

The Impact of School Environment and Peer Influences on Students' Academic Performance in Vihiga County, Kenya

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine the relationship between both school environment and peer influences on the one hand and students' academic performance on the other hand. The study assessed school environment factors and peer influences in terms of the level of psychological impact they have on learners. The study was based on Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which considers leaning as an interaction between environment, behaviour, and one's psychological processes. It was a correlation study carried out in Sabatia District of Vihiga County in twenty-one public secondary schools. The respondents were selected using simple random sampling technique. Questionnaires were used to collect data, which were analyzed by multiple regressions. The study established that school environment and peer influence made significant contribution to the students' academic performance. A school, as a learning institution and as a second home for learners, has a strong relationship with students' academic performance. The head teacher and the teachers through their specific roles either have negative or positive influence on students' academic performance. Therefore, the head teacher and the teachers should enhance a conducive learning environment in which the learners are free to consult them when in need, provide adequate learning facilities and arouse interest in the learners to work hard. Peer level factors also have a relationship with students' academic performance. It is hoped that the findings of this study will be useful to teachers, principals and parents to gain more insight into the psychosocial factors that affect students' academic performance and therefore help improve their academic performance.

Keywords: Impact, School Environment, Peer Influences, Students Academic Performance, *Vihiga County, Kenya*

1. Introduction

1.1 School Environment

A student outcome and academic success is greatly influenced by the type of school they attend. School factors include school structure, school composition and school climate. The school one attends is the institutional environment that sets the parameters of a students' learning experience. As schools are faced with more public accountability for student academic performance, school level characteristics are being studied to discover methods of improving achievement for all students. Considerable research has been conducted on teaching skills, climate, socio-economic conditions, and student achievement (Hoy, Tarter, & Kotthamp, 1991). Depending on the environment, school can either open or close the doors that lead to academic performance (Barry, 2005).

Crosnoe *et al.* (2004) suggest that school sector (public or private) and class size are two important structural components of the school. Private schools tend to have both better funding and smaller sizes than public schools. The additional funding for private schools leads to a better academic performance and more access to resources such as computers, which have been shown to enhance academic achievement (Eamon, 2005). The skill level of teachers is another indicator of student academic performance. Students who attend schools with a higher number of full credential teachers perform better (Bali & Alverez, 2003).

School climate is closely linked to the interpersonal relations between students and teachers. According to Crosnoe *et al.* (2004), school climate is the general atmosphere of school. Trust between students and teachers increases if the school encourages teamwork. Research shows that students who trust their teachers are more motivated and as a result perform better in school (Eamon, 2005). School policies and programmes often dictate the school climate. To add to that, if a school is able to accomplish a feeling of safety, students can have success despite their family or neighbourhood backgrounds (Crosnoe *et al.*, 2004).

According to Muleyi (2008), teachers do influence students' academic performance. School variables that affect students' academic performance include the kind of treatment which teachers accord the students. Odhiambo (2005) contends that there is a growing demand from the Kenya government and the public for teacher accountability. Schools are commonly evaluated using students' achievement data (Heck, 2009). Teachers cannot be dissociated from the schools they teach and academic results of schools. It would therefore be logical to use standardized students' assessment results as the basis for judging the performance of teachers. Teachers celebrate and are rewarded when their schools and teaching subjects are highly ranked. In Chile, for instance, teachers are rewarded collectively when they work in schools which are identified as high-performing by the National Performance Evaluation System of Subsidized Schools (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005). In Kenya, teachers who excel in their teaching subjects are rewarded during open

education days held annually in every district (Cherongis, 2010). While appreciating the value of rewarding teachers who produce better results, teachers should also not escape a portion of blame when students perform poorly.

It has been proved that teachers have an important influence on students' academic achievement. They play a crucial role in educational attainment because the teacher is ultimately responsible for translating policy into action and principles based on practice during interaction with the students (Afe, 2001). In their study, Wright, Horn and Sanders (1997) conclude that the most important factor influencing student learning is the teacher. Teachers stand in the interface of the transmission of knowledge, values and skills in the learning process. If the teacher is ineffective, students under the teacher's tutelage will achieve inadequate progress academically. This is regardless of how similar or different the students are in terms of individual potential in academic achievement. According to Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain (2005), there has never been consensus on the specific teacher factors that influence students' academic achievement. Researchers have examined the influence of teacher characteristics such as gender, educational qualifications and teaching experience on students' academic achievement with varied findings. Akiri and Ugborugbo (2008) have found that there is a significant relationship between teachers' gender and students' academic achievement. This is contrary to what Dee (as cited in Akiri & Ugborugbo, 2008) says. Yala and Wanjohi (2011) and Adeyemi (2010) have found that teachers' experience and educational qualifications are the prime predictors of students' academic achievement. However, Rivkin *et al.* (2005) have found that teachers' teaching experience and educational qualifications are not significantly related to students' achievement. Etsy's (2005) study in Ghana found that the teacher factors that significantly contribute to low academic achievement are incidences of lateness to school, incidences of absenteeism, and inability to complete the syllabi. Oredein and Oloyede (2007) conclude that teacher management of homework and assignments given to students have an impact on student achievement, especially when it is well explained, motivational, corrected and reviewed during class time and used as an occasion for feedback to students.

Perkins (2013) indicates that teacher's attitude contributes significantly to student attention in classrooms whereas Adesoji and Olatunbosun (2008) illustrate that student attitude was related to teacher characteristics. This therefore meant that teacher's attitude directly affected students' attitude. On teacher personality, Adu and Olatundun (2007) contend that teachers' characteristics are strong determinants of students' performance in secondary schools. Scholars and researchers generally are in agreement that the school variables, which include teacher administration, perform a critical role in educational achievement than other variables (Patrick, 2005).

The important role of the teachers in the learning is unquestionable. Teachers have a lot of influence on their classroom practices. Teachers should have and apply specific abilities without which their influence may not be reflected in their students' performance in the subject. For students to be able to make connection between what is taught in school and its application in problem solving in real life, the teacher has to be effective in their teaching. On contrary, there has been no consensus on the importance of specific teacher factors, leading to the common conclusion that the existing empirical evidence does not find a strong role for teachers in the determination of academic achievement. The study therefore sought to investigate the influence of teacher characteristics on students' performance: whether teachers give assignment, mark and revise on time and reward or motivate the students' to learn.

Quite a bit of research has been done to identify the influence of classroom and school characteristics on academic performance. Student achievement variables aggregated to the school level have been used a great deal to describe school output but variables describing aggregation of properties of classrooms within schools have been studied somewhat less in school analyses. On the other hand, direct school-level measures such as the building and physical environment, and the school social and psychological environments have been used often (Crosnoe *et al.*, 2004). The study sought to know if schools have adequate books and learning materials.

Kombo (2005) observes that the leadership style of the head teacher creates a kind of learning environment. A cordial relationship between the head teacher and learners creates an environment conducive to learning as discussions are encouraged and learners are listened to. The head teacher works together with students on how to succeed in life and academically. In such a school, every member is useful in decision making process. Most of such schools have disciplined students and positive academic record. The head teacher has a formal relationship with several people or groups of people both inside and outside the school system. He/she has dealings not only with the teachers and students, but also with parents, members the community, which the school serves and educational officers. Therefore the image of the school outside is seen through the administrative capabilities of the head teacher. For instance, if the school fails in the KCSE, then the head teacher has failed and vice versa.

Griffin (1994) emphasizes that the students must be effectively involved in the administration system of the school. The head teacher must encourage team work for none is extremely perfect. In this extent, a good head teacher is one who involves the staff and students in administrative force and one who the learners are able to consult when in need. This will help realize academic progress characterized by a competitive performance in the national examinations, which is in KCSE. Dugnan (1986) reinforces that the head teacher is expected to set an atmosphere of order, high expectation for the staff and students, encourage collegial and collaborative

leadership and building commitment among the students and the staff towards attainment of the school goals. Since the school is considered a second home for the students, the head teacher should develop a rapport and understand the feelings of the students, take these feelings into consideration and provide a school environment in which the child temporarily feels better. Once this is achieved, the student should be shown how the subject matter of the classroom could at least partially satisfy the need to have a safer life outside of the classroom. The study also sought to prove or disapprove the relationship that exists between the role of the head teacher and students' academic performance.

Goldhaber and Brewer (1997) describe schools in terms of the percentage of students from single-parent families and percentage of students in a given grade who are white. Other student-level variables have been used in the analysis of school effects. However, these have been individual, no aggregated student-level variables such as intellectual capacity and background. An irony in the history of quantitative studies of schooling has been the failure of researchers' analytic models to reflect adequately the social organization of life in classrooms and schools. The experiences that children share within school settings and the effects of these experiences on their development might be seen as the basic material of educational research; yet until recently, few studies have explicitly taken account of the effects of the head teachers and schools in which students and teachers share membership.

1.2 Peer Influence

Peer pressure refers to the influence exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change his/her attitudes, values in order to conform to group norms (Kirk, 2000). While most educators believe that peer pressure has an influence on children's academic performance, Kirk (2000) observes that few studies have been done to prove this believe. Peer groups are an important socialization agent. According to Castrogiovanni (2002), a peer group is defined as a small group of similarly age, fairly close friends, sharing the same activities. Adolescents ask questions relating to social identity theory such as, "Who am I?" and "What do I want out of life?" Feeling part of a group, be it the stereotypical jocks, or punks, allows adolescents to feel like they are on the way to answering some of these questions. Given that adolescents spend twice as much time with peers as with parents or other adults, it is important to study the influence or pressures that peers place on each other.

Peer pressure is defined as when people your own age encourage or urge you to do something or to keep from doing something else, no matter if you personally want to do it or not (Ryan, 2000). The more subtle form of peer pressure is known as peer influence, and it involves changing one's behaviour to meet the perceived expectations of others (Burns & Darling, 2002). In general, most teens conform to peer pressure about fairly insignificant things like music, clothing, or hairstyles. When it comes to more important issues like moral values, parents still remain more influential than the peer group (Black, 2002).

Participating in peer group activities is a primary stage of development and adolescents' identities are often closely associated with that of their peers (Santor *et al.*, 2000). A number of students see some of their peers as role models. Teachers, parents and peers all provide adolescents with suggestions and feedback about what they should think and how they should behave in social situations. These models can be a source of motivation or a lack thereof. Modelling refers to individual changes in cognition, behaviour, or effects that result from the observation of others (Ryan, 2000). Observing others perform a particular behaviour or voice a certain opinion can introduce an individual to new behaviours and viewpoints that may be different from his or her own. Observation also enlightens an individual on the consequences of such behaviour and opinions. Depending on these consequences, observation of a model can strengthen or weaken the likelihood the observer will engage in such behaviour or adopt such beliefs in the future. The current literature reviewed focus on both the positive and negative influence on students' academic performance.

Lockwood and Kunda (2002) classify role models into two, namely positive role models and negative role models. Positive role model, they say, refers to individuals who have achieved outstanding success and are widely expected to improve others to pursue similar excellence. Negative role model, on the other hand, refers to the individuals who have experienced misfortunes and are widely expected to motivate people to take the steps necessary to avoid similar unpleasant outcomes. Positive role models can inspire one by illustrating an ideal, desired self-highlighting possible achievement that one can strive for, and the root for achieving them. Negative role model can inspire one by illustrating disasters and highlighting mistakes that must be avoided so as to prevent. Because peer groups are a key part of development process, they can have a negative effect on young people due to peer pressure, which is the pressure from others in certain activities, and peer conformity, which is the degree to which an individual adopts actions that are sanctioned by their peer group.

Risk taking behaviours such as substance abuse and sexual activities have been shown to increase the likelihood of affecting school performance in a negative way (Santor *et al.*, 2000). Teenagers learn about what is acceptable in their social group by "reading" their friends' reactions to how they act, what they wear, and what they say. The peer group gives this potent feedback by their words and actions, which either encourages or discourages certain behaviours and attitudes. Anxiety can arise when teens try to predict how peers will react, and this anxiety plays a large role in peer influence. In fact, Burns and Darling (2002) state that self-conscious worrying

about how others will react to future actions is the most common way adolescents are influenced by their peers. When a teen takes an unpopular stand and goes against the expectations or norms of the peer group, he or she is at risk of being ridiculed. Ridicule is not an easy thing to accept at any age, let alone when you are twelve or thirteen years old. This leads to the topic of peer pressure.

According to Howard (2004), adolescents have always been exposed to peer influence, but the kinds of peer influence that they encounter have changed tremendously in the past years. Peers can influence everything from what an adolescent chooses to wear to whether or not an adolescent engages in drug related or other delinquent behaviour. This is an important topic because if society and education related professionals understand the issues surrounding negative peer influence, they are more likely to prevent it and be more adequately prepared to help a teenager facing negative aspects of peer pressure.

Adolescence is a time of transformation in many areas of an individual's life. In the midst of these rapid physical, emotional, and social changes, youth begin to question adult standards and the need for parental guidance. It is also a time for individuals to make important decisions about their commitment to academics performance. Young adults begin to ask questions such as, "Is school important to me?" and "How do I want to spend my time?" The choices that adolescents make regarding their motivation, engagement, and achievement in school (and in life) and the satisfaction they obtain from their choices depend, in part, on the context in which they make such choices (Ryan, 2000).

According to Lashbrook (2000), adolescents are well aware that they influence each other Peer influence can provide many positive elements in an adolescent's life. It is important, however, to remember that peer influence can potentially have a deadly impact or other various negative effects. It is vital for education and other related professionals to understand the complex aspects of peer influence in order to stop these negative effects before they occur. It is assumed that peer influence can have both positive and negative effects on an adolescent's academic performance and socialization. It is also assumed that peer groups may not allow an adolescent to be "themselves" in the truest sense of the word. Adolescents sometimes need to put on an act in order to gain acceptance from the specific group with which they would like to be associated. Furthermore, it is assumed that peers, as well as parents, siblings, and teachers, all play a large role in how adolescents function in everyday living.

Educators and parents should be aware that peer groups provide a variety of positive experiences for adolescents. Castrogiovanni (2002) cites the following: (1) the opportunity to learn how to interact with others; (2) support in defining identity, interests, abilities, and personality; (3) autonomy without control of adults and parents; (4) opportunities for witnessing the strategies others use to cope with similar problems, and for observing how effective they are; (5) involved emotional support, and (6) building and maintaining friendships.

According to Black (2002), peer groups provide a forum where teens construct and reconstruct their identities. Castrogiovanni (2002) stated that at no other stage of development is one's sense of identity so unstable. A peer-labelling process may be contributing to the construction of positive identities for some adolescents but negative identities for others (Downs & Rose, 1991). Unfortunately, members of groups may Peer Influence accept negative labels, incorporate them into their identity, and through the process of secondary deviance, increase levels of deviant behaviour.

Biddle, Bank and Marlin (2001) conducted a study to examine parental and peer influence on adolescents. The data collected was part of a field study of expectations and reported behaviours conducted by interviews with American adolescents. Subjects for the study consisted of 149 adolescents enrolled in public high schools in a Midwestern state. The respondents constituted a quota-sample design that was approximately balanced for age, sex, social class, race, and community of residence. In comparison with the total population, the sample contained more blacks and disproportionately few who lived in rural areas; and the sample was obtained within a single, Midwestern state and consisted only of adolescents who were then enrolled within public schools. In other respects the sample was presumably representative. The researchers found that peer behaviours are more likely to affect the adolescent than parental behaviours, whereas parental norms are more likely to affect the adolescent than peer norms. Parents have had a longer time to influence adolescents and retain a responsibility to represent the standards of the adult world. Peers, in contrast, may be shunned if they attempt to impose standards on their adolescent friends but are likely to be omnipresent as behavioural models within schools (Biddle, Bank & Marlin, 2001). It is unfortunate that many adolescents do not have parents who are actively involved in their lives, do not provide appropriate supervision, and are unable to clearly communicate their values. This puts these adolescents in an even greater danger of giving in to negative peer pressure.

Cohen (1977) found evidence for similarity regarding the use of alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, and also issues concerning academic outcomes. Best friends have been found to be similar in regards to frequency of cutting class and time spent on homework. Thomas and Landau (2002) supports this conclusion by stating that students who care about learning are more likely to associate with peers who share this interest in academics than those who have less interest in learning. The personal value that an individual attaches to a characteristic also affects the individual's response to change. High value results in resistance to change, and low value results in

receptiveness to change (Ryan, 2000).

Ryan (2000) has found that peer groups are influential regarding changes in students' intrinsic value for school (i.e. liking and enjoying) as well as achievement (i.e. report card grades). The peer group is not, however, influential regarding changes in students' utility value for school (i.e. importance and usefulness). It was found that associating with friends who have a positive affect toward school enhanced students' own satisfaction with school, whereas associating with friends who have a negative affect toward school decreased it (Ryan, 2000). Thomas and Landau (2002) states that an adolescent's expectancy of success was the primary predictor of academic effort and grades. A sense of belonging and support of a peer group was also significantly associated with these outcomes. Peer influence on athletics, dating, and sexual behaviour, as well as alcohol, drug, and tobacco use have been shown to be important to friendship choice in adolescence. For some adolescents, other interests may compete with or take charge over similar academic motivation and engagement as criteria for selecting a peer group. This could put an adolescent's motivation and engagement in school in a precarious position (Ryan, 2000). Through selection, some adolescents may place themselves in peer group situations that support or foster their achievement-related beliefs and behaviours. Others may place themselves in contexts that weaken achievement-related beliefs and behaviours.

Contrary to popular belief, not all peer influence is negative. Spending more time with peers does not always translate into trouble (Lingren, 1995). The peer group is a source of affection, sympathy, understanding, and a place for experimentation. It is always possible for parents to talk with school counsellors and professionals to help with the problem.

On the contrary, Kirk (2000) has found negative peer pressure had less effect on students' academic performance. To the expectation that the achievement gap should widen, not collapse, as a result of the peer effect between the fourth and eighth grades. There are two possible explanations for the diminishing peer effects. First, older students may mask their academic achievement from their friends. That is, peers do not necessarily know exactly what grades their friends achieve or how much time they spend on homework in any given week. Thus, individual students may be able to give their peers a false impression of their academic performance, especially as they reach adolescence. Although peer pressure could generally increase, students may be able to avoid academic pressure more easily. Second, adolescent peer pressure may focus on extracurricular behaviour rather than on classroom behaviour. In other words, as children test their independence, they may focus negative peer pressure on antisocial behaviour outside of school rather than on academic achievement. For example, social experimentation with cigarettes, alcohol, and other illicit substances generally begins in junior high. The attention paid to this kind of peer pressure may supersede pressure regarding grades in class.

Extensive literature notes that a child's peer group influence social and academic development, and these influences begin at start of a formal education. It influences the child's study habits and academic development (Antony, 1992). This contradicts other findings that peers do not affect a students' academic performance but only affects extracurricular behaviour. He also argues that student's academic performance is not only influenced by peers, but also by his/her parents and teachers. Consequently, some academicians argues that peer effects becomes more important as time passes, peaking somewhere during adolescence (Lawrence, 1993). This contradicts Kirk (2000), who argued that peer effect is particularly strong influence on academic performance on fourth grade.

Goethe (2001) found out that weak students do better when grouped with other weak students. It shows that students' performance improves if they are with the students of their own kind. Sacerdote (2001) found out that grades are higher when students have unusually academically strong peers. The results of Zimmerman (2003) were somehow contradictory to Goethe results but again it proved that students performance depends on number of different factors, it says that weak peers might reduce the grades of middling or strong students. Having friends allows the child to learn many skills: group interaction, conflict resolution and trust building. Peer rejection during adolescence is a good predictor of social and academic problems (Buhrmester, 1990).

1.3 Limitations of the Study

The findings and generalization of the study only apply to public secondary schools. It cannot be applied to private schools because there are differences in the infrastructure and learning and teaching resources between the private and public schools. Consequently, the findings are appropriate to rural schools because Sabatia District is found in rural part of the country. Its generalization to schools in towns should be done with precaution. The author recommends a similar study using the same methods to be conducted in other parts of the country so that generalization can be applied to similar population in other districts.

2. Materials and Methods

The study was done in public secondary schools in Sabatia District. It is one of the districts in Vihiga County, Western Province of the Republic of Kenya. It neighbours Hamisi to the East, Vihiga to the South and Emuhaya to the North. The research used a correlation research design. Gay (1996) points out that correlation research attempts to determine whether, and to what degree, a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable

variables. Waters (2009) adds that correlation research is a quantitative method of research in which you have two or more variables from the same group of subjects to determine the relationship between the stated variables. In correlation research, each variable must be expressed in numerical form, that is, must be quantifiable.

Sabatia District has 28 public secondary schools. Twenty-one of them are district day schools while seven are provincial boarding (District Education Office [DEO] Report, 2011). The target population was Form Four students in selected Sabatia District public day secondary schools. Since it is practically impossible to access all the schools in the District, only manageable populations of seven district public secondary school students were used.

The research employed both simple random and purposive sampling technique to select the respondents from the school stated. Purposive sampling was used to select twenty-one district public day secondary schools. This group was most suitable for the research because students from such schools have direct contact with their parents/guardian or home factors everyday compared to those from boarding schools. They were suitable for the independent variable that was being researched on. The other seven were Provincial public boarding secondary schools.

Simple random sampling technique was used to select seven district public day secondary schools out of the twenty-one. These represent thirty per cent of the twenty-one district public day secondary schools. Kombo & Delno (2006) says that a sample of 30% is a representative of a population to be studied. Simple random sampling was used because it yields research data that can be generalized to a larger population. In particular, a table of random numbers was used to select schools that were used in the study. In order to get the required sample size, the names of the schools were listed and a number assigned to each name. Using a table of random numbers, the authors then picked every 3rd number until he got the sample required. In doing this, the ratio of 1:3 was applied. This implied that in every three schools, one was picked for the study. By the end of the exercise, 07 schools were used, representing 30% of the total number of public district day secondary schools in Sabatia District.

Purposive sampling was also used to select the Form Four students from the sampled schools. The Form Four students were selected because they are directly involved in preparation for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) and their concern about academic performance is very important. They are also the final consumers of the learning process at the secondary level in Kenya (Muleyi, 2008). Furthermore, it is because of their maturity level and the experience they have both at school and home. Therefore, created learning environment, students have to prove their ability through their academic performance. Simple random sampling was used to get thirty respondents per school. Therefore, the authors used 210 respondents in the research.

The study used questionnaires as a tool for collection of data. The questionnaire was used since the study was mainly concerned with variables that could not be directly observed or manipulated. A questionnaire was also preferred because it takes care of confidentiality. It was a Likert-type questionnaire.

School environment variable focused on the influence of the teacher in the students' academic performance, i.e. the teacher giving extra work/assignment to evaluate whether the students have understood what he/she has taught or to enhance better understanding of the topic and whether the teachers mark and revise assignments if in case they give to learners. It investigated if teachers reward/encourage students when they perform well in school. The study also examined if the students are free to consult their principal in case they have a problem. The study also investigated if students have adequate internal exams, prep time in school. It is expected that students who attend schools with an environment to conducive have a high academic performance.

Peer pressure refers to the influence exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change his/her attitudes, values in order to conform to group norms. This study focused on influence of classmates and schoolmates on a students' academic performance. It looked at the activities the student engages in with the peers and how the peers influence his/ her academic performance. It therefore looked at positive and negative aspects of peer pressure. It is expected that students whose peers emphasizes and engages in positive activities have higher academic performance.

Data analysis refers to examining what has been collected and making deductions and inferences. It involves the uncovering underlying structures, obtaining important information, detecting anomalies and testing any underlying assumptions (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 12.0 was used to calculate correlation coefficient. The data was subjected to regressions to explore the magnitude and direction of relationship between independent and dependent variables. For descriptive, percentages and means were used. Results were presented in tables and in words.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 The Relationship between School Environment and Students' Academic Performance

The results on the relationship between school environment and students' academic performance revealed that forty two percent of teachers do not give assignments/extra work to students after lessons to enhance their better understanding of what they teach. This comprised of twenty nine and thirteen per cent who strongly disagreed

and disagreed, respectively that their teachers give and mark assignments. Another ten percent and eight per cent of the students strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that teachers motivate/reward them when they perform well in their academic work.

Thirteen per cent of the respondents indicated that their schools did not have adequate examinations in preparation to their national examination having eight per cent agreeing and four per cent strongly agreeing. Twenty-two per cent strongly disagreed that they are free to consult their teachers in case they do not understand what they have been taught in class. Another seventeen per cent disagreed too. With twenty per cent of students strongly agreeing and seventeen agreeing that they are not free to consult their head teachers when they are in need of help from them, it couples a significant thirty-seven per cent of the students. Sixteen per cent of the students showed that they did not have adequate preparation time to study before the normal teaching and learning time constituting of nine per cent that strongly agreed and seven per cent that agreed. Sixteen per cent strongly agreed that their schools do not have adequate teaching and learning facilities with twenty three per cent agreed. Thirty-seven per cent of the students indicated that very few students qualify to university from their schools comprising of nineteen per cent that strongly agreed and eighteen per cent that agreed. Furthermore, twelve per cent of the teachers who give assignments do not mark or revise the tasks they give to the students with six per cent of students strongly agreeing and another six agreeing.

The data was also subjected to regression analysis and the findings were as shown in Table 2 below. It was revealed that the relationship between school environment factors and students' academic performance is .055, which is significant at .508. The school environment factors under study have greater relationship with students' academic performance than student role performance factors, but lesser in relationship with students' academic performance if compared with family background factors investigated. However, there existed a positive relationship between school factors and student's academic performance.

3.2 The Relationship between Peer Influence and Students' Academic Performance

Fourteen per cent and twelve per cent of the students strongly disagreed that their friends perform well in academic work as shown in Table 3. This gives a significant twenty-seven per cent. Another eleven per cent of the students strongly disagreed that their friends encourage them to work hard in school, with four per cent strongly disagreeing on the same item. Fourteen per cent strongly agreed that their friends affect their academic work negatively. Seven per cent agreed on the same issue. Twenty-four per cent of strongly agreed that their peers make fun of those who do well academically constituting. Another sixteen per cent agreed on the same issue.

Ten per cent strongly disagreed that they spend most of their time with their friends discussing academic work or revising for examinations. Another nine per cent disagreed on the same issue. This makes nineteen per cent of the students under study. With seven per cent strongly agreeing and twelve per cent agreeing that their friends use drugs, it amounts to nineteen per cent of their friends who use drugs. Seventeen per cent of their peers were not disciplined at home and in school. This comprised nine per cent who strongly agreed and eight per cent who agreed on the same issue. Furthermore, six per cent strongly agreed that their friends do not attend school regularly with another six per cent agreeing on the same item.

Thirty-eight per cent of their friends engage in sexual relations. This comprised twenty-four per cent who strongly agreed and another fourteen per cent who agreed on the same issue.

To add on that, twenty-one per cent and another nine per cent of the students strongly agreed and agreed, respectively that their friends sneak out of school.

The data was also subjected to regression analysis as shown in Table 4 below. The relationship between peer level factors and students' academic performance was .012, significant at .883. However, while the relationship is low if compared to students' role performance, home factors and school factors, peer level factors had a positive effect on student's academic performance.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

A school, as a learning institution and as a second home for learners, has a strong relationship with students' academic performance. The head teacher and the teachers through their specific roles either have negative or positive influence on students' academic performance. Therefore the Head teacher and the teachers should enhance an environment conducive learning in which the learners are free to consult them when in need, provide adequate learning facilities and arouse interest in the learners to work hard.

The study established that home and school environments exert potent influence on students' academic performance. These factors directly and indirectly pointed to areas that have to be addressed in order to promote good academic performance. If the parents/guardians and government could improve the learning environment of the students and motivate them, it is most likely that students' academic performance will improve.

Peer level factors also have a relationship with students' academic performance. Students whose friends engage in negative activities such as use of drugs, sneaking out of school and being absent from school chronically are likely to have lower academic performance.

The principals of district public secondary schools should develop a rapport and understand the feelings and needs of their students. They should also provide an environment in which the students feel better to learn and be available to students for consultation when in need.

The students should be encouraged to choose their friend wisely as some have negative influence on their academic performance, especially those who sneak out of school, use drugs and them that do not attend school regularly.

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Tables

Table 1. Students' response to the relationship between school environment factors and students' academic performance

	SA(5)	A(4)	U(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Total
Teachers give extra work/assignment to enhance understanding in subjects they teach	54(26%)	56(27%)	12(6%)	28(13%)	61(29%)	210(100%)
Teachers reward/encourage me when I perform well in school	123(59%)	45(21%)	5(2%)	16(8%)	21(10%)	210(100%)
We usually have adequate internal exams	61(29%)	115(54%)	9(4%)	17(8%)	8(4%)	210(100%)
I am free to consult teachers after class in case I do not understand a concept	75(36%)	33(16%)	2(1%)	35(17%)	47(22%)	210(100%)
I am free to consult the Head teacher at any time in case of any problem	74(35%)	58(25%)	7(3%)	35(17%)	40(20%)	210(100%)
We have adequate prep time in school	71(33%)	96(46%)	10(5%)	14(7%)	18(9%)	210(100%)
There is conducive environment to study in our classrooms	96(46%)	56(27%)	9(4%)	30(14%)	19(9%)	210(100%)
Teachers mark and revise assignments on time	72(34%)	100(47%)	14(7%)	12(6%)	63(30%)	210(100%)
Our school has a motto, vision and a Mission that are clearly understood and followed by students	72(34%)	51(24%)	14(7%)	42(20%)	30(14%)	210(100%)
Our school library has adequate with relevant books relating for students	35(17%)	63(30%)	30(40%)	49(23%)	33(16%)	210(100%)

Table 2. Regression analysis on school environment factors and students' academic performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	sig
(Constant)	49.1205.921		8.296	.000	
SCHOOL FACTORS	.074	.112	.055	.663	.508

Table 3. Students' response to the relationship between peer influence factors and students' academic performance

	SA(5)	A(4)	U(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Total
Most of my friends in school perform well in examinations	56(27%)	86(41%)	14(7%)	26(12%)	30(14%)	210(100%)
My friends encourage me to work hard in school	93(44%)	75(36%)	9(4%)	9(4%)	23 11%	210(100%)
My friends affect my academic work positively	58 28%	77 37%	30 14%	14 7%	30 14%	210(100%)
My friend make fun of students who try to do well in school	51(24%)	61(29%)	21(10%)	44(21%)	33(16%)	210(100%)
I spend most of my time in school with friends discussing academic work/revising for examination	65(31%)	93(44%)	12(6%)	19(9%)	21(10%)	210(100%)
My friends are drug addicts	14(7%)	26(12%)	12(6%)	42(20%)	117(56%)	210(100%)
Most of my friends are disciplined in school and at home	37(19%)	72(33%)	16(34%)	19(8%)	40(9%)	210(100%)
My friends attend school regularly	72(34%)	81(41%)	26(12%)	12(6%)	18(9%)	210(100%)
My friends engage in sexual relations	51(24%)	77(34%)	7(3%)	58(28%)	63(36%)	210(100%)
My friends sneak out of school	44(21%)	81(43%)	12(6%)	19(9%)	44(21%)	210(100%)

Table 4: Regression Analysis on Peer Level Factors and Students' Academic Performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	sig
(Constant)	49.1205.921		8.296	.000	
PEER PRESSURE	.025	.167	.012	.147	.883

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