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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR PERFORMANCE IN THE NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS BY PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MERU COUNTY, KENYA

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#### Abstract

Development in a country takes place if its young learners perform well in Education at different levels. In Kenya, performance at primary school level is ascertained after students sit for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination at Standard 8. The results of the recent years have indicated that the performance in Kibirichia Division is below 50%. Thus this paper examines the factors that have contributed to poor performance in public primary schools based on a study conducted in Kibirichia Division in Meru County. The population of the study included 12 head teachers, 60 assistant head teachers and 120 standard 8 pupils. Different questionnaires were used for the head teachers, assistant head teachers and pupils for data collection. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study found the contributors of poor performance in schools as: lack of enough teachers, pupils' absenteeism, lack of time for lesson preparation by teachers, teaching of all subjects, lack of enough story books and lack of motivation from parents/guardians. The study recommends that the government employs more teachers, induct new head teachers; schools have a common library and subject specialization in primary schools. The study provides insightful reference to policy makers, scholars and researchers. Policy makers, learners and scholars will use the study findings to reinforce weak areas and make changes to improve on performance in public primary schools.

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#### Introduction

Performance in Kenyan primary schools has been a disturbing issue for a long time. Mwango (1998), on the causes of poor performance of English in public day schools and high performance in boarding schools, has found that high performance is due to high motivation for both students and teachers, light subject load for teachers, more learning hours and high economic status. Poor health of the learners is a significant obstacle leading to chronic absenteeism. Another area is poverty where 47% of the rural people live below poverty line. Iron deficiency leads to poor cognitive performance. Schwartz *et al.* (2002) have found that child abuse is a factor leading to poor performance. The types of abuse include beating of children at home and learning institutions; other

Students' are deprived of food and hence education. Child abuse leads to children leaving school for streets where they end up getting exploited for cheap labour and even sexual abuse to both the girl and the boy child (*ibid.*).

Kimatu (2007) has found that poor performance in the Nairobi's Kibera Slums has been a result of pupils not taking education seriously. The surrounding environment has made it difficult for learning. Kimatu (*ibid.*) also observes that pupils are ill disciplined and there is high dropout rate in the area. Eshiwani (1983) has found that performance in the Western Province in Kenya is influenced by large class size, poor school facilities, lack of preparation or homework, lack of sound and efficient leadership

in the school administration, the inadequate amount of time allocated to teaching and learning teacher characteristics.

Owiye (2005) notes that in Siaya District, wastage is high in upper grades and girls are more affected than boys. This wastage has led to poor performance. This wastage is brought about by lack of fees, inadequate learning and teaching facilities, parental attitude, illiteracy levels, family size and health related problems. There has also been the issue of dropouts due to forced repetition, poverty, absenteeism, child labour, negative attitude, domestic chores and economic activities in the environment. Snow *et al.* (2009) says that common factors to poor performance in schools include inadequate teaching resources, absenteeism due to lack school fees, poor syllabus coverage, poor administration leading to lack of motivation of teachers, poor teacher student ratios, poor infrastructure like ill constructed facilities, poor roads, lack of inspections, disease outbreaks like malaria in swampy areas and language use.

### Statement of the Problem

Education is a necessary condition for development of individuals and nations. Educational performance of individuals is measured using their performance in national examinations. Performance in national examinations is also used to select students progressing to the next level of education and training. Performance across regions has however varied significantly with certain regions posting very good performance while others performed poorly. The government commissions have endeavoured to address this through recommendations, which are not supported by systematic studies and adequate data. Despite the persistent dismal performance in public primary schools in Kibirichia Division, no systematic studies have been done to explain circumstances contributing to the situation.

### Motivation

Motivation, according to Ofoegbu (2004), includes those inner driving conditions, described as wishes, desires, urges to stimulate the interest of a person in an activity. Motivation, therefore, triggers behaviour. For performance to improve, parents, teachers and pupils must be motivated. Motivation can be looked at in different ways. In one way, it is cyclic, in that the parents motivate the teachers, the motivated teachers motivate the pupils and the motivated pupils motivate the parents. The cyclic version can start from any given point. Motivation can also be looked at as reciprocating where the teacher motivates the

pupils and the motivated pupils perform well and motivate the teachers.

A teacher's motivation has to do with his/her desire to participate in the education process (Ofoegbu, 2004). Teachers should be adequately motivated by paying them salaries when due and teaching facilities made available. Ofoegbu (2004) says motivation is a good thing that goes on influencing a teacher's desire to participate in pedagogical process within the school, interest in school discipline and control in the classroom. Motivation underlies involvement or non-involvement in academic and non-academic activities in school. For a teacher to be motivated, he/she should feel the classroom situation safe, healthy, happy place with supportive resources and facilities for teaching for optimal learning. A motivated teacher tends to participate more than expected in the process of management, administration and the overall improvement of the school. A teacher's teaching activities therefore may dilute or enhance pupils' performance.

The teacher's motivation therefore is a necessity for poor performance to be avoided. Teacher motivation is taken to be anything that is done to make teachers happy, satisfied, dedicated and committed in such a way that they bring out their best in their places of work so that students, parents and the society will greatly benefit from their services (Ofoegbu, 2004). Intrinsic motivation is a situation where one does a task for its own sake, the satisfaction it provides or for feeling of accomplishment and self actualization while extrinsic motivation is performing in order to obtain some rewards such as salaries. Teachers should be exposed to conditions to promote intrinsic motivation and improve performance.

Performance of pupils is also affected by how they are motivated. Highly motivated pupils will perform better in examinations. According to Husbands, Kitson and Pendry (2000), motivation on pupils is influenced by peer pressure, parental perceptions, teachers, poor social skills and low self esteem, lack of understanding of boundaries and expectations. Parent's motivation on their children depends on so many factors. One of these factors is the education level of the parents. The more educated and learned the parent is the higher the motivation. How much parents listen to their children determines how much confidence pupils have on themselves. The way children are treated by the parents also has a lot of influence on their performance. Those parents who treat their children badly make them perform poorly.

The teacher plays a great role in the motivation of learners. This is because a high percentage of the pupil's time is spent with the teacher. Teachers should be aware of what motivation is and how pupils should be motivated in order to improve their

performance. According to Estyn *et al.* (2001), teachers should have knowledge of how pupils learn by encouraging those who know the answers and motivate those who do not know by creating interest in them. The teacher should create confidence in learners. This confidence is associated with levels of achievement. A teacher can motivate learners by arranging topics starting with easy ones so that they get high marks. The high marks will motivate them even when they come to learn the hard topics. The teacher should vary the methods of presenting and understanding information. Teachers should vary activities to keep learners on the task such as playing games, dramatizing and singing.

Teachers should instil the aspect of self motivation to the learners. According to Wikipedia (2010), self motivation means driven, focused, ready for objective discussion, being sharp and smart enough not to be manipulated and to be open to positive learning. A self motivated learner gets things done and realizes his/her goals without being pushed. The teacher should be able to put across the ten traits of a self motivated pupil to them and assist the pupils in nurturing them. According to Wikipedia (2010), they are:

- i. Pupils should be able to set their own goals high and always reaching to the top.
- ii. They should be willing to take risks.
- iii. They should participate fully in life like in organizations, in their families and communities.
- iv. Pupils should be energetic and willing to jump in and take thing on.
- v. The pupils should be humble. They should not be afraid to admit that they do not know it all.
- vi. They should be committed to life-long learning. They should know their stuff and are in the process of learning more.
- vii. They should possess an attitude of success. They should act as if it were impossible for them to fail, as if success is a done deal.
- viii. One should be persistent with options. They should never give up until they succeed.
- ix. Strive for health in all aspects of their live. They should work hard to take care of themselves physically, emotionally, spiritually, intellectually and socially.
- x. They should rise above adversity. This means that they should rise above small stuff to achieve greatness in their lives.

The researcher wanted to determine if motivation contributed to poor performance in Kibirichia Division.

### **Time Management**

Time management involves both planning and execution. Time once gone is never recovered. It is not like money which can be earned back. Time management depends on how individuals manage their schedules and prioritize their activities. It concerns the wise use of time. Work should be planned in a priority order and one should try to recover from bad time habits. Once time management is taken care of, organization of work space is better, setting of goals and developing of strategies, prioritizing work in order to meet deadlines and controlling those activities that would derail workplace productivity. An institution should lay strategies for proper use of time which include developing blocks of study time, schedule reviews and updates prioritize assignments, postponing assignments that can be put off until a later time, developing alternative study places free from distractions, using "free" time wisely to review work before and immediately after task is carried out.

School managers play a big role in the performance of school as on how they manage time (Chih-Feng, 2000). School managers should emphasize on time planning and control, divide duties of work and authorize them to subordinates in order save time of the head to attend to other duties. The manager should eliminate the disturbance of uninvited guests and maintain the implementation of time management. School managers should strive a lot to attend time management courses.

According to Chih-Feng (2000), the success of a school needs proper time management not only from the managers but also the assistant teachers and pupils. Teachers should have good time management skills so that they are able to control time, control their lives, and control stress and energy level and thus progress in their work. A teacher is able to maintain balance between work, personal life and family life. This is possible because, time management skills are learnable. One starts improving after becoming aware of the essence and causes of common personal management problems such as how to beat procrastination and laziness. For a teacher to succeed he/she should always be busy and productive. The teacher should be aware of his/her goals so as to prioritize the activities. The teacher should create a schedule that works for him and not others. The schedule should be flexible to include things that are most important.

According to Chih-Feng (2000), time management is very important to pupils so as to perform well in their studies. He gives an example of Murumba Primary School in Kisumu which has only one source of water 400 metres away from the school. This is the only source of unsafe water which they share with the

community. Pupils use a lot of time fetching water instead of concentrating in class. Due to interaction with the community the learners have time with idlers who lure the girls and boys into bad practices such as drug taking and sexual activities. The researcher wanted to determine if time management contributed to poor performance in Kibirichia division.

### **Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR)**

Pupil teacher ratio is the number of pupils enrolled in a school divided by the number of teachers regardless of their assignment. The ratio depends on the emphasis a government has on education and the strength of its economy. As the world is moving towards universal primary Education the number of pupils per teacher in a school is one of the measures of quality and ultimately performance at the end of the primary level. Teachers of large classes dedicate less time to each pupil than teachers of a small class.

According to Huebler (2008), the countries with the lowest PTRs were Takelau (5.8), San Marino (6.3) and Bermuda (8.3). Most developed countries in Eastern Europe and former members of Soviet Union had PTR ranging from 10-19 pupils per teacher. Some countries in East and South East Asia, the middle East, Africa and Latin America also belong to the 10-19 group. China, the most populous country had a PTR of 18.3. Majority of countries in Latin America, some countries in Africa and Asia have PTRs between 20 and 29. The greatest PTRs existed in Sub-Saharan Africa (40.7) and Southern Asia (37.8). The average PTRs of the most developed country was 13.7. The global average was 24.6.

The ratio depends on the emphasis a certain government has on education and the strength of economy in a given country. In 2009 in England the infant classes were restricted to 30 pupils with the average being 27 pupils per teacher. The teachers insist that they need assistants especially in practical subjects. In Kenya currently the ratio is 1:44.1 where in the Arid and semi-arid areas 1:20-25 while in some densely populated areas can be 1:70-90 leading sometimes to shifts (Siringi, 2009, April 19) In Bangladesh, the ratio is 1:90. Where the number of pupils is large per teacher, it has been found that the performance in the school is as poor as the case in Bangladesh. The researcher wanted to determine if pupil teacher ratio contributed to poor performance in Kibirichia division.

### **Infrastructure**

Infrastructure in relation to a school situation includes physical facilities such as classrooms, toilets, uniforms, water, food, exercise books, textbooks, chalk and Radios. Although primary

education is free in Kenya since 2003, parents are required to provide physical facilities such as classrooms, toilets, uniforms, water and food. These preconditions have forced many children from poor families away from school (IRIN, 2008).

To a parent, quality education and a good school environment are normally on the top of the list for they assure health and safety of children. In Nairobi slums, for example, parents have no option but take their children in schools where infrastructure is wanting and where sanitary and hygiene conditions pose a major health threat (Snow *et al.*, 2009). The Ministry of Education recommends ratio for toilets per children as 1:25 for girls and 1:30 for boys. However, in Korogocho and Viwandani slums the ratio for toilets for both boys and girls is 1:84. According to Kirimi (2004), on average, 64 children share one toilet in arid and semi-arid lands. In North Eastern province for example one toilet was shared by 104 pupils. Bullesa Primary School in Isiolo has one toilet for 600 pupils. The problem of toilets was also reflected in low enrolment, low retention rates and poor school performance. The design of the toilets (back-to-back design) in arid and semi arid lands (ASAL) makes girls reaching puberty drop out of school due to the embarrassment of sharing latrines with boys. Even where a good number of toilets existed the condition was deplorable. Maintenance and proper use of toilets is also poor. Lack of water to wash the toilets is another challenge. Water is another facility which influences performance. Ministry of education recommendation ratio for taps is 1:50 (Kirimi, 2004). However, in the slums of Nairobi the ratio is 1:200. Arid and Semi-arid lands are the worst hit by the shortage of water supply. There is not enough water to even wash their hand leave alone toilets. Shortage of water results in pupils' drinking water from any source regardless of the health hazards. Drinking water from 'anywhere' fuels the spread of acute diarrhoea and cholera. This is prominent in the ASAL areas such as Isiolo, Moyale, Laisamis and Garbatulla districts. The researcher wanted to determine if infrastructure contributed to poor performance in Kibirichia Division.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the study were lack of adequate data from some head teachers and assistant teachers, poor record keeping in schools made the head teacher to give incorrect information. The teams in schools during time of data collection were different from the team which attained the poor results which were being investigated.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out in Kibirichia Division which has 12 public primary schools. It is one of the five divisions in Meru Central District. The population of the study comprised 341 standard 8 pupils, 98 assistant head teachers and 12 head teachers. This gave a total population of 451 for the study. Purposive sampling was used for head teachers. For the assistant head teachers stratified sampling and random sampling methods were used. Teachers were grouped based on their gender. To get the five teachers from every school they were then picked randomly. Stratified sampling and random sampling methods were used to get the students. The study sampled 12 head teachers 60 assistant head teachers and 120 standard eight pupils making a total of 192 respondents.

The research instruments that were used for data collection were questionnaires. Data and information was collected by administering questionnaires to head teachers, assistant head teachers and standard eight pupils in the twelve public primary schools. The analysis of the data began by inspection of data collected in order to identify spelling mistakes, items that were wrongly responded to and any blank spaces left unfilled by the respondents. Data coding was done by assigning numerals to questions so that responses could be put into a limited number of categories (Kothari, 1996). The coded data was entered into the computer for analysis using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version

11.5. Data was then analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics. Qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions was organized into categories and themes pertinent to the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Factors Contributing to Poor Performance

One of the objectives of the study was to look for the factors contributing to poor performance in public primary school. Adequacy of teachers is one factor that the researcher looked at. One school had adequate teachers while eleven (11) did not have adequate teachers. Four schools had less than one teacher per class.

Table 1 shows that 33.3% of the schools had a teacher per class, including the head teacher. This means that in case one of the teachers is absent due to personal or official commitments then those learners would not be attended to. 58.3% of the schools did not have enough teachers with seven schools having a deficit of one teacher or more. This means that at no time are all the children being attended to at the same time. Only one school (8.3%) had a teacher: class ratio being more than 1:1. In total, 11 schools (91.7%) did not have adequate teachers.

A few pupils failed to attend school all the school days. Failure to go to school leaves a gap in the continuity of what is being learnt.

**Table 1: Adequacy of Teachers**

	Teacher: class ratio	Frequency	Percentage	Adequate
	1:1	4	33.3	No
Less than	1:1	7	58.3	No
More than	1:1	1	8.3	Yes
<b>Total</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

**Table 2: Pupils Absenteeism per Term**

Day Absent	Frequency	Percentage
0-3	3	25
4-6	6	50
7-10	3	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows that 75% of the students were absent for more than 3 days per term. This translates to more than a day per month. The absence means leaving a gap in the learning process which ultimately would lead to poor performance. The author went further

and sought the reasons for absenteeism. Absenteeism for some pupils was a result of unavoidable reasons while others had no reason. Nevertheless, pupils are supposed to give a reason being either true or false. With or without a reason, absenteeism is not good to

learners. The main reason for absenteeism from the responses was due to sickness. The causes of sickness should be known so that preventive measures can be taken. Snow *et al.* (2009) cites disease outbreak like malaria in swampy areas as one of the factors contributing to poor performance of pupils in public primary school. Moreover, 58.3% (2100) of pupils' absenteeism was because of sickness, 25% (900) was because of drought while 16.7% (600) was because of poverty.

Apart from absenteeism was the issue of teachers' work load in terms of lessons taught. Teachers need time to prepare for the lessons they were going to present. The number of lessons a teacher has determines ones time for preparation. The lesser the number of lessons one has, the more time for preparation one has. The findings showed that 45% of the teachers taught 30-39 lessons per week; 48% taught 40-49 lessons per week while 6.7% taught 50-59 lessons per week. These lessons were excessive so

that 86.7% of the respondents said that time for preparation was not enough with the remaining 13.3% saying they had enough time to prepare for their lessons. If teachers cannot have enough time for subject preparation then the material presented to learners is likely to be of less quality and quantity.

In primary schools, teachers are supposed to teach all subjects. During the training in colleges, one is taught and examined in all these subjects. The study findings showed the ratio of teachers comfortable teaching all subject to those not comfortable was 1:4; 20% of the teachers were comfortable with teaching all subjects while a majority (80%) are not comfortable with teaching all subjects.

Students are happy if they are rewarded after doing well in examinations. Presents are given to appreciate the efforts of the learners. Improvement can be through increasing of marks or getting to a better position.

**Table 3: How Parents/Guardians Reward Pupils**

Present	Frequency	Percentage
Tangible items	76	66.3
Promise to reward	35	29.2
Nothing	9	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4: Catering for Lack of Enough Teachers**

Action	Frequency	Percentage
PTA teachers	7	63.6
Overloading	4	36.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 5: Administering of Punishments**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
HT or DHT	27	22.5
Teachers	91	75.8
Others	2	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Another factor that contributed to poor performance was the parents or guardians not rewarding students after doing well. The percentage that gave nothing and those that promised to reward the children was 36.7%. This percentage is large and discourages the young learners. This category of parents/guardians needs to be encouraged to motivate learners.

### Strategies to Improve Performance

For someone to take strategies to improve on performance, one has to accept that the performance

is poor. Siringi (2009, April 19) observes that performance in KCPE shows that only 19% of students from public primary schools featured in the first hundred performers. Siringi (*ibid.*) gives different contributors to the poor performance. Stakeholders of education in Kibirichia Division have also realized that performance in the division is poor. Some of the strategies taken by the different stake holders can be seen from this study.

Learning can take place in different places. These places could be inside a classroom or even under a tree. Provision of adequate classrooms is one way of

trying to improve on poor performance. Stakeholders are trying their level best to have adequate classrooms. The schools communities have tried to put up enough classrooms. It emerged that 91.7% of the schools had enough classrooms. This is one area which can make the learners comfortable and improve on the performance. The states of classrooms include the windows, the walls the desks inside and the floor. The windows should allow enough light and enough air when opened. The desks should be comfortable to allow for writing space and placing of books when reading.

The findings further showed that only 1 (one) school out of the 12 schools had their state of the classrooms being poor. If the desks are good, the classrooms have proper ventilations, the roofs are not leaking, the floors are good and the walls do not allow cold wind getting into the classrooms then the students can do better. Nine schools had their classrooms being in a fair condition, two schools had their classrooms in a good condition while only one school had classrooms in poor condition.

The purpose of taking children to school is to learn and acquire knowledge. Learning is made easier through the guide of teachers. Inadequate number teachers results in pupils' needs not getting fulfilled. Some school management committees are employing teachers to cater for the deficit while in other schools the teachers are overloaded.

Schools are doing something to see to it that something is done to make sure that the learners are being attended to. Table 4 shows that 63.6% of the eleven (11) schools with a deficit of teachers had taken the initiative of employing teachers through the PTA programme. This is because the government has not been employing and posting teachers to schools over the last 12 years.

In primary schools, there are subject panels. These subject panels are made of teachers who teach that subject. These subject panels oversee the strengths and weaknesses in their respective subjects. Subject panels have the task to improve performance of their subjects. All the schools had subject panels which were (8.3%) very active and (91.7%) active. The presence of subject panels tries to solve problems associated with the poor performance of the particular subject and ways of improving it. An improvement on the subjects would lead to improvement on general performance.

Lessons at school start at 8.15a.m. in the morning but students go for morning studies before the lessons begin. During this time those students who had not finished assignments get time to do them. Early reporting to school gives learners time to get

prepared for days work. It was established that 95% of the students reported before 7.00 a.m.; 5% of the students reported after 7 a.m. Before classes begin, students had time to revise on the previous days' work, time to complete the assignments given the previous day and even increase contact time with some teachers who would like to recover any lessons not attended to due to some reasons.

Rewarding encourages students. Rewarding should be done both at home and in schools. Rewarding in schools should be done when students are assembled. This increases the spirit of competition and ultimately leading to improvement in performance. Learners work harder as they are competing for rewards. From the study, it was found that 91.1% of the schools gave presents to the students who did well while 8.3% (one school) did not give presents to well performing students. The 11 schools giving presents to learners were doing a lot in terms of motivation. This encourages the learners to work harder.

English language is very important in a school situation because all the subjects except Kiswahili are taught, written and examined in English. A student writes what he or she knows. Writing of any language comes after speaking it. Fluency of speaking English comes after a lot of practice. The study revealed the proportion of students who liked speaking in English to those who do not: 71.7% of the respondents conversed in English in the absence of teachers; 28.3% of the students did not like speaking English in absence of teachers. Conversing in the English language should be encouraged because four papers out of the five done in standard 8 are written in English.

Story books help learners in many ways. They make learners busy, help in improving the reading skills in pupils and assist in improving the learners' imaginations and creativity which make composition writing easier. Use of story books is another strategy schools put in place to improve English language and ultimately improve on performance. Learners should be encouraged to buy story books. The study showed that 88.3% of the teachers observed that students had story books while only 11.7% observed that there were no story books.

According to Hornsby (2000), discipline is obeying rules and orders and punishing those who do not obey them. Punishing should be done so that mistakes can be corrected before they develop into bad habits. Teachers who do not discipline students do more harm to students than good. If learners are not corrected for the mistakes done, the situation would make the performance poor. From the study, 96.7% of the learners agreed that they were punished on making a mistake. A few (3.3%) were not punished

on making a mistake. This is commendable in trying to bring up a whole person.

Punishments in schools are administered by prefects, teachers and the administration which includes the head teacher and his deputy. Prefects administer simple punishments like picking of rubbish in the school compound. The major punishments are given by the head teacher or the deputy head teacher depending on the magnitude of the offence committed.

The study findings showed that the whole teaching fraternity takes part in the correcting of mistakes. A few students (22.5%) said they were punished by the Head teacher or the Deputy head teacher. Majority of the students (75.8%) said they were punished by the teachers while 1.7% was punished by prefects in the school. This is a good sign of togetherness and team work in improving performance. Speaking in English should be encouraged while speaking of vernacular should be discouraged. To discourage the speaking of vernacular, some schools use monitors.

A monitor is a small object given to a student who speaks in vernacular. It is then passed from one student to the next one who speaks vernacular. None of the students likes carrying the monitor, and thus refrain from speaking vernacular to avoid receiving the monitor. This way of using the monitor makes the students to control the usage of the language themselves. It was further established that 88.3% of the students were given a monitor for speaking in vernacular. This means they are punished. The more they practice the speaking of English, makes them competent and fluent in the language. The teachers should try and punish the remaining 16.7% so as to improve their performance.

Examinations are yardsticks used to measure how much the students have learnt. Examinations also help the students to always revise and thus busy. The interval of the examination should also allow for enough content to be taught. The study findings showed that most schools (87.5%) did 0-3 papers per week while the remaining 12.5% did 4- 6 papers per week. The giving of examinations encourages students especially if the examinations are accompanied by rewarding. Examinations also help the teachers and learners to know what has not been understood and therefore revise on them.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the study findings discussed in this paper, it is evident the major contributors of poor performance are: lack of experienced head teachers, lack of

enough teachers in our public primary schools, pupils' absence- most of the absenteeism is due to sickness and drought, lack of young energetic teachers, lack of enough time for preparation and unpreparedness of teachers resulting to presenting of inadequate and low quality material to the learners.

Teaching of all subjects where one is not comfortable with these subjects is another factor that contributes to poor performance. It was observed that some head teachers were overstaying in one station and students lacked story books. There is also lack of motivation from parents/guardians. From the foregoing conclusions, the following recommendations have been made to improve the performance in public primary school:

- i) New head teachers should be given induction courses and frequent refresher courses to get enough skills to handle the various categories of people.
- ii) The teachers service commission (TSC) should employ enough teachers in the schools and reduce the burden of employing PTA teachers as they are paid by the parents.
- iii) Schools should create a common library with enough story books.
- iv) Parents/guardians should be educated and encouraged to appreciate the efforts of their sons and daughters and reward them and should visit the schools regularly to help and motivate them.
- v) That all stakeholders should be made aware of the importance of quality education so as to try and improve performance.

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