

Perceived Influence of Selected Home Environment Factors on Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Meru County, Kenya

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Abstract

Home environmental factors play an important role in students' educational attainment. The environmental conditions and the nature of social interaction that goes on in the family may have some positive or negative relationship with the academic achievement of a child. Thus, it should be conducive to the learner. However, the performance of the students has been left in the hands of the teachers and they are solely blamed for the learners' poor performance. This study investigated the perceived influence of selected factors in home environment, namely: infrastructure, communication, parents' economic activity, home academic culture, and parents' marital status on the secondary school students' performance. The study used a cross-sectional survey research design. The study employed questionnaires to collect data. Piloting was conducted in four schools within Tharaka Nithi County. The target population was 109,151 consisting of 52,650 students, 3,851 teachers and 52,650 parents. The study used simple random sampling to sample 212 form four students, 212 parents and 121 teachers. Purposive sampling was used to sample 53 principals from 53 randomly selected public secondary schools. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic data analysis. It was established there is a significant relationship between principals', teachers', parents' and students' perception on the influence of parental economic activity on students' academic performance and actual students' academic performance. The study also found out that there is a significant relationship between principals', teachers', parents' and students' perception on the influence of communication at home on students' academic performance and actual students' academic performance. It was further established that there is no significant relationship between principals', teachers', parents' and students' perception on the influence of parental economic activity on students' academic performance and actual students' academic performance. The study also found out that there is a significant relationship between principals', teachers', parents' and students' perception on the influence of home academic culture on students' academic performance and actual students' academic performance. It was further established that there is no significant relationship between principals', teachers', parents' and students' perception on the influence of parental marital status on students' academic performance and actual students' academic performance. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education and the policy relevant to the state body needs to make policies that will improve the social welfare of the parents. The study also recommends that parents should control their children's use of mobile phones and foster productive communication. The government should strive to reduce unemployment rates among parents and also sensitize parents and stakeholders in education on the importance of education. Parents should be sensitized on the importance of holding together in the family and shunning violence.

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