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# Unpacking Financial Interventions Link to Student Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools: A Nyamira County Level Analysis, Kenya

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**Abstract: The research was conducted to determine the impact of education funding on academic achievement with reference to Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) performance. The KCSE scores of Nyamira County, among others, have always been low, which begs the question of how well the public secondary schools in the area are performing. Based on the Theory of Performance by Elger (2000), the research was descriptive in nature and employed both qualitative and quantitative research designs. The population of 189 public secondary schools was sampled with a sample size of 127 which is based on the sample size determination table by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The total number of respondents was 889, comprising of teachers, PTA members, principals and disciplinary masters in the identified schools. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data and SPSS software to analyze the data. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used, as well as a multiple regression model ($Y = \beta 0 + \beta 1X1 + \varepsilon$) to determine the relationship between variables, where one-way ANOVA would be used to analyze them further. The results indicated that financial aid is very important in making sure that there are educational resources like text books, classrooms, libraries, and adequate teaching staff. Inadequate funding also led to shortage of supporting facilities and materials in certain schools, which adversely impacted on KCSE performance. The research suggests that policymakers should make reforms to make better resource distribution and better student performance, such as increasing government investment into secondary education, especially in regions where socioeconomic factors negatively affect student performance.**

***Keywords***: *Financial Support, Students' Academic Performance.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The learning dynamics in the Kenyan education system have received little academic research especially in respect to the major determinants that promote academic success among learners in the public secondary schools. After the adoption of the 2010 Constitution, Kenya was restructured to forty-seven counties, one of which is Nyamira County. Nyamira is in the former Nyanza Province, and was formerly a district of what was then called Kisii County; it was sometimes called North Kisii County. The 2009 Census revealed that the county had 598,252 people. The county headquarters and principal town is Nyamira town with an estimated urban population of 41,668 in the same census. The county has four sub-counties (constituencies) which include Borabu, Kitutu Masaba, North Mugirango, and West Mugirango and a total of 154 public secondary schools.

Secondary education is a critical component of the education system of any country because it prepares the learners with the knowledge and skills that enable them to make a contribution to the economic and social development of the country (World Bank, 2013). A report by the World Bank indicates that this level of education is critical in combating poverty and enhancing inclusive prosperity, and also in the achievement of better health, gender equality, peace, and stability in the society (World Bank, 2013). In Kenya, the government officially incorporated secondary education in the structure of basic education (Republic of Kenya, 2007). It is therefore important to ensure that quality education is delivered at this level since this will define the ability of graduates to make a significant contribution to national development.

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In many middle-income nations, a significant number of students fail to attain the fundamental skills that employers seek and that are essential for securing employment (Romilly & Ali, 2013). In educational settings, a student's level of knowledge and competency is often assessed through their performance in national, regional, and internal school examinations, as well as other assessment tools. Assuming all other factors remain unchanged, strong academic performance is generally taken as an indicator that a learner can effectively contribute to societal development by addressing relevant local challenges. However, when students consistently perform poorly, it becomes a major concern for parents, educators, government officials, and other stakeholders. This is because such underperformance signifies a loss of valuable resources especially in light of opportunity costs resources that might have been more productively used elsewhere.

Student performance in national examinations, both at the primary and secondary levels, holds great importance due to the high levels of anxiety it often generates among learners, parents, and teachers particularly during the release of exam results. These examinations are crucial as they often determine the learner's future academic and career paths. It is, therefore, essential for schools to ensure that the conditions necessary for optimal performance are met. In a study conducted in Nigeria, Obadara and Alaka (2010) examined the impact of resource allocation on secondary school students' academic outcomes and found a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.6, which was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Their findings demonstrated that financial resource allocation to schools has a notable influence on student achievement. This provides strong evidence that adequate resources are critical in ensuring the effective functioning of an education system. Hence, resource availability plays a fundamental role in shaping students' academic success.

Research on the determinants of academic performance in secondary schools within Nyamira County identified several key challenges contributing to low student achievement. These include inadequate teacher professionalism, ineffective school leadership, insufficient funding for school infrastructure rehabilitation and renovation, limited provision of learning materials, and strained teacher-student relationships (Onderi & Makori, 2013). In a broader context, Ward, Stoker, and Murray-Ward (1996) observed that academic performance is shaped by a combination of individual, social, economic, and environmental influences. Similarly, Mirera (2012) undertook a study to explore the factors affecting learners' academic performance in Nyamira District, Kenya, further contributing to the growing body of knowledge on the issue.

In Kenya, education is broadly acknowledged as a fundamental pillar of national development. Expanding access to quality education is viewed as essential for enhancing socio-economic progress, improving productivity, raising individual income levels, and reducing disparities in wealth distribution (Republic of Kenya, 2007). Since gaining political independence, the Kenyan government has consistently emphasized the role of education as a cornerstone of its socio-economic development agenda, as reflected in numerous policy frameworks.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) is tasked with overseeing the administration and management of the national education system to enhance its overall effectiveness. Nonetheless, both public and private schools operate within a framework involving multiple stakeholders who contribute to various aspects of school operations. As such, school management is a collaborative effort among these stakeholders, each playing distinct but complementary roles to help achieve educational goals. In both primary and secondary education, decentralization has been implemented to encourage community involvement and promote the delivery of quality education. At the secondary level, schools regardless of whether they are publicly funded or privately run depend significantly on the financial and managerial support of parents, religious institutions, business entities, and civil society organizations to strengthen school governance and improve academic outcomes.

Despite substantial investments in the education sector by the government and various stakeholders including parents, religious institutions, civil society, and private actors the anticipated improvements in key educational indicators, particularly in relation to school improvement variables and academic achievement, have not been fully realized (UNESCO, 2015). This trend suggests that the returns on these investments remain limited (Republic of Kenya, 2007) Nyamira County is among the regions where this decline in educational performance has been notably observed. An analysis of Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination results reveals that public secondary schools in Nyamira County have consistently underperformed in comparison to their counterparts in other counties (Onderi & Makori, 2013). In light of this situation, the current study aims to evaluate the influence of school improvement variables on academic performance in public secondary schools within Nyamira County, Kenya.

- *Statement of the Problem*

Over the years, schools in Nyamira County have consistently recorded lower performance in national examinations compared to other counties in the same region. Nyamweya (2013) conducted a study to explore the factors affecting the academic performance of girls in mixed-day public secondary schools within Nyamira District, Nyamira County, Kenya. The study aimed at identifying strategies to improve academic performance, as the county has continually shown subpar results, particularly when measured by mean scores. This persistent underachievement has raised significant concerns among education stakeholders. The key research questions guiding this study are: "Why do some public secondary schools in Kenya excel in standardized national examinations, while others struggle to achieve satisfactory performance as measured by mean scores?" and "What specific learning process variables influence student performance in public secondary schools in Kenya?" The study seeks to address these questions with a particular emphasis on Nyamira County.

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Empirical studies have shown that various factors contribute to learners' academic underachievement. Onderi and Makori (2013), in their investigation of determinants of academic performance in secondary schools within Nyamira County, identified several key challenges. These included inadequate teacher professionalism, weak school leadership, insufficient financial resources for infrastructure improvement, limited access to instructional materials such as textbooks and teaching aids, and strained teacher-student interactions. These issues were found to be significant contributors to the poor academic outcomes observed in the county.

Nyamongo (2014) conducted a study in Nyamira County and analyzed academic performance reports of public secondary schools obtained from the County Education Office. The findings revealed that schools in the county had consistently registered poor performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations (DEOs, 2011). Nyamongo noted that the 2011 KCSE results reflected this trend, as none of the schools from Nyamira County appeared among the top 20 nationally ranked institutions. The county comprises six districts Kisii Central, Gucha South, Gucha, Manga, Nyamira, and Masaba North ranked among the bottom thirty in national standings. Specifically, Table 1.1 illustrates the performance trend of Masaba North District, which has remained relatively stagnant over time, unlike its neighboring districts that have demonstrated progressive improvement.

Table 1: Comparison of Masaba North District MSS in KCSE in Relation to the Neighboring Districts in Kisii and Nyamira Counties (2008-2010)

| County | District | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Kisii County** | Kisii Central | 4.266 | 3.832 | 4.798 |
| | Gucha South | 3.691 | 4.102 | 4.488 |
| | Gucha | 3.962 | 3.953 | 4.292 |
| **Nyamira County** | Manga | 4.387 | 4.653 | 4.978 |
| | Nyamira | 3.832 | 3.702 | 4.464 |
| | Masaba North | 3.909 | 3.368 | 4.089 |

Source: Nyamongo *et al.*, (2014)

Analysis of Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) results over the years indicates that public secondary schools in Nyamira County have consistently underperformed in comparison to those in other counties. The county often ranks in the 40s out of 47 counties, highlighting a persistent concern regarding academic achievement (Nyamongo et al., 2014). Historical data further supports this trend, with Michieka (1994) noting that as early as 1994, secondary schools in both Nyamira and Kisii districts exhibited low academic performance.

Nyamira County is among the counties identified as underperforming in national examinations, particularly in terms of KCSE mean scores, where it has consistently trailed behind other counties (Daily Nation, 2015). Several factors have been associated with academic performance in schools, including parental involvement, financial support from the community, structural conditions of schools, and the effectiveness of school management (Omolo, 2009; Kingdon, 2010). However, there remains a gap in understanding the extent to which each of these factors specifically influences academic outcomes within Nyamira County. Notably, the statistical significance of the relationship between these school improvement variables and student performance in public secondary schools is often insufficiently explored.

If the current trend of poor academic performance continues, there is growing concern that the education system in Nyamira County could face a potential collapse, with far-reaching social and economic consequences both within the county and across neighboring regions. This situation threatens to undermine the goals of Kenya's Vision 2030, which aims to elevate the country to middle-income status through education as one of its key pillars (Republic of Kenya, 2007). In light of these concerns, this study aims to examine the effect of financial allocation on academic performance in selected public secondary schools within Nyamira County. It is anticipated that the outcomes of this research will provide critical insights for education stakeholders, enabling timely interventions to stabilize the education sector and sustain its contribution to national development (UNESCO, 2015).

➢ *Objectives of the Study*

The study sought to unpack the extent to which financial interventions influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Nyamira County.

## II. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

➢ *School Financing and students' Academic Performance*

Buckland (2003) emphasizes that the state must reaffirm its role as the primary financier of education, bearing ultimate responsibility for ensuring quality. In alignment with this view and in pursuit of the Vision 2030 agenda, the Kenyan government introduced measures to regulate the cost of education, thereby promoting equitable access for all citizens (Republic of Kenya, 2007). Currently, basic education is offered at subsidized rates to reduce financial barriers. According to the Republic of Kenya Report (2001), education in the country is funded through a variety of sources, which vary depending on the type of school. These funding sources include public finances, donor grants, bilateral loans, private investments, and contributions from religious and charitable organizations.

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Table 2: Sources of Financing Public Secondary Education in Kenya

| Category of Schools | Sources of Funding |
|---|---|
| Public Education Sector | Taxation, Cost sharing levies and fines and community cash and in kind including land and labor |

*Source: Republic of Kenya on Sources of financing secondary education (2001)*

The average unit cost per student under the Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) program, as documented by Wango (2011). In response to the surge in enrolment following the introduction of Free Primary Education, the Ministry of Education issued policy guidelines in 2008 to facilitate the implementation of FDSE. According to these guidelines, each student in a public day secondary school is entitled to government funding amounting to Ksh. 10,265 annually to support access to quality secondary education.

Table 3: Free Day Secondary Education cost per Child

| S. No. | Vote Head | Amount (Ksh) | Amount ($) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Tuition | 1,800.00 | 1,080.00 |
| 2 | Repairs, Maintenance & Improvement | 200.00 | 120.00 |
| 3 | Local Travel & Transport | 200.00 | 120.00 |
| 4 | Administrative Costs | 250.00 | 150.00 |
| 5 | Electricity, water and conservancy | 500 | 6.25 |
| 6 | Activity Fees | 600 | 7.5 |
| 7 | Personal Emoluments | 3,965 | 49.6 |
| 8 | Medical | 300 | 3.75 |
| | Total School Fees | 10,265 | 128.3 |

Source: (Wango, 2011)

These funds are disbursed in three phases throughout the academic year: 50% is released in the first term, 30% in the second term, and the remaining 20% in the third and final term. Table 3 illustrates this phased disbursement structure using detailed figures.

Table 4: Government Subsidy for Secondary Allocation per Tranche (Wango, 2011)

| S. No. | Vote Head | Tranche 1 | Tranche 2 | Tranche 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Tuition | 1,800.00 | 1,080.00 | 720.00 |
| 2 | Repairs, Maintenance & Improvement | 200.00 | 120.00 | 80.00 |
| 3 | Local Travel & Transport | 200.00 | 120.00 | 80.00 |
| 4 | Administrative Costs | 250.00 | 150.00 | 100.00 |

The Constitution of Kenya (2010) emphasizes the importance of education by prioritizing its financing, a factor that significantly influences students' academic performance. In addition to government funding, communities have historically played a vital role in supporting school financing a trend that dates back to the colonial period, particularly after World War I disrupted missionary funding for schools in regions like Uganda (Ssekamwa, 1997). Despite this, Nancy and Lorraine (2004) observed that economically disadvantaged families are generally less involved in their children's education compared to wealthier households, and schools in poorer communities are less inclined to encourage parental engagement in school governance.

Similarly, Feyfant and Rey (2006) argued that while many families possess the right intentions, those from rural or low-education backgrounds often lack the capacity to contribute meaningfully. Nonetheless, wealth alone does not guarantee support for education, as financial capability does not always translate into the provision of school resources. This study, therefore, sought to examine whether communities regardless of their socio-economic status contribute to school funding, supply scholastic materials, and support other educational needs, and to what extent the availability of such resources influences students' academic performance in Nyamira County.

Somers (2001) highlighted the positive impact of various school-based factors including student-teacher ratio, availability of educational materials, size of the library, and teacher qualifications—on student learning outcomes. In support of this, research conducted in low-income countries has underscored the importance of both human and financial resources for effective learning, including infrastructure development, classroom size, teacher experience and competency, as well as access to instructional materials (Fuller & Clarke, 1994). Demir (2009) specifically examined the influence of student-teacher ratio on academic performance and concluded that it is one of the most significant predictors of student achievement. However, the study also noted that a school's physical and financial capacity, while important, may not directly translate into improved academic outcomes.

According to Onyango (2001), it is the responsibility of headteachers to ensure that school budgets are effectively managed, particularly when undertaking various forms of expenditure. He emphasizes that head teachers are ultimately accountable for financial reporting and auditing processes within the school. Proper financial accounting is essential for monitoring and controlling the implementation of the approved budget. It is also the headteacher's duty to ensure that all financial transactions are accurately recorded in the appropriate books of accounts, such as the ledger, journal,

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inventory records, and cashbook. Onyango further notes that, with support from the bursar or accounts clerk, the headteacher should oversee the internal auditing of school accounts, ensuring that both income and expenditure are transparently documented.

In response to the country's evolving educational needs, the Ominde Commission (1963) was established to recommend reforms in the education sector. The commission emphasized the importance of expanding secondary, technical, and higher education, noting that these levels were critical in preparing individuals to fill key positions vacated by colonial administrators in the civil service (Olel, 2000). Consequently, enrolment in secondary schools expanded significantly, rising from approximately 30,000 students in 1963 to 848,000 by 2002 (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2003). During this period, the government made substantial financial investments in the secondary education sub-sector. For instance, between 1966 and 1970, nearly 58% of the total education budget equivalent to $5,127,000 out of $8,841,000 was allocated to secondary education (Sifuna & Kiragu, 1988). More recently, recurrent expenditure for secondary schools increased from Ksh 667.31 million in 2001/2002 to Ksh 948.79 million in 2004/2005, while development expenditure rose from Ksh 52.24 million in 2003 to Ksh 205.5 million in 2005 (Republic of Kenya, 2006). Despite these significant investments, academic outcomes have remained below expectations, with only 12% of students advancing from secondary school to university (MOEST, 2003).

In Kenya, the government serves as the primary financier of public education, with its efforts complemented by local communities through direct fees and *Harambee* contributions. Olembo (1986) explored various methods of school financing and found that the bulk of financial support originated from the Ministry of Education. However, he also noted that the combined funds from both government and parents were often insufficient to sustain school operations, with many teachers indicating the need for increased financial support. Education experts have long contended that meaningful improvements in school infrastructure and student outcomes are associated with increased financial investment. Although the relationship between education expenditure and student performance remains a topic of academic debate, there is general agreement that the effectiveness of spending plays a crucial role in shaping learning outcomes (Hanushek, 1997). Supporting this view, Sherlock (2011) found that increased financial resources had a positive impact on fourth-grade mathematics pass rates, especially in previously low-spending, low-performing schools. While the evidence is not definitive, it suggests that targeted financial investment may contribute to improved academic achievement.

Njenga (2004), in his study on public secondary schools in West Pokot District, found that parents serve as the primary source of funding for these institutions. She noted that, due to widespread low household incomes, many schools in the district faced significant financial challenges, which in turn hindered the availability of essential educational facilities and learning materials. Njenga emphasized the need for schools to implement income-generating projects as a strategy to supplement parental contributions, particularly for both day and boarding schools. Additionally, she observed that delays or failure by parents to pay school fees often led to prolonged student absenteeism, negatively impacting syllabus coverage. Similarly, Mwasya (2004) reported that the revenue collected from school fees in district secondary schools was inadequate to meet the full costs of running academic programs and school operations.

In summary, although government funding for education has yielded some benefits, its implementation has faced significant criticism. Abagi and Wasunna (2000) examined cost sharing in Kenya's education and health sectors and noted that the education sub-sector was grappling with challenges such as low enrollment, poor retention, low transition rates, and substandard education quality. Their study highlighted shortcomings in the Ministry of Education's policy guidelines on cost sharing, which led to inconsistent fees across schools. The ministry's fee schedules were criticized as unrealistic, arbitrary, and unresponsive to the diverse needs of individual schools. This criticism was echoed by the Chairman of the Kenya Secondary Schools Headteachers Association, who described the government's fees guidelines formulated in 1998 as outdated and impractical. He questioned how headteachers could be expected to enforce the same fees eight years later, especially given inflation and economic difficulties (Kenya Times, 11 May 2006).

## III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was grounded in the Theory of Performance (ToP) as articulated by Elger (2000), which emphasizes that the performance of a system is determined by both its internal components and the interactions among them. In the context of individual or organizational performance, the theory outlines several key elements. The context component refers to the situational variables surrounding performance, such as environmental or institutional conditions. The knowledge component involves the facts, concepts, and principles gained through education or experience. Skills pertain to the specific actions or techniques individuals or groups apply during performance. The identity component reflects how individuals, over time, align themselves with a professional community while also developing a unique sense of self; similarly, organizations evolve by refining their mission and ways of operating. Personal factors include variables tied to an individual's unique circumstances, while fixed factors represent inherent characteristics that cannot be altered. Together, these components provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how performance can be influenced in educational settings.

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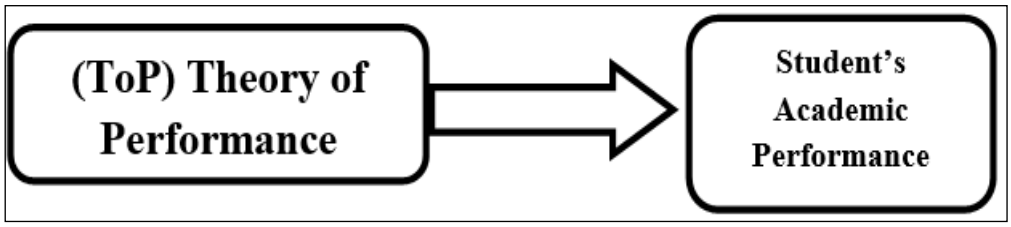


Fig 1 Theoretical Framework (Researcher, 2016)

This study applies the Theory of Performance (ToP) by utilizing its performance and improvement components to explore how in-school improvement variables affect academic achievement. Specifically, school financing is viewed as part of the immersion axiom, suggesting that a well-resourced learning environment supports better academic outcomes. The study focuses on the context component and the immersion axiom of the ToP as the foundational basis for its conceptual framework.

## IV. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework, as described by Smyth (2004), is a research tool that helps the researcher understand and interpret the research problem. It guides the investigation by illustrating the hypothesized relationships among variables and serves as a structure that can be tested, refined, and interpreted throughout the research process.

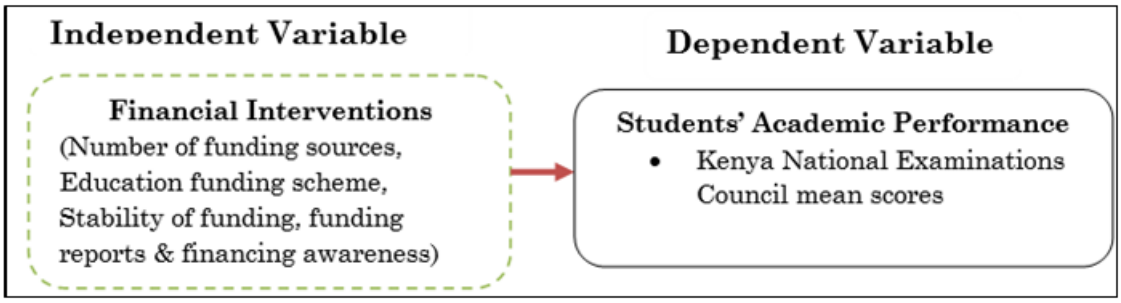


Fig 1: Conceptual Framework Interrelationship Among Variables Subsumed in the Study

Figure 2 illustrates the conceptual framework outlining the interaction among variables considered in the study. It proposes that students' academic performance (the dependent variable) is influenced by key independent variables: parental involvement, school financing, and student discipline. Additionally, the relationship between these variables is mediated by socio-economic, personal, and environmental factors.

➢ *Research Gaps*

Nyagosia et al. (2013) conducted a study in Central Kenya examining factors influencing academic achievement in public secondary schools through the lens of effective schools. The study highlighted key factors such as instructional leadership, clear school mission, safe learning environments, high expectations, strong home-school relations, and equitable learning opportunities. It recommended that school leaders enhance instructional supervision and engage in regular staff performance reviews to promote academic improvement. However, there remains a gap in focused research on how community support systems influence academic outcomes in Kenyan secondary schools, especially within the context of the devolved government structure. In addition, while various researchers (e.g., Salzer-Morling, Cotton, Matsoga, and Kabandize) have explored school discipline, many studies lack depth in identifying the specific causes of declining student discipline, pointing to both methodological and completeness gaps in the literature.

## V. RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopted **a** mixed-methods approach**,** using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. It employed an ex post facto research design, which was appropriate since both the dependent (academic performance) and independent (education financing) variables had already occurred. This design enabled the researcher to explore cause-and-effect relationships without manipulating the variables (Orodho, 2003).

This research design was appropriate because the variables under investigationacademic performance (dependent) and education financing (independent) had already taken place. As such, the study examined their relationship without manipulating them. To enhance the depth and reliability of the findings, the study employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.

➢ *Target Population*

The target population, often referred to as the theoretical population, comprises units with diverse characteristics relevant to the study. According to records from the Nyamira County Education Office (2015), there are 189 public secondary schools in the county. These schools are categorized into four levels: national, extra-county, county, and sub-county. Specifically, the county hosts 2 national schools, 4 extra-county schools, 15 county schools, and 169 sub-county public secondary schools.

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Table.5: Details on Divisions, Teachers and Students in Public Secondary Schools Nyamira County in 2015.

| Sub counties in Nyamira | No. of Schools | Male Teachers | Female Teachers | Enrolled Male Students | Enrolled Female Students |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Borabu | 21 | 148 | 71 | 4112 | 3889 |
| Masaba | 32 | 222 | 66 | 4184 | 3860 |
| Nyamira South | 50 | 334 | 126 | 6162 | 6742 |
| Manga | 31 | 215 | 80 | 4950 | 3278 |
| Nyamira North - Ekerenyo | 55 | 249 | 106 | 7171 | 8425 |
| **Total** | **189** | **1168** | **449** | **26579** | **26194** |

Each of the 189 public secondary schools in the target population had one principal, resulting in a total of 189 principals. Additionally, the study targeted 1,617 ordinary teachers across all schools, focusing on those teaching Forms 1 through 4. Other key respondents included one disciplinary master and one PTA representative from each school. These figures reflect the staffing and composition of the schools at the time the study was conducted

➢ *Sample Size and Sampling Procedure*

A total of 127 public secondary schools were sampled from a target population of 189, based on the sample size determination table developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). To ensure representativeness across school categories, the researcher employed stratified random sampling to select schools from the national, extra-county, and sub-county levels. This approach ensured proportional inclusion of different school types in the sampling frame, as illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 6 Sampling of Schools

| Type of school | Population size | computation | Sample size |
|---|---|---|---|
| National | 2 | 2/189*127 | 1 |
| Extra county | 4 | 4/189*127 | 3 |
| County | 15 | 15/189*127 | 10 |
| Sub county | 169 | 169/189*127 | 113 |
| **Total** | **189** | | **127** |

The sample size for schools included in the study was determined using proportional stratified sampling, based on the formula: **(x/189) × 127**, where *x* represents the number of schools in each stratum. Data was collected from key school stakeholders, including teachers, PTA members, disciplinary masters, and principals from the selected schools. These respondents were selected using a simple stratified random sampling technique to ensure representativeness and alignment with the study objectives. Specifically, the study sampled four class teachers one from each form (Form 1 to Form 4) from each participating school to gather detailed information relevant to the research objectives.

➢ *Data Collection Instruments*

Primary data for this study was collected directly from respondents using a structured questionnaire. According to Wallen and Fraenkel (2001), primary data refers to information obtained firsthand through direct observation or inquiry. The questionnaire was developed based on the study's objectives and included both closed and open-ended questions. Closed-ended items were structured using a five-point Likert scale, which allowed respondents to express their level of agreement or disagreement with various statements, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" (Golafshani, 2003). Additionally, open-ended questions were included under each objective to capture respondents' personal insights and opinions.

➢ *Data Analysis and Presentation*

As emphasized by Dessinger and Moseley (2004), selecting appropriate data analysis and interpretation methods should be determined early in the research process, based on the research design, analyst expertise, and desired outcomes. In this study, after collecting the questionnaires, the data was reviewed for completeness and consistency, then coded and entered into SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were used to analyze categorical data, while correlation and regression analyses were applied to continuous variables at the 0.05 significance level. Qualitative data was analysed thematically in line with the study objectives. A multiple regression model ($\mathbf{Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + e}$) was used to explore the relationships between key variables.

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## VI. RESULTS

➢ *Correlation Tests*

Table 7 presents the results of the correlation analysis between the dependent variable (KCSE students' performance) and the independent variable (school financial support).

Table 7 Relationship Between School Financial Support and KCSE Students' Performance

| Variable | | KCSE students' Performance | School Financial Support |
|---|---|---|---|
| KCSE students' Performance | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .724 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 744 | 244 |
| School Financial Support | Pearson Correlation | .724 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 744 | 244 |

***Source: Research Data, 2016***

The study established a strong positive correlation between the level of school financing support and students' performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE), as evidenced by a correlation coefficient of **0.724**. This relationship was found to be statistically significant, with a p-value of **0.000**, which is well below the conventional threshold of 0.05. These results indicate that an increase in financial support for schools is likely to lead to improved student performance in KCSE examinations within Nyamira County.

➢ *Regression Results*

The primary objective of the regression analysis was to examine the relationship between students' performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) and the level of financial support. In this model, the KCSE performance index served as the dependent variable, while the level of financial support constructed as a composite index was treated as the independent variable.

Table.8: Students Performance in KCSE and Level of financial support (a)Model summery

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .872[a] | .760 | .713 | .10122 |
| a. predictors: (constant) Level of financial support | | | | |
| b. Dependent: Variable: Students Performance in KCSE | | | | |

**(b) ANOVA**

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 2.280 | 1.000 | 2.280 | 9.956 | .004[b] |
| | Residual | 170.147 | 743.000 | 0.229 | | |
| | Total | 172.427 | 744.000 | | | |
| a. Dependent Variable : Students Performance in KCSE | | | | | | |

**(c) Coefficient**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| | (Constant) | -1.821 | 455 | | -0.004 | -1.821 |
| | Level of financial support | 0.523 | 0.218 | 0.489 | 2.399 | 0.523 |
| b. Dependent: variable : Students Performance in KCSE | | | | | | |

*Source: research data, 2016*

The regression equation derived from the analysis was: Students' Performance in KCSE = -1.821 + 0.523(Level of Financial Support) + e

Based on the results presented in the table above, the adjusted $R^2$ value for the regression of students' KCSE performance on the level of financial support is 0.713, indicating that approximately 71.3% of the variance in student performance can be explained by the level of financial support in secondary schools within Nyamira County.

The ANOVA results show that the F-statistic ($F(1, 230) = 9.956$, $p < 0.004$) is statistically significant, suggesting that the regression model reliably predicts student performance based on financial support. Furthermore, the unstandardized beta coefficient for the level of financial support is 0.523, which is also statistically significant at $p < 0.004$. This implies that for every one-unit increase in financial support, students' KCSE performance improves by 0.523 units, assuming other factors are held constant.

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The constant term in the model is -1.821, indicating that if financial support were completely absent, the predicted performance in KCSE would be -1.821 units, suggesting a substantial performance deficit.

These findings underscore a statistically significant and positive relationship between the level of financial support and students' academic performance in KCSE. The results are consistent with the findings of Obadara and Alaka (2010), who concluded that financial and material resources are critical for the effective functioning of the education system. Thus, adequate resource allocation remains a vital determinant of student academic achievement.

## VII. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The study found a statistically significant relationship between financial interventions and students' academic performance. A wide range of educational resources were positively associated with improved learning outcomes. Locally sourced school funding, combined with territorial mobility, was shown to intensify competition among schools, as institutions strive to attract more students and raise performance standards. These findings align with Khan and Malik (1999), who argue that equitable educational success requires that each student be provided with sufficient resources to achieve positive outcomes, rather than simply receiving equal levels of funding across the board.

The study further identified resource inadequacies and substandard facilities as major contributors to the poor academic performance observed in public secondary schools within Nyamira County. In contrast to urban institutions, several schools in Nyamira are in a dilapidated state, lacking basic infrastructure. Inequalities in the distribution of resources between counties persist (Motala & Pampallis, 2001), and many schools in the region operate without essential facilities such as science laboratories. As a result, science instruction is often limited to rote learning, significantly reducing the effectiveness of the learning process.

Moreover, students in Nyamira County have limited access to educational technologies, which restricts their exposure to digital learning tools and limits their ability to stay informed on current global issues. This technological gap hampers not only their academic growth but also their readiness for the modern workforce.

The findings also highlighted that insufficient funding remains a critical barrier in public secondary education. Since education expenditures are directly linked to student achievement, the study recommends that policymakers implement comprehensive education reforms that prioritize equitable resource distribution, enhance infrastructure, and promote strong school leadership. Strategies such as expanding school choice, improving teacher recruitment and retention, and ensuring effective allocation of resources are necessary steps toward enhancing academic outcomes in the region.

## VIII. CONCLUSIONS

This study conducted a thorough analysis of the key factors affecting academic performance in public secondary schools across Nyamira County, Kenya. The results demonstrated a strong positive relationship between sufficient financial interventions and students' performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). Adequate financial support was found to be instrumental in ensuring the availability of vital educational resources such as textbooks, classrooms, libraries, and qualified teaching personnel. In contrast, limited funding was closely associated with the lack of these essential inputs, thereby contributing to poor academic outcomes. The study therefore concludes that inadequate financial investment remains a significant barrier to improved academic performance in public secondary schools within Nyamira County.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the persistent financing gaps and improve educational outcomes for students in rural areas, the Government of Kenya must take a more active role in supporting under-resourced schools, particularly those in counties such as Nyamira. It is imperative that the government ensures the equitable provision of educational facilities in rural schools, matching the standards found in urban institutions. In addition, targeted financial assistance should be provided to students from low-income households, many of whom face barriers to accessing quality education due to economic constraints.

Beyond infrastructure and financial support, the deployment of well-trained and experienced educators to rural schools is crucial. Highly qualified teachers can play a transformative role in enhancing students' academic performance, as teacher quality is closely linked to student achievement. The government should therefore ensure that teachers are not only professionally trained but also assigned to subjects that match their areas of expertise.

Moreover, the Ministry of Education should conduct regular school visits to assess and verify the specific needs of each institution. This will facilitate more informed and equitable allocation of resources, ensuring that support is aligned with the unique challenges faced by each school, especially those in marginalized regions.

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