County of Kenya.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Grant and Hallman (2006) found a significant relationship between parental highest level of education and academic performance. Furthermore, evidence indicates that parental involvement continues to have a significant effect on academic performance into adolescence and even adulthood (Desforges, 2003; Sylvia, 2004; Brannon, 2008). According to Bridgemohan (2002) and Cook, Shepherd, Cook and Cook (2012), parental involvement means different things to different individuals while the degree of parental

involvement in different phases of education varies. Parental involvement is the awareness of and participation in schoolwork, understanding of the interaction between parenting skills and student success in schooling and a commitment to consistent communication with teachers about students' progress (National middle school Association summary, 2006). Additionally, Bridgemohan (2002) found that parental involvement in their children's education has led to increased levels of academic performance in the classroom. This study examined how parental factors such as level of education, involvement as well as expectations influence academic performance in Kamara Division of Nakuru County of Kenya.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine selected parental factors influencing academic performance in public primary schools in Kamara Division, Nakuru County.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The following objectives guided this study:

1. To identify the extent to which parental level of education influenced pupils' academic performance in Kamara Division.
2. To establish the extent to which parental involvement influenced pupils' academic performance in Kamara Division.
3. To examine the extent to which parental expectations influenced pupils' academic performance in Kamara Division.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent does parental level of education influence academic performance of pupils in Kamara Division?
2. To what extent does parental involvement influence pupils' academic performance in Kamara Division?
3. To what extent does parental expectations influence pupils' academic performance in Kamara Division?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study findings may be useful in assisting the Ministry of Education to understand the various parental related factors impeding pupils' academic performance and be able to outline measures of addressing the issue so as to improve academic achievement in the area. Also, school administrations, teachers and other stakeholders will also be able to comprehend the factors affecting academic achievement in their schools and as a result the study recommendations will enable schools to initiate both short and long term measures in place to address the problem. It is expected that the study findings will be useful to other scholars and researchers by acting as a point of reference to parental factors influencing pupils' academic performance. The major beneficiaries of this study are the parents who must understand their roles that they are expected to play in their children's academic performance.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The study was carried out in selected schools in Kamara Division. The Division has a total of 30 schools and 240 teachers. The study also confined itself to parental factors such as the level of education, parental involvement as well as expectations influencing academic performance in Kamara division of Nakuru County of Kenya. The study was divided into three sections: - identification of the extent of influence of parental level of education on pupils' academic performance in public primary school in Kamara division, establishment of the extent of influence of parental involvement in academic related activities on pupils academic performance and examination of the influence of parental expectations on pupils academic performance.

### **1.8 Limitation and Delimitation of the Study**

Some parents who participated in the study were hesitant to give their opinion however, they later agreed after the researcher's explanation of the importance of the study. In addition, some schools in Kamara were inaccessible due to poor and dilapidated roads. However, the researcher overcame this by using bicycles and motorbikes.



### **1.9 Assumptions of the Study**

The study made the following assumptions;

1. That parents were available during data collection.
2. That parents are involved in every aspect of their children education.
3. That parents have high expectations towards their children's education.

## **1.9 Definition of Terms**

The following terms have been defined the way they have been used in this thesis.

**Academic Achievement:** It is used in this study to refer to the academic outcome that pupils can attain.

**Academic Performance:** In this study it refers to the outcome of pupils' studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers.

**Parental Expectations:** It refers to the hope that parents attach to their children in relation to academic performance.

**Parental Factors:** It is used in this study to refer highest level of education, involvement and expectations of parents which influence academic performance.

**Parental Level of Education:** In this study it refers to the highest level of formal education that parents have obtained.

**Parental Involvement:** It refers to the level of commitments that parents put in their children's education.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter reviews the literature that has been conducted by other scholars on the study topic. Specifically, the chapter has discussed academic performance; social factors affecting academic performance; theoretical and conceptual framework.

#### **2.1 Academic Performance**

Academic performance has become an index of child's future in this highly competitive world. Academic achievement is a key mechanism through which adolescents learn about their talents, abilities and competencies which are an important part of developing career aspirations (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 2000). Academic achievement and career aspirations in adolescence are often correlated (Abu-Hilal, 2000).

Poor academic performance according to Aremu (2000) is a performance that is pronounced by the examinee and significant others as falling below an expected standard. The evaluator or assessor can therefore give different interpretations depending on some factors. Bakare (1994) described poor academic performance as any performance that falls below a desired standard. The criteria of excellence can be from 40%-100% depending on the subjective yardstick of the evaluator or assessor. For example, a 70% performance of senior secondary 3 (SS3); students in senior secondary English language examination is by all standard a very good performance. However, a cursory look at the performance and the individual examined and the standard of the examination he or she took could reveal that the performance is poor. On the other hand, a senior secondary school student's performance of 37% in SS3 mathematics can be said to be a poor performance when in actual fact the performance is by all standards a good one. This shows that the concept of poor academic performance is relative and this depends on so many intervening variables.

Aremu and Sokan (2003) submit that the search for the causations of poor academic achievement is unending and some of the factors they put forward are: motivational

orientation, self-esteem, emotional problems, study habits, teacher consultation and poor interpersonal relationships. Bakare (1994) also made efforts to categorize factors militating against good academic performance into four principal areas which are: causation resident in the child such as basic cognitive skills, physical and health factors, psycho-emotional factors, lack of interest in school programme; causations resident in the family such as: cognitive stimulation/basic nutrition during the first two years; type of discipline at home; lack of role model and finance; causation resident in the school such as school location and physical building; interpersonal relationship among the school personnel and causations resident in the society such as instability of educational policy; under-funding of educational sector, leadership and job losses.

## **2.2 Parental Factors Affecting Academic Performance**

The factors discussed below have been found to influence learning at home and in the school. They include; family educational background, parental expectation/aspirations and parental involvement.

### **2.2.1 Family Educational Background**

Research indicates that the educational level of household members is particularly influential in determining whether and for how long children access schooling. Ersado (2005: 469) talks of 'the widely accepted notion that parental education is the most consistent determinant of child education (and employment decisions)'. Higher parental/household head level of education is associated with increased access to education, higher attendance rates and lower dropout rates (Al Samarrai & Peasgood, 1998; Ainsworth, Beegle & Koda, 2005; Connelly & Zheng, 2003; Hunter & May, 2003; Duryea, 2000; Ersado, 2005; Grant & Hallman, 2006). A number of reasons are put forward for the link between parental education and retention in school. Some researchers indicate that non-educated parents cannot provide the support or often do not appreciate the benefits of schooling (Juneja, 2001; Pryor & Ampiah, 2003).

There is evidence that the gender and education level of the parent can influence which child is more likely to access and remain in school for longer. Often it is the mother's

educational level in particular which is seen to have an effect on children's access to education (Ainsworth *et al.*, 2005). But this varies in certain contexts. Brown and Park's (2002: 533) research on China indicates that for each additional year of a father's education, the probability of his child dropping out of school falls by 12-14%. And Cardoso and Verner's (2007: 15) research on Brazil claims that the 'schooling level of the mother ... does not have a significant impact on the probability that the teenager will drop out of school'.

Al Samarrai and Peasgood's (1998) research in Tanzania suggests that the father's education has a greater influence on boys' primary schooling; and the mother's on girls'. While a married mother's primary education can increase the probability of girls enrolling in primary school by 9.7% and secondary by 17.6%, it has no significant effect on the enrolment of boys. They claim that educated mothers giving preference to girls' schooling, implies that 'mothers have a relatively stronger preference for their daughters' education and that their education affords them either increased household decision-making power or increased economic status' (Al Samarrai & Peasgood, 1998: 395).

Psychologists have studied the importance of parental education level as it relates to an individual's academic success (Bogenschneider, 1997; Sandefur, Meier & Campbell, 2005; Bakker, Denessen, & Brus-Laeven, 2007). They have found important factors that should be considered when researching this topic. These include defining *parental involvement*; the *parental education level* as it may impact the amount of involvement in their child's academia, and whether the impact is a *direct or indirect influence*.

There are several reasons why the education level of parents may be related to the amount of involvement they have in their child's academics. However, there are several ways that parents may become involved in their child's academics so that even parents with fewer resources can participate (Bakker *et al.*, 2007). In addition, a student whose home is of lower socio-economic status may not provide the same opportunities as the home of a student whose parents have higher income (Bogenschneider, 1997). Furthermore, parents with a higher education level typically have more of an opportunity

to become more involved in academic success (Bogenschneider, 1997). Parents with lower levels of education may not feel capable of assisting their child or playing a role in their academic life as they may not understand the material or feel comfortable with their abilities (Hill *et al.*, 2002). In contrast, studies show that some parents with lower levels of education do become involved because of their high level of expectations for their children to achieve upward mobility in the world and so their child achieves things they themselves could not (Hill *et al.*, 2002)

Most findings on the issue describe that the influences of parental involvement are primarily indirect. One example is that greater parental involvement leads to less behavioral problems that may cause interference with learning. Another indirect influence is the parents being a role model for what the individual should strive to achieve (Hill *et al.*, 2002). In addition, parents with a higher education level pass on certain expectations about the importance of education to their child. The way a child is raised differs based on the parents' education level as well because of the values the parents stress and the activities the parents create for the child and participate in. Parents with higher education are more academically involved and place greater emphasis on academia (Tavani & Losh, 2003). Regardless of parental educational level, more involved parents build stronger relationships with their child and demonstrate that they care about the individual's academic success (Sandefur *et al.*, 2005; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996).

Glick and Sahn's (2000) results offer some similar outcomes to Al Samarrai and Peasgood (1998): improvements in fathers' education raise the schooling of both sons and daughters, but mothers' education has significant impact only on daughters' schooling. Ersado (2005) suggests provision of adult education programmes to counter the educational deficit facing many households would be useful in bolstering sustained access to education for many children. Yet, this might not be enough. Al Samarrai and Peasgood (1998) also contend that while education of the household head increases the probability of completion, the basic literacy of the household head does not improve completion chances, rather house heads having attended primary school does. Perhaps

this needs to be investigated more. This study therefore explains the effect of family education on academic performance in Kamara division.

### **2.2.2 Parental Expectations**

Parental expectations for their children's educational attainment have been demonstrated to strongly predict academic achievement. Parental expectations for educational attainment positively predicted students' achievement test scores (Benner & Mistry, 2007), as well as GPA (Seyfried & Chung, 2002). Additionally, both parent reported and students' perceived parental expectations have had a demonstrated significant effect on students academic growth across a variety of subjects and after controlling for SES (Fan, 2001). Mothers who held higher educational expectations and wanted their child to compete more educationally, also protected against academic problems, significantly reducing the risk of academic failure by 48% (De Civita *et al.*, 2004).

Gill and Reynolds (1999) examined both parent reported expectations for their child's educational attainment, as well as children's perceived parental expectations for their achievement. While parent reported expectations for educational attainment was a significant predictor of mathematics and reading achievement, children's perceptions of their parents' expectations for their achievement proved to have a very meaningful role in their sixth grade mathematics and reading achievement. Children's perceptions of expectations had a strong and statistically significant impact on both mathematics and reading achievement, with effect sizes of  $r=.28$  and  $r=.33$ , respectively. Children who reported higher parental expectations to do well in school received higher scores on both reading and mathematics standardized tests.

While parental expectations for educational attainment alone has been shown to be a significant predictor of academic achievement, the length of time that parents report having held those expectations may also be a critical variable. When taken together, parent expectations for their children's educational attainment and the length of time they had held those expectations accounted for 24% of the variance in student achievement (Jacobs & Harvey, 2005).

African-American parents of who had higher expectations of educational attainment significantly affected their high school student's reading achievement ( $r = .67$ ) (Flowers & Flowers, 2008). Additionally, a meta-analysis found that African American parents' expectations for the academic success of their child had a significant effect on their overall academic achievement, yielding an effect size of  $r = .57$  (Jeynes, 2003). Interestingly, Seyfried and Chung (2002) found an interaction between parental expectations for educational attainment and ethnicity. The interaction model indicated that African-American and Caucasian students who had the same level of parental expectations have different GPAs; African-American students received lower GPAs. It is possible that the positive impact of parental expectations may be lessened for African-American students due to a greater number of life stressors or more negative experiences with schooling.

Other research has also indicated that parental expectations affect student academic achievement differently depending on ethnicity. While parental expectations for educational attainment had no effect on student achievement for Hispanic students, it had a direct and short term effect on achievement for Asian and African American students. For caucasian students, parental expectations had a direct effect on both short and long term achievement (Hong & Ho, 2005). For all groups of students, parental expectations affected both short and long term achievement indirectly through student expectations.

While parental expectations directly affect student achievement, they also play an important part in students' development of their own beliefs and expectations. Research has demonstrated that parental expectations significantly predict student expectations and aspirations (Jodl *et al.*, 2001; Benner & Mistry, 2007). Adolescents whose mothers expected them to continue their education further had significantly higher expectations for themselves to continue their education (Benner & Mistry, 2007).

Fathers' expectations for their adolescent child's educational attainment also significantly predicted students' own aspirations ( $r = 0.30$ ) (Jodl *et al.*, 2001). Additional research has demonstrated that parental expectations significantly predict student expectations in the



same way for both students with and without disabilities, demonstrating the critical role of parental expectations for both student populations (Patrikakou, 1996).

Parental aspirations and expectations also have some long term implications for student beliefs. Parental aspirations for their child's educational attainment when students were 11, were significantly and moderately correlated with students' self-reported aspirations at age 16; the higher parents' aspirations were when students were 11, the higher students reported their own aspirations were at age 16 (Marjoribanks, 1995). Educational expectations of African-American parents when students were in eighth grade significantly and positively predicted students' own educational expectations when they were two years out of high school.

While the lack of longitudinal data examining the effects of parental expectations and aspirations beyond high school is notable, research has indicated that students' own expectations and aspirations for their educational attainment are predictive of their actual educational attainment (Marjoribanks, 2003; 2005; Andres, Adamuti-Trache, Yoon, Pidgeon, & Thomsen, 2007). Because parents' aspirations and expectations have been demonstrated to predict students' aspirations and expectations, it follows that a relationship between parents' aspirations and expectations and students' educational attainment would be worth examining in future research.

Glick and White (2004) followed participants two years after their expected high school graduation to examine the role of family variables on post-secondary enrollment. Results from a multiple regression analysis indicated that parental expectations significantly predicted post-secondary enrollment. Even after controlling for previous academic achievement and family resources, students whose parents held high expectations for them were more likely to graduate from high school and continue their education in college than students whose parents held low expectations for them.

Most studies have found strong and consistent evidence of a positive association or significant pathways between parental expectations and achievement for European-

American families (Alexander, *et al.*, 1994; Davis-Kean 2005). None of the studies that examined the association between parental expectations of European American families and children's achievement failed to find an association. However, the findings were not consistent for Asian-Americans or African-Americans. On one hand, Okagaki and Frensch (1998) found that when SES and other parental involvement variables were controlled, a measure of parental expectations was a significant predictor of fourth and fifth graders' grades for European American and Asian American students. Similarly, Sy and Schulenberg (2005) conducted path analyses using the ECLS-K data and found that the pathways from parental expectations to kindergartners' achievement outcomes were similar for European-American and Asian-Americans.

However, more recent research conducted by Vartanian and colleagues (2007) with 9,494 participants showed that parental expectations was a significant predictor of college completion for the non-Asians but not for Asian-Americans after controlling for 8th grade GPA and standardized test scores. Davis-Kean (2005) studied 8 to 12-year-old children and found similar patterns with African-Americans; parental expectations had a direct significant effect on academic achievement for European-American but not for African-American students.

Parental expectations can function as a form of communication that conveys to students the value their parents place on achievement. Students perceive this communicated value as a norm, which becomes internalized as a standard that students strive to attain. The concept of the self-fulfilling prophecy was introduced by early sociologists who argued that parents' prophecy or expectations about future achievement boosts their children's motivation and expectations, and in turn leads them to high achievement. Dumais (2006) extended this notion by characterizing student perceptions of parental expectations as the internalization of a social structure that "forms one's worldview and serves as a guide throughout an individual's life" (p. 85). Psychologists have proposed a similar notion, describing parents as "expectancy socializers" (Eccles *et al.* 1982) and focusing on the ways in which parental expectations function as an "environmental press" that compels students to meet parental standards (Marjoribanks, 1972).

Another way in which parental expectations may affect student achievement is by conveying messages about their child's abilities and capabilities which in turn enhance students' competency beliefs and sense of efficacy about their academic trajectory (Eccles, *et al.* 1982; Eccles *et al.* 1998). In general, students who perceive themselves as capable tend to obtain better grades and higher test scores than students with lower capability beliefs. For example, the mediating role of students' competency beliefs emerged in a comparative study of sixth and seventh grade students in the USA and Switzerland (Neuenschwander, *et al.* 2007). Path analyses indicated that parental expectations influenced early adolescents' self-concept of ability which in turn affected their grades and standardized scores in math and native language.

Parental expectations on their children also affect academic performance. The facet of parental involvement that required a large investment of time includes reading and communicating with ones child. Parental styles and expectations had great impact on student educational outcomes (Jeynes, 2005). Thus parental attention affects academic performance of children. It is the amount of parental attention and concern that is strongly associated with achievement and success. Parents who are concerned about their children's performance and who pay close attention to what the children do in school, tend to have children who perform better academically. Minambo (2009) indicates that his father was an absentee father, he never came to his school functions and hardly paid his fees, if his father was a visionary man who saw potential in him and went ahead to nurture his talents probably he would have achieved more in life.

### **2.2.3 Parental Involvement**

According to Richardson (2009), parental involvement is the most powerful influence in a child's education. It can have various effects on students, both academically and behaviorally. Initially, research on family involvement generally did not aim at differentiating between the effects of specific types of involvement on definite student outcomes (Sheldon, 2009). But rather, the connections between general measures of

parental involvement with students' test scores and grades were analyzed. However, recently, researchers started studying how different types of involvement connect to specific student outcomes.

Some studies emphasize the idea that higher levels of education of parents and parental involvement both have impacts on an individual's academic success (Blair, Blair, & Madamba, 1999; Tavani & Losh, 2003). However, regardless of the parents' education level, the more involved parents are in their child's schooling the better students perform academically and reaches a higher level of achievement in high school (Bakker, *et al.*, 2007; Bogenschneider, 1997). The degree of impact of parental involvement on an individual's academic success may vary. Some studies show that when the parents who have lower levels of education are more involved, the effect is greater and more positive than when parents who have higher levels of education are involved (Bogenschneider, 1997; Hill *et al.*, 2002).

There are several ways that parents may become involved in their child's academics so that even parents with fewer resources can participate (Bakker, *et al.*, 2007). In addition, a student whose home is of lower SES may not provide the same opportunities as the home of a student whose parents have higher income (Bogenschneider, 1997). Furthermore, parents with a higher education level typically have more of an opportunity to become more involved in academic success (Bogenschneider, 1997). Parents with lower levels of education may not feel capable of assisting their child or playing a role in his academic life as they may not understand the material or feel comfortable with their abilities (Hill *et al.*, 2002). In contrast, studies show that some parents with lower levels of education do become involved because of a desire for their child to have upward mobility in the world and so their child achieves things they themselves could not (Hill, *et al.*, 2002).

Parents with a higher education level pass on certain expectations about the importance of education to their child. The way a child is raised differs based on the parents' education level as well because of the values the parents stress and the activities the

parents create for the child to participate in. Parents with higher education are more academically involved and place greater emphasis on academia (Tavani & Losh, 2003). Regardless of parental educational level, more involved parents build stronger relationships with their child and demonstrate that they care about the individual's academic success (Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996; Sandefur, *et al.*, 2005). There may be a boundary that when crossed creates over-involved parents who then hinder the academic success of an individual, but further exploration and research would need to define this.

According to the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (Obeidat & Al-Hassan, 2009), successful parental involvement may be defined as “the active, ongoing participation of a parent or primary caregiver in the education of his or her child”. At home, parents can demonstrate their involvement in different ways; such as by reading for their child, assisting with homework, and having regular discussions about school or school work with their child. In addition, it is important for parents to convey their expectations to their child's education.

Research has provided ample evidence that parental involvement affects achievement in core subjects such as English, Mathematics and Science, and the behaviour of students, their school attendance and their attitude and adjustment to school (Sheldon, 2009; Sanders & Sheldon, 2009). According to Jerry Trusty, student perception of their parents' involvement and expectations are also highly effective and influential in their education. Moreover, students who feel their parents' support for their education and have good communication are more likely to continue their studies past high school.

Parent involvement in a child's early education is consistently found to be positively associated with a child's academic performance (Stevenson & Baker, 1987; Hara & Burke, 1998; Marcon, 1999; Hill & Craft, 2003). Specifically, children whose parents are more involved in their education have higher levels of academic performance than children whose parents are involved to a lesser degree. The influence of parent involvement on academic success has not only been noted among researchers, but also among policy makers who have integrated efforts aimed at increasing parent involvement

into broader educational policy initiatives. Coupled with these findings of the importance of early academic success, a child's academic success has been found to be relatively stable after early elementary school (Pedersen, Faucher, & Eaton, 1978; Entwisle & Hayduk, 1988). Therefore, it is important to examine factors that contribute to early academic success and that are amenable to change.

Researchers have reported that parent-child interactions, specifically stimulating and responsive parenting practices, are important influences on a child's academic development (Christian, Morrison, & Bryant, 1998; Committee on Early Childhood Pedagogy, 2000). By examining specific parenting practices that are amenable to change, such as parent involvement, and the mechanisms by which these practices influence academic performance, programs may be developed to increase a child's academic performance. While parent involvement has been found to be related to increased academic performance, the specific mechanisms through which parent involvement exerts its influence on a child's academic performance are not yet fully understood (Hill & Craft, 2003). Understanding these mechanisms would inform further research and policy initiatives and may lead to the development of more effective intervention programs designed to increase children's academic performance.

Parent involvement has been defined and measured in multiple ways, including activities that parents engage in at home and at school and positive attitudes parents have towards their child's education, school, and teacher (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Epstein, 1996; Kohl, Lengua, & McMahon, 2000). The distinction between the activities parents partake in and the attitude parents have towards education was highlighted by several recent studies. Several studies found that increased frequency of activities was associated with higher levels of child misbehavior in the classroom (Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow, & Fendrich, 1999), whereas positive attitudes towards education and school were associated with the child's increased academic performance (Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta, Cox, & Bradley, 2003). Specifically, Izzo, *et al.* (1999) reported that an increase in the parent's school activities, such as increased number of parent-teacher contacts, was associated with worsening achievement, as increased contacts may have occurred to help the teacher

manage the child's existing behavior problems. The significance of parent attitudes toward education and school is less well understood, although attitudes are believed to comprise a key dimension of the relationship between parents and school (Eccles & Harold, 1996). Parents convey attitudes about education to their children during out-of-school hours and these attitudes are reflected in the child's classroom behavior and in the teacher's relationship with the child and the parents (Kellaghan, Sloane, Alvarez, & Bloom, 1993).

Several methods are used to measure child academic performance, including standardized achievement test scores, teacher ratings of academic performance, and report card grades. Standardized achievement tests are objective instruments that assess skills and abilities that children learn through direct instruction in a variety of subject areas including reading, mathematics, and writing (Sattler, 2001). Teacher rating scales allow teachers to rate the accuracy of the child's academic work compared to other children in the class, and allow for ratings on a wider range of academic tasks than examined on standardized achievement tests (DuPaul & Rapport, 1991). Report card grades allow teachers to report on classroom academic performance, but are used by few studies for early elementary school children due to, among other reasons, a lack of a standardized grading system and uniform subject areas children are evaluated on.

According to Bridgemohan (2002), parental involvement means different things to different individuals while the degree of parental involvement in different phases of education varies. Parental involvement is the awareness of and participation in schoolwork, understanding of the interaction between parenting skills and student success in schooling and a commitment to consistent communication with teachers about students' progress (National Middle School Association, 2006). Epstein and Janson (2004) observes that there is no common model for parental involvement and school's needs will differ from one another and will therefore be determined by each school's strengths and backgrounds.

Epstein (1992) gave a framework of six types of involvement namely; parenting in the education of children ; parents beliefs about what is important to do with and on behalf of their children, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with community. There are three major factors of parental involvement; belief on what to do with and on behalf of their children, that they can influence children's education and parents perceptions that their children and school want them to be involved in (Michigan Department of Education, 2001).

### **2.2.3.1 Relationship between Parental Involvement and Academic Performance**

Based on previous research, Hughes, Gleason and Zhang (2005) hypothesized that parents who have a positive attitude towards their child's education, school, and teacher are able to positively influence their child's academic performance by two mechanisms: (a) by being engaged with the child to increase the child's self-perception of cognitive competence and (b) by being engaged with the teacher and school to promote a stronger and more positive student-teacher relationship.

Perceived cognitive competence is defined as the extent to which children believe that they possess the necessary cognitive skills to be successful when completing academic tasks, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic (Harter & Pike, 1984). Previous research found evidence that higher parent involvement contributes to an increase in a child's perceived level of competence (Grolnick, Ryan, & Deci, 1991; Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Holbein, 2005). There are theoretical pathways through which children's perceptions and expectations of their cognitive competence are influenced by others: (a) performance accomplishments/performance mastery, (b) vicarious reinforcement, (c) verbal persuasion, and (d) emotion regulation (Bandura, 1977). In addition, a child's increased perception of cognitive competence is consistently related to higher academic performance (Schunk, 1981; Ladd & Price, 1986; Chapman, Skinner, & Baltes, 1990). Based on theory and previous findings, Gonzalez-DeHass *et al.*, (2005) suggest that perceived cognitive competence be examined to explain the relation between parent involvement and a child's academic performance.



A positive student-teacher relationship has been defined as the teacher's perception that his or her relationship with the child is characterized by closeness and a lack of dependency and conflict (Birch & Ladd, 1997). Closeness is the degree of warmth and open communication between the student and teacher, dependency is the over-reliance on the teacher as a source of support, and conflict is the degree of friction in student-teacher interactions (Birch & Ladd, 1997). Previous research found that close, positive student-teacher relationships are positively related to a wide range of child social and academic outcomes in school (Hughes, Gleason, & Zhang, 2005). Specifically, a close student-teacher relationship is an important predictor of a child's academic performance (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Previous research has also found that parent involvement in a child's education positively influences the nature of the student-teacher relationship (Stevenson & Baker, 1987; Hill & Craft, 2003). Therefore, the student-teacher relationship was examined for its ability to explain the relation between parent involvement and a child's academic performance.

Parent involvement is one factor that has been consistently related to a child's increased academic performance (Stevenson & Baker, 1987; Hara & Burke, 1998; Marcon, 1999; Hill & Craft, 2003). While this relation between parent involvement and a child's academic performance is well established, studies have yet to examine how parent involvement increases a child's academic performance. Parent involvement was defined as the teacher's perception of "the positive attitude parents have towards their child's education, teacher, and school" (Webster-Stratton, 1998). Academic performance was measured by two methods: standardized achievement test scores and teacher report of academic performance through rating scales. Based on previous research (Gonzalez-DeHass *et al.*, 2005; Hughes *et al.*, 2005), two possible mechanisms, a child's perception of cognitive competence as measured by the child's report, and the student-teacher relationship as measured by the teacher's report, were examined for their ability to mediate the relation between parent involvement and academic performance. It was predicted that parent involvement would no longer be a significant predictor of a child's academic performance when the child's cognitive competence and the student-teacher relationship were accounted for in the analyses.

## **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.3.1 The Social-Ecological Theory**

This study was guided by Social-Ecological Theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner which emphasizes the complex environmental system where people live and operate. In this case, the school environment is where parents, teachers, pupils and other actors meet to achieve the set goals. Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979) dwells on human development and follows one's growth into a fully competent member of the society. Thus, it is a developmental psychology theory. In essence, Social-Ecological Theory is a systems approach that carefully defines the multilayered environment in which individual actions occur. To emphasize the complex and dynamic nature of the environment where people live and work, Bronfenbrenner depicts the environment through four unique subsystems, each one nested within the other. This approach allows for interactions between the individual and each subsystem and for interactions between subsystems to be studied (Harney, 2007). Social-Ecological Theory is useful tool for the study of schools because of the complex hierarchy in which schools exist.

The social-ecological model is based on four core principles. First, multiple factors influence behaviours. Therefore efforts to change behaviour, including physical activity and behaviour, should be based on the understanding of the interrelationship between the four levels of the social-ecological model: individual, social environment, physical environment and policy. Physical activity interventions are more likely to be successful when they target multiple components of the social-ecological model.

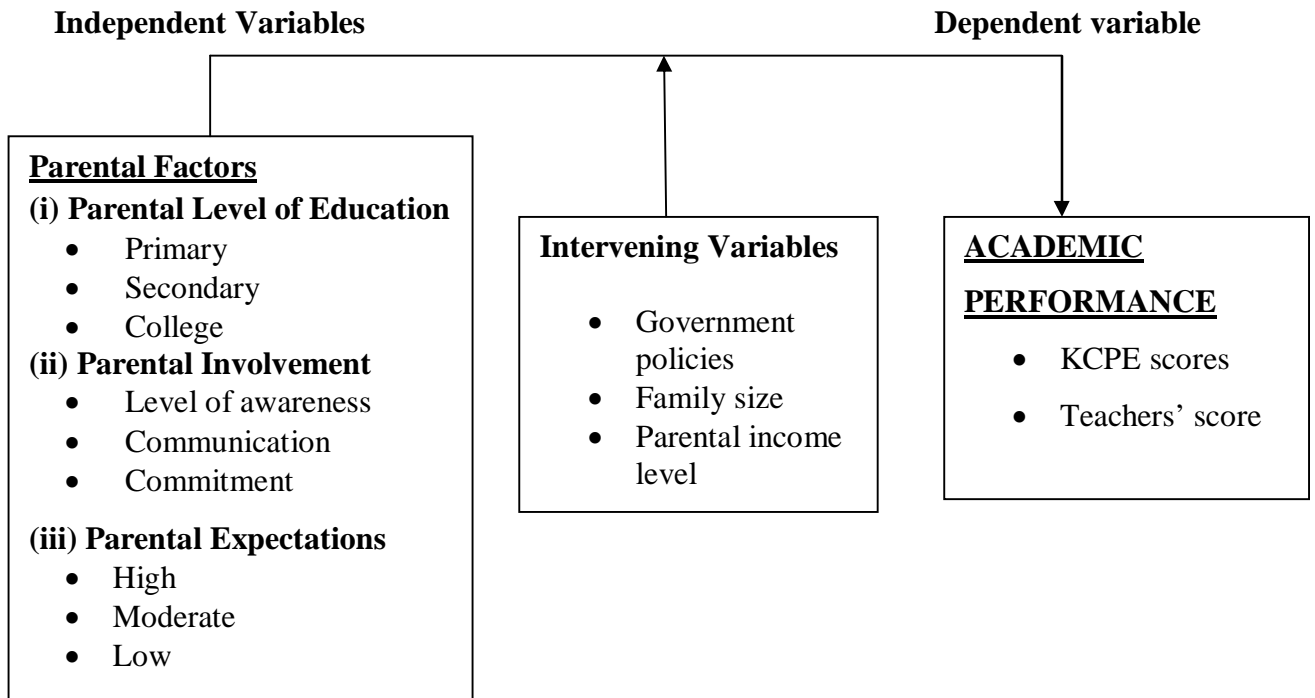
Second, environments are multidimensional and complex. Social or physical environments can be described as containing a variety of features or attributes, such as the size, temperature, facilities and safety. Environments can also be described in terms of their actual or perceived qualities. The variable nature of environments has a direct implication on the design of initiatives to promote physical activity participation. For example, a community may have good access to parks which are easily accessible and well equipped with play equipment for children, however parental perceptions about

traffic safety en-route to the park and 'stranger danger' may prevent children from using this aspect of their physical environment.

Third, human-environment interactions can be described at varying levels of organisation. Human interactions with the environment can occur at individual, small group, organisational, community or population levels. The social-ecological model does not just focus on the individual but includes multiple levels of human interaction with environments. For example, interventions promoting physical activity can be large such as whole population, mass media campaigns or may focus on organisations such as a school or workplace settings. It may also be based around a local community which they are tailored to. The effectiveness of campaigns to promote physical activity is enhanced when they target differing levels of the human-environment interaction.

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework

The study used social and cultural factors as independent variables while academic achievement as dependent variable. This is as shown in figure 2.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework

The Figure above shows the perceived influence of independent variables on dependent variables. The model presumed a relationship between parental level of education; parental involvement; parental expectations and academic performance of pupils. This study model was based on assumption that parental level of education influence academic performance. This was informed by the study that was conducted by Ainsworth *et al*, (2005), that showed a significant relationship between parental/household head level of education and academic performance. In addition, the study conceptual model also assumed that parental involvement influence academic performance. This assumption was informed by a study conducted by Hill and Craft (2003) who found that parental involvement is associated with academic performance. Finally, Benner and Mistry (2007) also established a significant relationship between parental expectations for their children's and academic performance.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the following aspects; research design, the population, sample size, data collection procedure and data analysis.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This study adopted a descriptive survey design since it sought parents' opinions on the social factors influencing academic achievement in public primary schools in Kamara Division of Nakuru County. This design was used due to its ability to accommodate various methods of data collection.

#### **3.3 Study Area**

The study was carried out in Kamara Division which had 30 public primary schools. The division has three (3) zones from which schools were categorized. Kamara Division was chosen because it was noted that despite the government's effort to provide funds for FPE, the schools in this division continue to perform poorly and yet there are no studies that have been done to explain such performance.

#### **3.4 Population of the Study**

The population of this study constituted all parents who are members of school committee (n=360 in each), head teachers and one Area Education Officer in Kamara Division. Kamara Division has 30 public primary schools with a total of thirty head teachers, three hundred and sixty parents and one educational officer.

#### **3.5 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size**

The study first adopted stratified sampling technique where schools from the division were categorized based on zones. Proportionate sampling was then used to identify the representative number of schools from each zone while simple random sampling was used to select schools from which parents were selected as study participants. Since the

target population of schools is 30, the researcher sampled 30%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) 10-30% of the target population is representative as long as the population is less than 10,000. This therefore gave nine schools which were sampled. These schools were identified through simple random sampling in order to give each school a chance of being represented in the sample. Furthermore, one hundred and eight parents who are members of school committee from the nine sampled schools were included in the study. Table 2 shows the selected schools along with the total number of parents constituted the study's respondents.

**Table 2: Sampled Schools and Parents**

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Parents</b>
<b>Sirikwa</b>	Bygum	12
	Baringo	12
	Nyakinywa	12
<b>Mau Summit</b>	Pele	12
	Tabain	12
	Mlima	12
<b>Kamara</b>	Upendo	12
	Kamara	12
	Mau Summit	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>108</b>

As a result, the study used a sample size of 108 parents from Kamara Division.

### **3.5 Instrumentation**

#### **3.5.1 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire was used for collecting primary data from parents. Questionnaires were distributed to the parents and were then collected when they were duly filled. Those who had problems in reading were guided and were able to fill the questionnaires on their own. The questionnaire was chosen as it provides a more comprehensive view than any other research tool. Questionnaire was used to obtain data from the sample. The questionnaire was formulated according to the study's objectives in a systematic procedure. Part 1 dealt with parents' demographic characteristics, part 2 addressed the influence of parental level of education on academic performance, and part 3 discussed the influence of parental involvement on academic performance while part 4 addressed the influence of parental level of expectations on a child's academic performance.

#### **3.5.2 Interview Schedule**

Information was also collected from key respondents by the use of interview schedule. This included interviewing nine head teachers and one Area Education Officer. Interview schedule was also important because it helped in eliciting in-depth responses that enabled the deepen understanding of the study problem in this study.

### **3.6 Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Instruments**

#### **3.6.1 Validity**

Validity is defined as the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). As such, the researcher sought assistance of his supervisors, who are experts in research to help improve content validity of the instrument. The researcher used the expert opinion to assess the validity of the data collection tools used for the research. The expert opinion from the supervisor who assessed the data collection tools was able to determine the degree to which the research instruments measured the influence of parental factors on academic performance in Kamara division. To determine the content validity of questionnaire items, two experts in the Department of Psychology, Counseling and Educational Foundations, Egerton

University, examined them. Suggestions and advice offered was used as a basis to modify the research item and made more adaptable in the study.

### **3.6.2 Reliability**

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) define reliability as a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trial. In order to test the reliability of the instrument used in the study, the test- retest methods were used. The questionnaires were assessed for its reliability through a pilot study. This was done by administering 20 sets of the instruments to parents in Kamara area who were never included in the final sample. The selected 20 respondents were requested to fill the same questionnaires three weeks after they filled it the first time. The reliability of the instruments was established through test–retest method. A Cronbach’s Alpha was computed in order to establish the extent to which the contents of the questionnaire were consistent in eliciting the same responses every time the instrument was administered. A Cronbach’s alpha of 0.821 was obtained for the 18 items in the questionnaire and considered high enough to judge the instrument as reliable for the study.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher sought permit from the National Council of Science and Technology before data collection. Furthermore, he sought permission from the County Education Officer and further from head teachers of the nine selected primary schools. Questionnaire was used to collect data from parents while interview schedule was used to obtain qualitative data from nine head teachers and one education officer from Kamara Division. The researcher distributed questionnaires to parents and picked them when they were dully filled. However, for those parents who had problems in answering the questions, the researcher guided on how to answer them and were able to write on their own. The researcher used a pen and a notebook during the interview session with head teachers and education officers. He noted all the important information which he later sought it out during data analysis.



### **3.8 Data Analysis**

The data collected from research instruments were coded and analyzed through the use of descriptive statistics. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0 was used to aid in the data analysis. In order to address the objectives and research questions, descriptive statistics were generated. Qualitative data from interviewees were summarized and interpreted in order to establish the parental factors influencing pupils academic performance.

**Table 3: Summary of the Data Analysis**

	<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Independent V.</b>	<b>Dependent V.</b>	<b>Measurements</b>
i.	How does parental level of education influence academic performance of pupils in Kamara Division?	Parental Level of Education	Academic performance	Descriptive statistics
ii.	In which way does parental involvement influence pupils' academic performance in Kamara Division?	Parental Involvement	Academic performance	Descriptive statistics
iii.	How does parental expectations influence pupils' academic performance in Kamara Division?	Parental expectations	Academic performance	Descriptive statistics

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter gives an analysis of the data collected from the field on the influence of parental factors on academic performance of their children in public primary schools in Kamara division. The analysis was based on the responses from parents' questionnaires and interview schedules to head teachers and AEO's. Out of the 118 questionnaires issued, only 108 which were appropriately filled were analyzed. The data were used in analyzing and interpreting the results and in suggestion of the recommendations. The analysis was done with particular reference to the three specific objectives of the study using descriptive statistics.

This chapter contains two sections; section one presents descriptive analysis of the demographic information. The second section presents inferential analysis of the three objectives.

#### **4.2 Background Information**

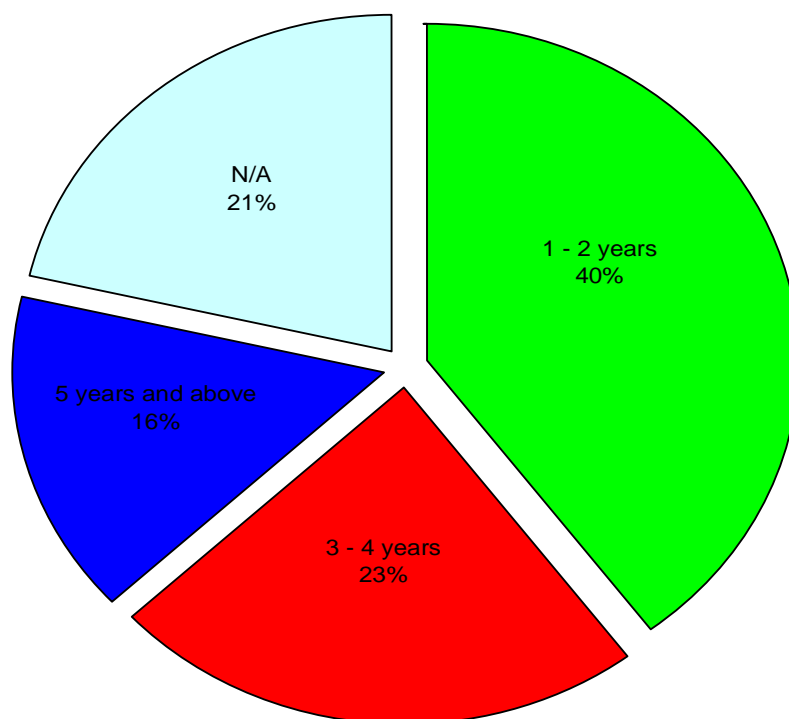
Background information was arrived at by looking at age of the respondents, gender, highest level of education attained and the number of years as committee member. Table 4, below provides background information of the respondents.

**Table 4: Respondents Background Information**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 25 years	17	15.7
25- 30 years	22	20.4
31- 35 years	19	17.6
36- 40 years	35	32.4
Above 40 years	15	13.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	71	65.7
Female	37	34.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Educational level</b>		
Primary	76	70.4
Secondary	5	4.6
College	9	8.3
Others	17	15.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** *Researcher (2013)*

In relation to the age of the respondents, it was established that the majority 35 (32.4%) of the respondents were between the ages of 36-40 years while 22 (20.4%) were 25-30 years, 17 (15.7%) were less than 25 years while few 15 (13.9%) above 40 years. In terms of the gender of the respondents, the study found out that majority 71 (65.7%) of the respondents were males while 37 (34.3%) were females. This implies that there were more male members in school committees than females. This implies the existence of gender inequality in leadership and management positions.



**Figure 2:** Number of years as a committee member

When respondents were asked to state the number of years they had worked as committee members, the majority 43 (39.8%) were found to have served between 1-2 years and 25 (23%) had served for between 3-4years, 17 (16%) had served for 5 years and above while, 23 (21%) did not remember the number of years they had served as committee members. This information is shown in Figure two.

#### **4.3 Parental Level of Education and Academic Performance**

The first objective of the study was to identify whether parental level of education influenced pupils' academic performance in Kamara Division. In order to ease the analysis of the data collected from the respondents in the study, the bi-polar adjectives were summarized and put together into "agree", "disagree" and "not sure". Data for "strongly disagree" and "disagree" were sum up together into "disagree", "agree and "strongly agree" were also combined into "agree" while data on "Not sure" were never tampered with.



**Table 5: Parental Level of Education and Academic Performance**

<b>Parental level of education and academic performance</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
i. The education I acquired enabled me to understand the importance of giving their children quality education.	92 (85.2%)	2 (1.9%)	14 (13.0%)	108 (100%)
ii. The education I acquired has enabled me to provide basic needs for my children.	91 (84.3%)	0 (0.0%)	17 (15.7%)	108 (100%)
iii. Literate parents often visit their children at school to assess their progress.	74 (68.5%)	6 (5.6%)	28 (25.9%)	108 (100%)
iv. Literate parents respond to schools needs like payment of school fees more effectively than illiterate parents.	87 (80.6%)	3 (2.8%)	18 (16.7%)	108 (100%)
v. I normally assist my children in doing assignments and homework.	77 (71.3%)	9 (8.3%)	22 (20.4%)	108 (100%)

In relation to whether parental level of education influenced pupils' academic performance, most respondents agreed to the following statements: that parents who are educated understand the importance of giving their children quality education 92 (85.2%); the education I acquired has enabled me to provide basic needs for my children 91 (84.3%); literate parents often visit their children at school to assess their progress 74 (68.5%); and literate parents respond to school's needs like payment of school fees more effectively than illiterate parents 87 (80.6%); and I normally assist my children in doing assignments and homework 77 (71.3%). Few respondents were found not to be sure whether: parents who are educated understand the importance of giving their children quality education 2 (1.9%); literate parents often visit their children at school to assess their progress 6 (5.6%); literate parents respond to school's needs like payment of school fees more effectively than illiterate parents 3 (2.8%); I normally assist my children in doing assignments and homework 9 (8.3%).

When the key informants were asked to give the highest educational level one has attained, Table 5 shows that majority 76 (70.4%) of the respondents were certificate holders, and only 9 (8.3%) were degree holders while those holding diploma and postgraduate certificates were 5 (4.6%) and 1 (0.9%), respectively. However, there was a substantial number 17 (15.7%) who had other certificates such as KCSE or KCPE while others did not have at all. These findings imply that most respondents were educated up to certificate level. They therefore knew how to read and write and thus could positively influence on the education performance of their children.

On whether they agree or disagree with the variables, 14 (13%) were found to disagree with the opinion that parents who are educated understand the importance of giving their children quality education, 17 (15.7%) were on disagreement with the idea that the education I acquired has enabled me to provide basic needs for my children , few others disagreed with the opinion that literate parents often visit their children at school to assess their progress 28 (25.9%) ;also 18 (16.7%) disagreed with the item on literate parents respond to school's needs like payment of school fees more effectively than illiterate parents and finally on I normally assist my children in doing assignments and homework 22 (20.4%) disagreed.

From the findings, the majority 92 (85.2%) of the respondents agreed that parents who are educated understand the importance of giving their children quality education. This may be due to the parents themselves acting from experience. Since they were through the system of education and know the value of education, and therefore they will want to replicate the same to their children by ensuring that they get the best quality education.

This study also established that parents who are literate often visit their children at school to assess their progress. Literate parents are in a position to understand that visiting their children in their schools encourage them to work hard and boost their self-esteem and see themselves as capable. Children require constant encouragement not only from their teachers and peers but also from their parents. It is through visiting schools that parents



are able to understand and respond to school's needs like payment of school fees more effectively than illiterate parents. This is because parents are advised by teachers on how best they can do in order to improve their children's academic performance.

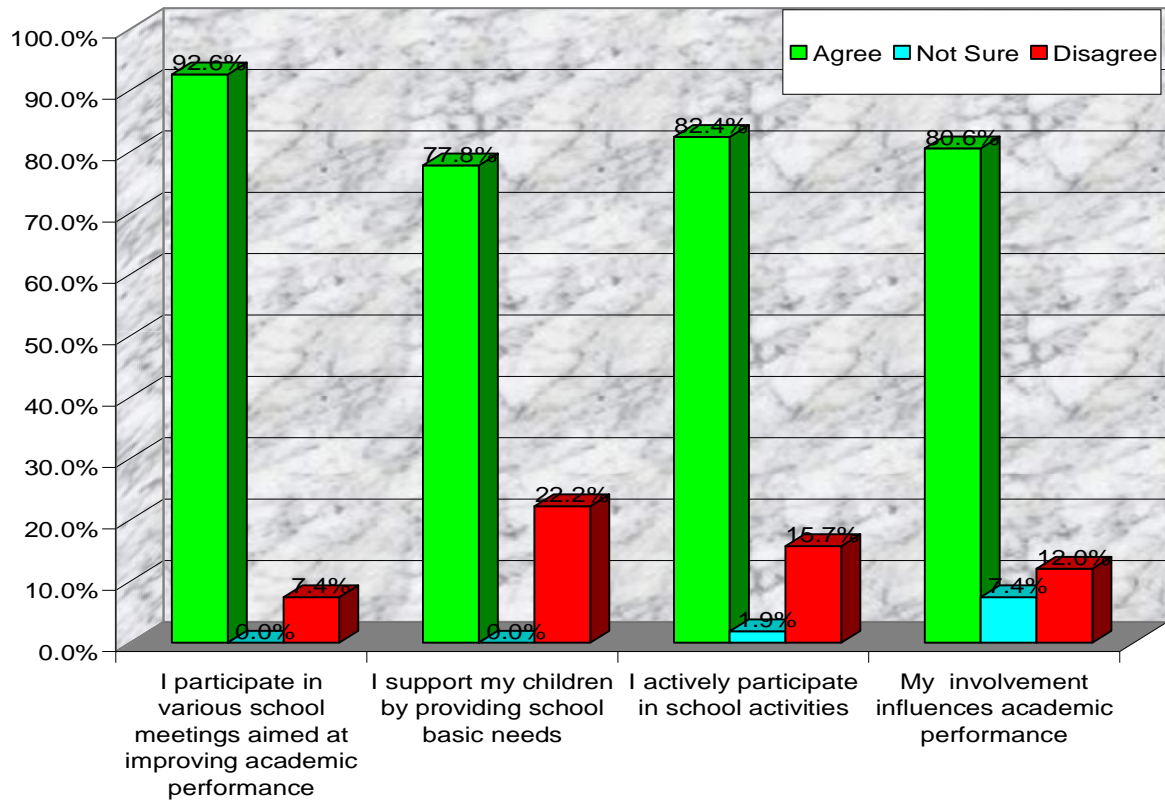
No respondent however, was not sure whether education he/she acquired has enabled in provision of basic needs for the children, while few, were not sure whether parents normally assist their children in doing assignments and homework. This may be due to the fact that not all parents are educated or literate and therefore they cannot effectively participate in assignments and homework of their children. Education of parents is therefore very vital; however, it does not imply that those parents who are illiterate should stay away from participating in their children's school activities. They need to encourage their children to work hard in school by providing the school's basic necessities.

Educational level of household members is particularly influential in determining whether and for how long children access schooling. These findings are in agreement with Erasdo (2005) who talks of 'the widely accepted notion that parental education is the most consistent determinant of child education (and employment decisions)'. According to Ainsworth *et al*, (2005) higher parental/household head level of education is associated with increased access to education, higher attendance rates and lower dropout rates.

Findings from the interview schedule over whether parental education level of education influence academic performance, showed that education of parents is very important and all teachers, head teachers and Area Education officer that were interviewed acknowledged to the fact that when parents have high education level, academic performance is good because they involve, participate and support in school programs

The study established that most parents who are educated understand the importance of giving their children quality education; literate parents often visit their children at school to assess their progress. From the findings, majority of the respondents indicated that parental level of education is important in influencing academic performance of their

children. This implies that the higher level of parental education the higher chances of their children performing well in academics. Those parents with low level of education may have their children not performing well academically.



**Figure 3:** Parental Involvement and Academic Performance

The second objective of the study was to establish whether parental involvement in school's activities influenced pupils' academic performance in Kamara Division.

In relation to parental involvement and academic performance, most respondents 100 (92.6%) agreed that they support their children by providing school basic needs and their involvement influence academic performance while only 8 (7.4%) out of the total disagreed.

From the findings, it is clear that most parents support their children by providing the school's basic needs 84 (77.8%). However, 24 (22.2%) disagreed with this item. For children to perform better there is need for parents to ensure that their children do not

lack anything in school. This may include timely payment of other school expenses like field trips, provision of school uniforms, provision of extra reading and writing materials among others.

Parental involvement should be seen both at home and in schools. At home, parents should provide an enabling environment for their children to do their homework as well as private studies while at school, parents need to visit their children from time to time and find out how they are performing as well as identifying areas that their children are weak through having consultations with teachers. On whether parents actively participate in school activities, 89 (82.4%) agreed with this idea, only 2 (1.9%) were not sure while 17 (15.7%) of the respondents disagreed with this opinion .when they were asked whether their involvement influences academic performance. The majority of the respondents 87 (80.6%) agreed with this item and a small proportion of the respondents 8 (7.4%) were not sure, while 13 (12.0%) disagreed.

Findings from the interview schedule revealed that parental involvement is positively associated with perceived academic performance because through involvement, parents are made aware of their children needs and the school, and when it is needed. Parental involvement promotes harmony and understanding among parents, their children and the school in general. These findings are in agreement with observations made by Hill and Craft (2003) who found out that involvement is one factor that has been consistently related to a child's increased academic performance.

It is clear that parents support their children by providing school basic needs, parental involvement influences academic performance. Also, parental participation in school activities influence academic performance and finally their involvement influences academic performance. This implies that parental involvement in academic activities influenced academic performance of children, those parents who get involved in supporting education of their children would result in high academic performance of their children while those who do not get involved much would get their children not performing well in academics.

**Table 6: Parental Expectations and Academic Achievement**

<b>Parental level of expectation and academic performance</b>	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Total
I have a lot of expectations in my children to perform well	93 (86.1%)	0 (0.0%)	15 (13.9%)	108 (100%)
I visit my children in school and encourage them to work hard	87 (80.6%)	0 (0.0%)	21 (19.4%)	108 (100%)
I perceive my children as capable and can perform better	89 (82.4%)	0 (0.0%)	19 (17.6%)	108 (100%)
My involvement influences academic performance	104 (96.3%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (3.7%)	108 (100%)

The third objective of the study was to examine whether parental expectations influenced pupils' academic performance in Kamara Division. Majority of the respondents agreed that they have a lot of expectations in their children to perform well 93 (86.1%) while substantive proportion of respondents disagreed, 15 (13.9%). On whether parents visit their children in school and encourage them to work hard, 87 (80.6%) agreed with this and none was not sure while 21 (19.4%) disagreed. This means that most parents understand the need of visiting their children in school, those who disagreed (19.4%) may be explained that other factors may influenced their pupils' academic performance such as teachers' role, presents and home environment.

On the item of whether they perceive their children as capable and can perform better, most of the respondents 89 (82.4%) agreed and none was not sure while a small proportion of the respondents (17.6%) disagreed. This implies that most parents have high perception on their children to perform better in academics.

Concerning parental expectations and academic performance the majority of the respondents agreed that they had a lot of expectations in their children in an endeavor to perform well; thus their level of expectations they have on their children influence their academic performance; they perceive their children as capable and can perform better as they visited their children in school.

From the study findings, it is clear that most parents have high expectations for their children in relation to academic performance. This indicates that parents are aware of the importance of education and therefore they are ready to provide their children with everything for best performance. High expectations also motivate children to work hard at school because they will not want to upset themselves and their parents. These findings concur with Benner and Mistry (2007) who noted that parental expectations for their children's educational attainment have been demonstrated to strongly predict academic achievement. Parental expectations for educational attainment positively predicted students' achievement test scores. Additionally, both parents reported and students' perceived parental expectations have had a demonstrated significant effect on students' academic growth across a variety of subjects and after controlling for SES (Fan, 2001). Furthermore, De Civita *et al.*, (2004) found that mothers who held higher educational expectations and wanted their children to compete more in education and also protected against academic problems, significantly reducing the risk of academic failure.

The study also found that parents perceive their children as 'able to perform' and therefore they are aware that their children perform well in school. These findings concur with that of Gill and Reynolds (1999) who also examined both parent reported expectations for their child's educational attainment, as well as children's perceived parental expectations for their achievement. They found that parents have high perception in their children which positively affects their academic performance.

Parental expectations motivate pupils because once children are aware that their parents have high hopes for them, then they will work hard towards achieving better results

The study found that parents have a lot of expectations in their children to perform well and that the levels of expectation they have on their children influence their academic performance; they perceive their children as capable and can perform better and they visit their children in school and encourage them to work hard.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The study aimed at examining the perception of parental factors on academic performance in public primary schools in Kamara Division, Nakuru County. This chapter presents the salient findings in form of a summary and conclusion. It also gives the relevant recommendations to be considered for improved academic performance.

#### 5.2 Summary

- i. The first objective of the study was to identify whether perception of parental level of education influenced pupils' academic performance in Kamara Division. As a result, it was established that parents who are educated understand the importance of giving their children quality education; literate parents often visit their children at school to assess their progress; and literate parents respond to schools needs like payment of school fees more effectively than illiterate parents.
- ii. The second objective of the study was to establish whether perception of parental involvement in school activities influenced pupils' academic performance in Kamara Division. It is clear that parents support their children by providing school basic needs and parental involvement influence academic performance. However, parents were not sure whether they actively participate in school activities and whether they participate in various school meetings aimed at improving academic performance.
- iii. The third objective of the study was to examine whether perception of parental expectations influenced pupils' academic performance in Kamara Division. The study found that parents have a lot of expectations in their children to perform well; that the levels of expectation they have on their children influence their academic performance; they perceive their children as capable and can perform better and they visit their children in school and encourage them to work hard.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

From the study findings, it is evident that majority of parents who have their children in the public primary schools in Kamara Division of Nakuru County are aware of how they can influence academic performance of their children. Specifically the study concludes that:-

- i. It can be concluded that parental level of education is very crucial in influencing academic performance of their children. Educated parents understand the need to provide their children with learning facilities and good environment so as to perform better in academics. Children need support from their parents so as to achieve higher in academics.
- ii. Most parents understand the need to visit their children in school and motivate them, regularly check their children's assignments provide materials required at school thus impacting positively on the academic performance of their children.
- iii. Parental expectations level is also critical in influencing academic performance of their children. It is evident that majority of the parents have a lot of expectations on their children to perform well and perceive their children as capable and can do well.

#### **5.4 Recommendation**

The study makes the following recommendations

- i. Since some parents' education level may be low they may not be valuing education of their children as compared to those parents who are educated, there is need therefore for school management to create awareness to these parents in order for them to realize and appreciate the importance of education of their children and how this may influence their children's academic performance in Kamara Division of Nakuru county.
- ii. Those parents who do not participate in school activities like parents meetings, academic days, payment of school funds among other activities should be made to understand the need of doing this through the school management so as to influence positively academic performance of their children in Kamara Division of Nakuru County.
- iii. Parental expectations are key in improving academic performance as indicated by this study, therefore there is need for some parents to be sensitized on the importance of perceiving their children as capable of performing well in academic thus influencing academic performance positively in Kamara Division of Nakuru County.



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## APPENDIX I: INTRODUCTION

I am a student at Egerton University undertaking a Masters Degree. I am currently undertaking a research study entitled “*Parental perception on selected factors on academic performance in public primary schools in Kamara Division*”. The study is expected to provide useful information that will be beneficial for improved academic performance in public primary schools.

You have been identified as one of the respondent to provide information for the study. This is therefore to request you to complete the questionnaire as honestly as possible. All information that you provide shall be treated with utmost confidence and will be used for the purpose of this study only.

## APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

1. Your age
  - a. Less than 25 years ( )
  - b. 25-30 ( )
  - c. 31-35 ( )
  - d. 36-40 ( )
  - e. Above 40 years ( )
  
2. Your Gender
  - a. Male ( )
  - b. Female ( )
  
3. Highest educational level attained
  - a. Primary ( )
  - b. Secondary ( )
  - c. College ( )
  - d. Other (please specify) ( ) \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Number of years as a committee member
  - a. 1-2 years ( )
  - b. 3-4 years ( )
  - c. Above 5 years ( )

**PARENTAL LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

5. On a scale of 1-5 (where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=not sure, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree) please score your agreement to the following parental level of education influencing academic achievement.

<b>PARENTAL LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Parents who are educated understand the importance of giving their children quality education					
The education I acquired has enabled me to provide basic needs for my children					
Literate parents often visit their children at school to assess their progress					
Literate parents respond to schools needs like payment of school fees more effectively than illiterate parents					
I normally assist my children in doing assignments and homework					

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

6. On a scale of 1-5 (where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=not sure, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree) please score your agreement to the following parental involvement variables influencing academic achievement.

<b>PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE</b>	1	2	3	4	5
I participate in various school meetings aimed at improving academic performance					
I support my children by providing school basic needs					
I actively participate in school activities					
My involvement influences academic performance					

**PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

7. On a scale of 1-5 (where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=not sure, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree) please score your agreement to the following parental expectations variables influencing academic performance.

<b>PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE</b>	1	2	3	4	5
I have a lot of expectations in my children to perform well					
I visit my children in school and encourage them to work hard					
I perceive my children as capable and can perform better					
The level of expectation I have on my children influences their academic performance					

8. In your opinion, what do you think should be done to address the parental factors influencing academic achievement in your school?

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**APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HEAD TEACHERS AND AEO**

1. Gender .....

2. How do you rate academic performance of primary schools in your area?

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3. How does parental level of education influence academic performance in primary schools?

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4. How does parental involvement influence academic performance in primary schools?

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5. How do parental expectations influence academic performance in primary schools?-----

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6. In your opinion, what do you think should be done to address the parental factors influencing academic performance in schools?

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APPENDIX IV

KURESOI DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**



Telegrams "LEARNING"  
Telephone 0518005896  
When replying please quote  
E-mail - Kuresoidec@hotmail.com

DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE  
KURESOI DISTRICT  
P. O BOX 107-20131  
**KERINGET**

**RE: KR/DOE/G.1/V.1/185**

19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2013

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**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION: BENARD KIPROTICH LANGAT**

In reference to the letter Ref No: NCST/RCD/13/013/283 dated 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2013 from National Council for Science and Technology, the above named person has been authorized to carry out research on "**The influence of parental factors on academic performance in public primary schools in Kamara Division, Nakuru County**" in kuresoi District

This is to request you to give him the necessary assistance while undertaking the said research.

DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE  
KURESOI DISTRICT  
P. O. BOX  
KERINGET

**MUSIKOYO S. ANGOYE**  
DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER  
**KURESOI DISTRICT**

APPENDIX V

KURESOI DISTRICT COMMISSIONER



**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND INTERNAL SECURITY**

Telegrams: Districter" Kuresoi"  
Telephone: Kuresoi  
Fax: 0202026644448  
Email: dckuresoi@yahoo.com  
When replying please quote  
REP:ED 12/10 VOL 1/47

**THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER  
KURESOI DISTRICT  
P.O. BOX 2,  
KERINGET**

19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2013.

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**  
**BERNARD KIPROTICH LANGAT**

The above named person who is a student at Egerton University –Njoro Main Campus. He is hereby authorized to carry out research on "The influence of parental factors on academic performance in public primary schools in Kamara division of this district " as part of his studies.

Any assistance accorded to him will be highly appreciated.

  
J.N. MUSEMBI  
FOR: DISTRICT COMMISSIONER  
**KURESOI DISTRICT**





APPENDIX V

LETTER OF RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION



**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND INTERNAL SECURITY**

Telegrams: Districtar" Kuresoi"  
Telephone: Kuresoi  
Fax: 0202026644448  
Email: dckuresoi@yahoo.com  
When replying please quote  
REF:ED 12/10 VOL 1/47

**THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER  
KURESOI DISTRICT  
P.O.BOX 2,  
KERINGET**

19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2013.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**  
**BERNARD KIPROTICH LANGAT**

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J.N. MUSEMBI.  
FOR: DISTRICT COMMISSIONER  
**KURESOI DISTRICT**



# APPENDIX V

## RESEARCH PERMIT

**PAGE 2** **PAGE 3**

**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT**

**Research Permit No. NCST/RCD/14/013/283**

**Date of issue 18 March 2013**

**Fee received KSH 1000**

**PROVIDING/Mrs/Miss/Institution**  
**Bernard Kiprotich Langat**

**Of (Address) Egerton University**  
**P.O. BOX 536**  
**Njoro**

**is/are permitted to conduct research in**  
**On the topic: The influence of parental**  
**on the development of public primary**  
**in Njoro Division Nakuru County**

**On the District of Njoro**  
**Province**

**For a period ending: 31 July 2013**

**Signature**  **Secretary**  
**National Council for Science and Technology**

**APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE**

**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

**RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT**

**CONDITIONS**

1. You must report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit.
2. Government Officers will not be interviewed without prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least two (2), four (4) bound copies of your final report for Kenyans and non-Kenyans respectively.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice.

**JKP60553mt10/2011** **(CONDITIONS - see back page)**