



**THE CONTRIBUTION OF PARENTAL  
SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS ON PUPILS' KCPE PERFORMANCE IN  
MWEA-EASTDISTRICT, KIRINYAGA COUNTY, KENYA**

**Nyaga Martin Mbugi,  
Pascal Onani Obinga  
Kaloki Joseph Waita<sup>1</sup>,  
Kenyatta University, Kenya**

**Abstract:**

The purpose of this study was to investigate parental socio-economic contribution and its implications on pupils' Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) performance in primary schools in Murinduko Zone, Mwea-East District. The objectives of the study included: to find out the extent to which the parents' level of income affects pupils' performance, to analyze the effects of parents' level of education on pupils' KCPE performance in Murinduko zone, to investigate the manner in which the parents' political involvement affects pupils' KCPE performance in Murinduko Zone. The study employed descriptive research design while stratified random sampling was used to collect data. The data collection instruments were questionnaires, interview schedules and observations. The data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively using SPSS statistical package. The study was modeled by Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of need theory. The study established that most of the learners hailed from poor backgrounds and hence affected the KCPE performance. Most of the parents had attained only the primary level of education and were primary school drop-outs. Political wrangles between parents and the administration also affected the performance of pupils. Child labour is very prevalent and had a very great influence in the KCPE performance where children are exposed to it in order to subsidize family income. The main recommendations include; the government should continue offering Free Primary Education (FPE) and increase funding for building facilities like computer laboratories and libraries, public private partnership should be encouraged to increase resources in the primary education sector, the government should also consider giving stipends to

---

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence: email [kalokijoseph2010@gmail.com](mailto:kalokijoseph2010@gmail.com)

pupils in hard to reach areas such as those in slums and marginalized zones this area so as to reduce drop-out rates and boost participation rates, need to enact and enforce legislation so as to curb child labour.

**Keywords:** performance, parental income, child labour, level of education, socio-economic contribution

## 1. Background of the problem

Education in Kenya is given first priority. The public and private sector especially Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) view education as the backbone of all the development of any country. Education is considered to be a basic right and a basic need. Notwithstanding the enumerated benefits accruing from formal education, provision of education has been sluggish, having experienced several bottlenecks. There are critical shortcomings and challenges facing the education sector including declining access and participation rates (Orodho 2010).

There is a positive correlation between parent's level of education, income and occupation with pupil's education performance (Onzima 2010). Families with higher occupational prestige often have more success in preparing their young children for school because they typically have access to a wide range of resources to promote and support young children's development. High social economic status of the parents plays fundamental and crucial role in the enhancement of their children's academic achievement (Sulemanet al2012). Bishop (1994) had noted that the most deep rooted and widespread inequalities in education especially in higher education in both developing and developed countries are those arising from socio-economic status. He further stated that the children of upper income group tend to get more years of schooling than low-income groups.

(Jensen 2009) had noted that children raised in poverty rarely choose to behave differently but they are faced with overwhelming challenges that affluent children never have to confront and their brains have adapted to sub optimal conditions in ways that undermine goodschool performance. Orazen and Gunnarson (2003) in one of their conclusions had noted that child labour had adverse consequences for test scores. Marphatia et al (2010) noted that Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and School Management Committee (SMC) members play a key role in both encouraging and dissuading parental involving.

History of formal learning, which requirement for the schoollevel up to the national was aimed at selecting the best people to enter the limited such as primary, secondary, tertiary an inheritance from the colonial government.

The independent Kenya education system embraced this legacy of examination from the colonial government up to the current day with some modifications of the systems. The Ominde and Mackay reports of 1964 and 1981 respectively testify this. The Kenya Education Commission of 1964 sought to reform the education system to make it more responsive to the needs of independent Kenya such as developing indigenous manpower to replace the whites who were leaving the country. It stressed on the need to train human capital for national development (Silsil 2009).

The national committee on education objectives and policies of 1976 (The Gachathi report) was a restructuring of education system to 9 years primary and junior secondary; 4 years middle secondary; 2 years minimum university Education. It also stressed on the importance of national unity, economic and cultural aspirations of the Kenyan people. In the Mackay report of 1981, the 7-4-2-3 system of education was replaced with the new 8-4-4 system and the establishment of the Commission for Higher Education (CHE). The curriculum was diversified and the technical skills incorporated in order to prepare pupils for self-employment, training and further education (Silsil, 2009).

From the examples given, it is clear evidence that the reforms in the education sector are modifications of the systems of education since the colonial government. Over the years, the area of the study, that is, Murinduko zone has been subjected to this vigorous evaluation and testing with dismal performance comparatively with other zones in the Mwea-East district is a unique zone because its location suffers harsh climatic conditions for effective socio-economic activities. It also includes Ngariama Ranching Scheme where people are currently being settled. There are still political wrangles between Kirinyaga County Council and the said owners of the ranch.

## **2. The statement of the problem**

National examinations in this country are done annually. The results are nationally analyzed. Some areas do well while others perform poorly. It has been a problem to exactly explain this phenomenon. Kirinyaga County has been over the years rated as performing well both in primary and secondary education. However, there are some pockets of zones which perform very poorly. Murinduko zone is one of these which have been doing very poorly. Mwea East District has three Zones i.e. Mutithi, Thiba and

Murinduko zone. Thiba always gives the top cream in this district while Murinduo zone lags behind. The following tables give the zonal merit in the county

**Table 1:** County 2012 Zonal Merit

Zone	Mean Score	Position
Kabare	299.23	1
Ktus	299.12	2
Thiba	285.68	3
Mutira	281.54	4
Inoi	280.90	5
Mwerua	275.25	6
Ngariama	272.13	7
Gakoigo	271.38	8
Kiiene	271.01	9
Barangwi	268.46	10
Mutithi	265.93	11
Murinduko	264.74	12

**Source:** Zonal office, MOE

**Table 1.1:** Mwea District KCPE Mean

Zone	2010	2011	2012
Thiba	271.16	276.68	285.68
Mutithi	269.87	274.04	265.93
<b>Murinduko</b>	<b>267.64</b>	<b>261.45</b>	<b>264.74</b>

**Source:** Zonal Office, MOE

Table 1.0 above, gave Mwea District KCPE zonal merit for year 2012, 2011 and 2010. This one showed clearly that Murinduko zone always lagged behind the other zones. This one meant that there was something which was really happening in this zone.

As evidenced in table 1 and table 1.1 above, Murinduko zone had not been doing well in KCPE performance. The researcher wanted to find out critical factors influencing this poor performance at the KCPE level. This poor performance triggered the researcher to carry out a research to find out why this trend had been persistent. The researcher strongly believed the following factors impacted heavily on poor academic performance in their examinations; the level of income of the parents due to harsh climatic conditions coupled with low level of education as a result of poverty. In addition, persistent wrangling of political leadership ranging from school managers, local authority to National politics. Child labour had also contributed a lot in the mining, horticultural and transport industry.

### **3. The purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to carry out an investigation of the contribution of the parental socio-economic status on pupils' KCPE performance in Mwea - East District. It aimed at investigating the low performance in public primary schools in the specified area. This is the newly created district of Kirinyaga County. The public primary schools in this area have been performing poorly which has drawn the attention of many stakeholders. The purpose of the study therefore was to find out whether the parents' level of income, education, child labour or political involvement contributed to the poor performance in the KCPE examination.

### **4. The objectives**

The study focused itself on the following objectives:

1. To find out the extent to which the parents' level of income affects pupils' KCPE performance in Murinduko zone.
2. To analyze the parents' level of education on pupils' KCPE performance in Murinduko zone.
3. To investigate the manner in which the parents' political involvement affects pupils' KCPE performance in Murinduko Zone.
4. To examine the extent in which child labour influences pupils' KCPE performance in Murinduko zone.

### **5. The research questions**

This study was guided by the following questions;

1. To what extent does the parents' level of Income affect pupils' KCPE performance in Murinduko zone?
2. In what ways do parents' 'level of education' influences the pupils' KCPE performance in Murinduko zone?
3. In what manner does parents' political involvement affect pupils' KCPE performance in Murinduko zone?
4. How does child labour influence pupils' KCPE performance Murinduko zone?

### **6. Significance of the study**

This study will provide useful information to all the stakeholders in the Ministry of Education on curriculum implementation in this region and such related areas. It may

help the government in planning and decision making. It may help the government to consider this area as an ASAL so that as they distribute their resources, they may put more emphasis on this region. The region may get some donations in form of finances, physical facilities or training from donors, NGO's, sponsors and even from the World Bank finances. All school stakeholders will embrace the findings to realign for excellent performance. The study may help head teachers and teachers to identify very needy pupils and assist them in getting some financial help from the CDF and other volunteers. The study will form literature for other scholars who may wish to do more research in this area.

## **7. Theoretical framework**

The study was carried out within the context of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. Abraham Maslow outlined the elements of an overall theory of motivation. Maslow's five hierarchy of need levels are significant in this study because parents and teachers as part of stakeholders cannot perform well when some needs are not met particularly the basic. Again, pupils will not be able to concentrate when basic needs like food and shelter are not met.

Motivation is a process that starts with a physiological or psychological deficiency or need that activates behavior or a drive that is aimed at a goal or incentive (Okumbe 2007). It consists of needs (deficiency) which set up drives (motives). The drives in turn help in acquiring incentives (goals). The physiological needs are the most basic in the hierarchy. Some of the examples include hunger, thirst and sleep. Once a pupil lacks these needs then his/her performance may be low. The safety (security) needs occupy the second level. These needs include both emotional and physical needs. Security needs relate to the desire for a peaceful, smoothly run and stable environment. Learners just like workers want some assurance that their security needs will be met.

The third level of needs is referred to as love, belonging, affection, affiliation or social needs. These needs are concerned with affectionate relations with other people and status within a group. A learner will do well when she/he feels loved and has a belonging. The fourth level of needs is the esteem needs. These are the needs for power, achievements, competence, recognition and status. Here, an individual aspires for self-respect, self-esteem and esteem for others. Learners also want to feel that they are worthy, that others also recognize this and they likewise recognize that others are worthy. The fifth level of needs is the self-actualization needs. At this level, one becomes what he / she is capable of becoming. An individual's need to self-actualize is the need to be what one wants to be to achieve fulfillment of one's life goals, and to

realize the potential of one's personality. The learners also have their set goals which they want to achieve in order to be what they are aspiring to become in their future.

This theory therefore was used in the assessment of parental socio-economic status on KCPE performance in this region. The theory assumes that human behavior occurs when people try to satisfy their unsatisfied needs. The theory was used to find out the contribution of parental socio-economic status on KCPE performance in this region.

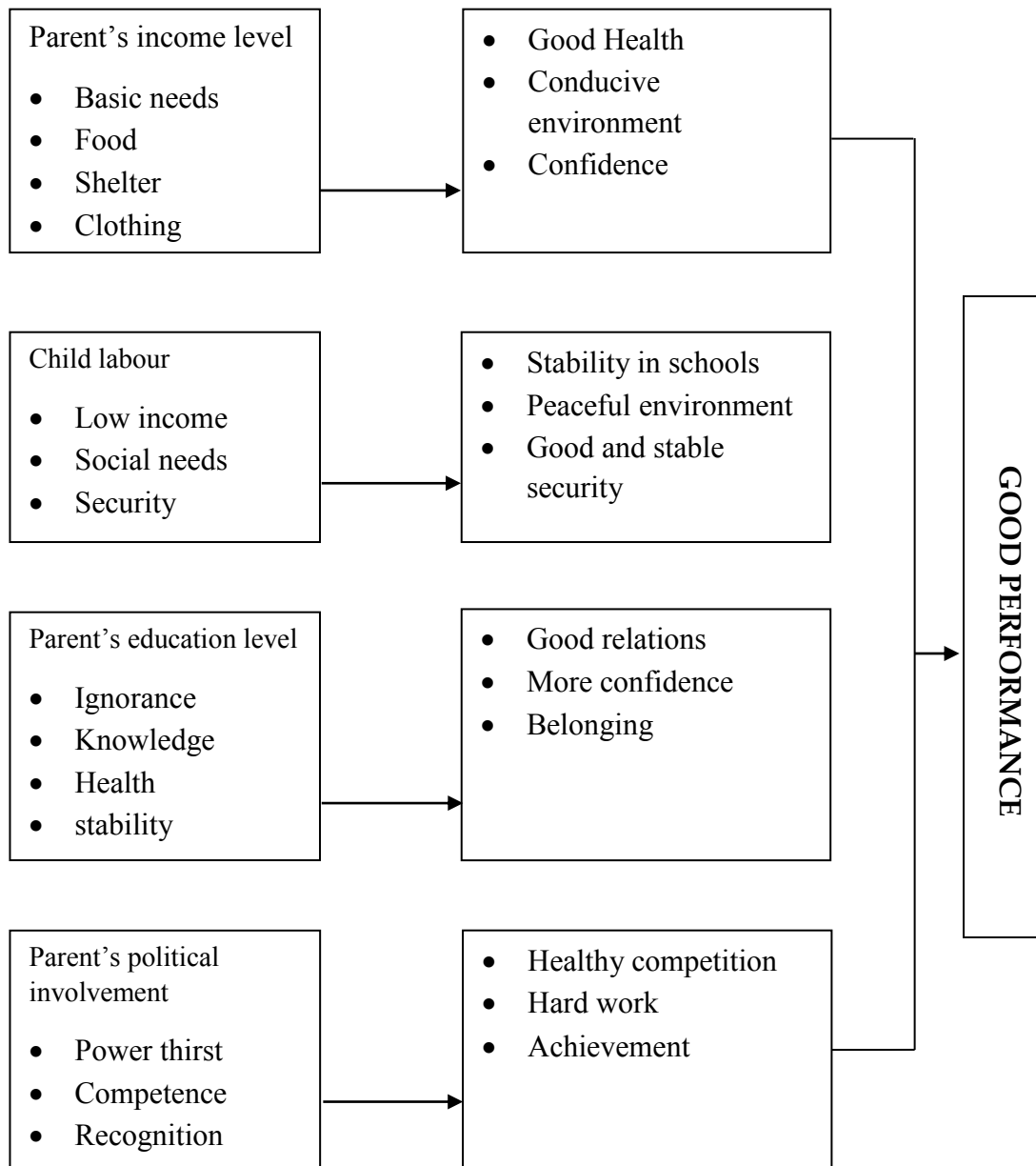
## **8. Conceptual framework**

A conceptual framework is a model of presentation where a researcher conceptualizes or represents the relationships between variables in the study and shows the relationship graphically or diagrammatically (Orodho 2010).

This theory is very relevant to this study because it is assumed that the poor performance may be due to deprivation of some of these motivators. On the same note, learners need some motivation. There are some needs which need to be met in order for learners to excel in the KCPE performance. At the same time, the distracters need to be suppressed so that they can do better in their examinations. The performance of pupils in this study therefore was pegged on this theory. This is because if teachers, pupils or even the head teacher are deprived of some of these needs or motivators, then the performance will most likely be poor and viceversa.

In figure 1.0 parents' level of income can contribute a lot to the pupils' performance. If for example, the learner is provided with all his/her physiological needs like food, shelter and clothes, such a learner is exposed to a good learning environment both in school and at home, he/she will perform well in KCPE. The same case, when the child is not exposed to child labour due to low income and earnings for survival, such a child can do well in his/her learning. Parents' level of education may be a basis of the child's performance since an educated parent will make sure his/her children are stable and will remain healthy as they pursue education. Such a parent knows the necessity of education and therefore will do his/her best for the children to get the best education. Again, if such children are exposed to a good learning environment, they will do better in their examinations.

**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework relating parental socio-economic status and pupils' KCPE performance



Source: Authors Conceptualization

## 9. Literature review

### A. Global perspective of socio-economic status and education

Orodho (2010) noted that the art of literature review involves reading and evaluating reports of research as well as other reports and opinions that are related to the planned research projects. Borg (1989) noted that literature review in educational research provides one with means of getting a frontier in a particular field of knowledge.



There is a positive correlation between the parents' level of education, income and occupation with pupils' educational performance. Less educated parents may have inadequate skills for such activities as Suleman et al (2012) note that high socio-economic status of the parents plays a fundamental and crucial role in the enhancement of their children's academic achievement. They found that students from low socio-economic status have lower academic achievement as compared to the academic achievement from higher socio-economic students. In their results, students showed good academic performance whose parental income was more compared to those students whose parental income was low. Students showed higher academic achievement whose father and mother were more educated as compared to those students whose father and mother were not educated or less educated.

Jensen (2009) noted that children raised in poverty rarely choose to behave differently, but they are faced with overwhelming challenges that affluent children never have to confront, and their brains have adapted to sub-optimal conditions in ways that undermine good school performance.

The 8-4-4 education system has had lots of criticism, the worst being its focus on examination. Some authors from Family Planning Association of Kenya have commented on parental influence to the youth. It is extremely important for parents to appreciate the problems of the youth and offer spiritual and social guidance to enable them to grow up as responsible citizens. As a parent, it is crucial to spend most of your time with the children in order to explain, clarify and answer questions about the changes they experience as they grow. This gives children an opportunity to learn from credible sources of information rather than from ignorant peers. Family Planning Association of Kenya (2001).

Watson (2008) in his evidence suggests that the short term impact of child labour may be negligible although this only holds for the relatively low levels of child labour undertaken by the Vietnamese children; reducing child labour will require households to be very forward-looking and to have access to sufficient credit to fund the costs of schooling without requiring their children to work.

A handbook from the Ministry of Education on EFA notes that in some cases, especially in many African countries, the indicators towards achieving quality EFA are showing declining trends (Silsil 2009).

High performance is encouraged by rewarding the highest performance with such things as salary increase and promotional opportunities (Heneman 1994). Education managers need to be aware of the influence of school and the outside environment. They should be aware of the mutual influence between the school and the

outside environment, and consciously and deliberately plan to make positive influence on its output and environment (Teklemariam 2009).

In an educational organization, as in any other organization, the teachers, students and other workers come from diverse cultural backgrounds (Okumbe 2007). The school draws its students from the local community and depends on the community for much of its financial support. In one of his findings in his research, Ngugi (2005) noted that head teachers can improve their performance and their effectiveness by their ability to influence the group and its members in achieving a common task. There is a direct relationship between leadership style and behaviour of the people and the organizational climate (Ngugi 2005).

The deepest noted and widespread inequalities in education especially in higher education in both developing countries are those arising from socio-economic status. He further states that the children of upper income group tend to get more years of schooling than low-income groups (Bishop 1994).

In the management of any school organization, the administrator should captivate trust in all the stakeholders for the learners to perform well in the national examinations. When the employees trust a leader, they are willing to be vulnerable to the leaders action-confident that their rights and interests will not be abused (Robbins 2008).

Armstrong (2006) noted that the failure to performance in schools might be due to lack of motivation. Psacharopoulos (1985) noted that characteristics such as parents' income, occupation, education and ownership of property indicate the family's resources for assisting children in further education. The parents' income which is determined by the occupation, will determine the children's educational achievements.

Macionis (2005) noted that the extent of schooling in any society is closely tied to its level of economic development. In low and middle income nations, where most of the world's people live, boys and girls spend several years in school leaning the practical knowledge they need to farm or perform other production tasks. The opportunity to study literature, art, history and science is generally available only to the lucky few who are wealthy and do not need to work. Education cannot be divorced from the social, cultural and human factors of development. The dynamics of underdevelopment and the vagaries of politics, together create a complex developmental problem which does not easily lend itself to simplistic educational solutions (Thomson 1995).

Pupils whose conditions of life enable them to be well fed and well housed and for their parents to be well informed and confident about dealing with systems, tend to do well. Pupils with opposite characteristics tend, on the whole, to do much less well;

although exceptional, talented and well-motivated pupils will buck this trend. The result of this phenomenon is that assessment frequently tests the background of pupils rather than the quality of their education (Craft 1996).

The responsibility of putting up primary schools has always been left to the local communities. Fitzgerald (2004) notes that to establish partnerships with families, connections need to be made, information exchanges and links developed in a way that values and respects the contributions of the children, their family and the setting. For families to feel part of the educational setting there is need to recognize them in the learning environment.

Parents can help their own children to learn and how they can complete the lessons which are given, these and activities like them will do something to bring parents into an understanding participation in the teacher's work. Some responses of the children are reinforced on a relatively unchanging fixed-interval schedule. Feeding, the availability of the father or school are siblings or social interaction, and in general events associated with household and family routines may serve as reinforcers, positive or negative, that are dispensed at relatively fixed intervals.

## **B. Parental social-economic status in Kenya**

Sessional paper no. 10 of 1965 on African socialism and its application to planning in Kenya sees education as a means of producing manpower for economic growth, development and for narrowing disparities. It identified three key areas for urgent interventions that is, eradication of poverty, illiteracy and diseases (Silsil 2009).

Education in Kenya has been undergoing constant changes from independence to date to suit government policies and the changing aims of education Eshiwani (1993). Republic of Kenya (1991) notes that some of the challenges facing the government in the provision of quality education to all Kenyans include poverty as 52% of Kenyans live below the poverty line implying that they cannot afford the basic necessities of life.

The Ministry of Education which is committed to the Education for All (EFA) was invited for discussions at a UNESCO world conference at Jomtien Thailand, 1990 Silsil (2009). UNICEF (1989) hypothesized and proposed a research agenda as to the trends of child labour in Kenya and recommended that the prevalence of child labour in the country should be banned so that these children attend school. Hammer (2003) notes that the home environment is as important as what goes on in the school. If the home environment is conducive for the learner, then most likely he/she will perform well in school.

A research project done by Mogaka Malach Mogire (2011) on the influence of parents' socio-economic status on children's performance in KCPE in Kiambu Division,

Kisii County and his conclusion was that parents' socio-economic activities greatly influenced children's performance in KCPE. In his suggestions, a research should be done to ascertain other factors that influence KCPE performance in Kenya.

In working groups, we can identify one or more of the following problems: mistrust, lone motivation and lack of initiative among group members (D'souza 1989). Motivation is concerned with the factors that influence people to behave in certain ways Armstrong (2006). A research done by Omega (2012) from University of Nairobi showed that the pupils are involved in domestic chores, commercial children labour and household poverty affects their academic performance. The parents do not adequately provide for their pupils' school needs. He found that a majority of pupils involved in the commercial child labour affect their academic performance.

Otewa et al (1997) in their findings revealed that socio-economic status, parental level of education, family size, family type and parental involvement affect the academic performance of pupils.

Odhiambo (2005) found that parental education and encouragement are strongly related to improve students' achievement. Phillips (1998) had also noted that parental education and socio-economic status have an impact on students' achievement.

### **C. Parents' level of income**

Parents' level of income can have a direct influence on the learners' performance. A pupil who hails from a poor background may not perform well in the KCPE examination.

Hijazi and Naqvil (2006) in their study found that beside other factors, parents' level of income, mother's education and age constitute factors influencing the learner's performance. Onzima (2010) noted that there was a positive correlation, income and occupation with pupils' educational performance. Less educated parents may have inadequate skills for such activities as reading to and with their children. Families with higher occupational prestige often have more success in preparing their young children for school because they typically have access to a wide range of resources to promote and support young children's development. Also, they have access to information regarding their children's health as well as social, emotional and cognitive development. Sen (1980) defines poverty as the absolute absence of certain critical capabilities to satisfy the basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, good health and education. A parent who has a low level of income can be termed as poor. Poverty is the state of not being able to sustain oneself with all the basic needs like shelter, food and clothes. This is an area which can cause poor performance and needs to be addressed.

Mutie and Kyungu (2011) had noted that students often face a number of challenges in the pursuit of education. Apart from academic challenges, there are other concerns that tend to interfere with their education, such as difficulties in raising school fees.

In the Daily Nation of Monday July 18, 2011, the Vice President, Kalonzo Musyoka urged schools not to send students whose parents fail to pay fees, home. Some parents are not able to clear the school fees due to poverty. Once such learners are sent home for fees, they will not cover the syllabus and this may cause poor performance in their KCPE. Chevalier et al (2005) noted that parent education and permanent income matters are significant to the learner's performance. An increase in parental income modestly increases the educational attainment of children (Mayer 2010).

Dahl and Lochner (2012) noted that children growing up in poor families are likely to have home environment or face other challenges that would continue to affect development. Even if family income rose substantially they note that current income has significant effects on a child's math and reading test scores. Loveridge (1996) views administrative tasks in three aspects. First, economy and efficient teaching and management; second, the public must be satisfied that the school is efficient and serving the purpose which it is paying for it to serve and third, as the process concerning individual children and their individual parents. Therefore, if a certain school is poor, parents are poor and if the meager resources found are misappropriated, then the performance may deteriorate. Mittler (2009) found that children from families living in poverty tend to benefit less from schooling than those coming from more advantaged backgrounds. Although most children from poor backgrounds are brought up by loving parents and do reasonably well at school, there can be no doubt from the evidence that as a group, they are more at risk of educational under-achievement and failure. Having no money and living below the official poverty line affects every other aspect of living. It causes immense stress and worry to parents and carers, leaving them little time to enjoy their children, far less cooperate with schools in promoting their child's learning.

Jensen (2009) noted that children raised in poverty rarely choose to behave differently, but they are faced with overwhelming challenges that affluent children never have to confront and their brains have adapted to sub-optimal conditions in ways that undermine good school performance.

Poverty affects students' absenteeism in Kenya and especially the female students. Students are withdrawn from school so that they earn money for the family (Gitonga 1997). Sen (1980) noted that poverty has been a major cause of inequality in

access to schooling. The parents' level of income therefore might be having a crucial impact on KCPE performance in this region.

#### **D. Parents level of education**

The prevailing concepts in Kenya's education system are the tendency to equate education with classroom instruction that leads to the mastery of an abstract body of knowledge which can be tested by formal examinations (Shiundu and Omulando 1992). They further say that education can be inferred from an understanding of the purposes for which children go to school, or parents take their children to school. A parent who is not learned in most cases will not see the sense of taking his/her children to school. Phillips (1998) found that parents' education and socio-economic status have an impact on students' achievement Kabiru and Njenga (2007) note that family lays the foundation for a happy society and productive citizens by ensuring that children acquire appropriate social skills and behavior. Each family must develop its own tradition which includes values, routines and principles that are unique and that children must observe. In this case, children will imitate their parents in what they do and what they love most. If they are educated and they love knowledge, their children will imitate the same. We need to be warm, loving and supportive but at the same time firm and consistent. We can also help our children to develop and achieve their goals. Parents must start molding the character of their children from the first year of life.

From the internet source, parents' level of education is part of a larger constellation of psychological and sociological variables influencing children's school outcomes. Students whose parents have higher level of education may have an enhanced regard for learning more positive ability beliefs, a stronger work orientation, and they may use more effective learning strategies than children of parents with lower levels of education with higher levels of access to education and poverty are inversely related, that is, the higher the level of education of the population, the lower will be the proportion of the poor in the total population and the reverse holds.

Wambua (2013) had found that parents level of education correlates with academic performance of students in KCSE. It also found that income and family size influence academic performance. Parents with higher levels of education were found to have higher levels of family income, provided more support to their children's education and had higher expectations on their children's education.

Ambajo (1997) notes that the poor families find it difficult to pay fees, but even free education imposes a substantial financial burden through earnings foregone and not of pocket expenses for clothes, travel, books or materials. Moreover, poor families on average tend to have more school-age children than the higher income families.

Buchmann (2002) noted that a few sociological studies have begun to consider the role of social and cultural resources in conditioning educational outcomes in developing country settings. Previous studies indicate that parental education and encouragement are strongly related to improve students' achievements (Odhiambo 2005). An education is multi-layered in purpose: its influence permeates society, economy and the polity as well as the experience of each individual (Ranson 1994).

Ranson (1994) also noted that no one is an island. However much education attends to the particular needs of each individual part of the learning process, the leading out will focus upon learning to relate to and to live with others. In shaping the agency of education are also more likely to believe strongly in their abilities to help their children learn. We develop ourselves in and through our relations with others. Education influences not sociably as such, but the scope of mutuality of person in relation.

Education is related not just to an individual's success but also to an entire nation's ability to compete in international markets. We look particularly at the school's role relative to that of the family. We next take up the current crisis in our public schools especially the problem of illiteracy and the measure proposed to combat it (Calhoun et al 1995).

The influence of the level of education of parents on the academic performance of their children is evident in all countries. In general, students whose parents have a tertiary level of education perform on average significantly better in tests of science, reading and mathematical ability than do those whose parents have only basic schooling.

Lockheed et al (1998) proved that a child whose father is a professional and a mother who is highly educated had high scores in mathematics. Hence, it can be said here that parents' education increases the academic achievement of the child. In another study,

Kaplan et al (1996) proves that parents who have low level of education and a high negative self-feeling may not have high expectations on children in education achievement. The more the level of parents' education, the higher the education aspirations held by the parents towards the academic achievement of their children (Lockheed et al 1998).

### **E. Child labour**

Child labour is defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development ([www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/briefing/labour.pdf](http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/briefing/labour.pdf)). Child labour refers to exploitation of

minors in work that maybe physically or mentally damaging or prevents the children from getting a decent education (UNICEF, 1989).

According to the Wikipedia, child labour refers to the employment of children at regular and sustained labour. This practice is considered exploitative by many international organizations and is illegal in many countries. This is especially because when children under fifteen are made to work it is physically or mentally harmful and interrupts their education or social development.

([www.nsmnurses.asn.anltopics/8391.html](http://www.nsmnurses.asn.anltopics/8391.html)).

UNICEF (1989) agreed that child labour was still prevalent in Kenya but it has not been well researched in this area and that is why the researcher wants to find out to what extent child labour influences the pupils' KCPE performance in Murinduko zone. There are many issues which still need to be addressed. For example, the Education Act is not in line with the contemporary changes in education. It cannot cope with dynamic changes. There is also lack of relevant legal framework to address the education dynamics for example the Education Act, TSC Act and the Code of Regulation are almost obsolete. There is also a mismatch between curriculum and cultural activities in the area for example pupils' being taught computer skills while what they go out to do after their course is horticultural farming. Each and every individual is supposed to acquire at least the basic education to be able to live comfortably. Child labour is a worldwide problem regardless of the economic status of a country.

The social phenomenon continues to exist both in developed and developing countries. It deprives basic rights to education and health (Phillips 1998). In poor countries, many child labourers are forced to stop schooling due to the necessity of contributing to family's income. Inevitably, child labour, with its goal to respond immediately to the basic needs of the household, deprives the child of the time to focus on schooling. Also, the health condition of the child labourers is also affected due to the exposure of children to chemicals which are mostly hazardous to their health. It should not be forgotten that the time spent in working contributes to the health of the children because more than eight hours of working is not suitable to the age of children. Orazem and Gunnarson (2003) in their preliminary investigations noted that child labour had adverse consequences for test scores. This means that child labour may be having some input in learners' poor performance in this zone.

Watson (2008) in his evidence suggests that the short term impact of child labour may be negligible although this only holds for the relatively low levels of child labour undertaken by the Vietnamese children; reducing child labour will require household to be very forward-looking and to have access to sufficient credit to fund the costs of schooling without requiring their children to work. Orazem and Gunnarson (2004)



noted that most children who work are engaged in household enterprises, whether it be a farm, a home based manufacturing operation or a retail business. These productive assets would have mixed impacts on child labour. On the one hand, they may raise a child's opportunity cost of time in school because the child is productive in labour activities. On the other hand, adults in the households are also more productive, so the household can better afford allocating child time to school activities.

Some pupils become house girls and houseboys, hotel attendants, matatu touts, handcart drivers and even help in other activities at home which contribute to family income (Gitonga 1997). In the poor families, child labour is often critical to the income or survival of the household. This is especially so among both the urban and the rural. The reason why a lot of children do not go to school is that school is not 'free'-primary pupils have to buy desks, chalk, and chairs and also make monthly contributions. This cost is very high for the average family. Many parents who have limited resources only choose to invest in boys or have the children stay at home to provide the needed labour or sell things from roadside stalls (Odada 1989)

Allais et al (2008) noted that child labour and the achievement of Education for All (EFA) are negatively correlated. The former acts as a significant barrier to the achievement of EFA. At the national level, a higher incidence of child labour is generally associated with lower values in the Education Development Index (EDI) which is a yardstick for measuring EFA achievements. However, lack of an accessible and affordable education infrastructure can also act as a push factor for children to take up work. Child labour leads to reduced human capital formation. It lowers net primary enrolment ratios. Also high levels of child labour are usually associated with low literacy rates. Boys and girls often do different jobs. Employment patterns tend to be gender specific. As a result, the impact of child labour on education for boys and girls can vary. For instance, girls are usually over represented in non-economic activities such as work in "own households". They also often bear the double burden of work outside and inside the house with little time left for schooling. There is a strong effect of child labour on school attendance rates. Many child labourers are constrained in their school attendance by long hours of work or difficult working conditions. Others do not attend at all.

The length of a child's work day is negatively associated with his or her capacity to attend school. Rural working children tend to be among the most disadvantaged. School attendance figures in rural areas differ considerably by work status. For those children combining work and education, performance at school often suffers. There is a significant correlation between the level of economic activity and primary school repetition rates and school survival rates. The higher the prevalence of children's work,

the more likely it is that children will drop out before finishing primary education (Allais et al 2008).

The direct relationship between work and learning achievement holding education constant could be because of exhaustion or because of a diversion of interest away from academic concerns. However, it could also be caused by those children who work being innately less interested in academic achievement (Heady 2000).

Studies have shown that in 1964 child labour accounted for 21% of the paid labour force, though the percentage has declined. UNICEF (1989) agrees that child labour is still prevalent in Kenya. These children are mainly from poor families who cannot enrol in primary school because the opportunity costs are very high. In reality, children do a variety of work in widely divergent conditions. This work takes place along a continuum, from work that is beneficial, promoting or enhancing a child's development without interfering with schooling, recreation and rest to work that is simply destructive or exploitative. There are vast areas of activity between these two poles. It is at the most destructive end, where children are used as prostitutes or virtual slaves to repay debts incurred by their parents or grandparents or as workers in particularly hazardous conditions, that efforts are focused to stop such abuse. The term 'child labour' generally refers to any economic activity performed by a person under the age of 15, defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) of the United Nations. On the beneficial side of the continuum, there is 'high work' after school or legitimate apprenticeship opportunities, such as helping out in the family business or on the family farm. At the destructive end is employment that is preventing effective school attendance and it is also hazardous to the physical and mental health of the child. Two UN agencies have directed their attention to the prevention of child labour worldwide; the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF 1989) and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

According to the ILO, national strategies to address child labour issue should, at the minimum, encompass the following five elements:

- National plan of action - single action or isolated measures against child labour will not have a lasting impact.
- Research - to develop effective national (and international) policies and programmes, extensive research must be undertaken to determine the state of child labour.
- Awareness - child labour is often viewed as an unavoidable consequence of poverty.
- Broad social alliance - Government action against child labour often ends with making laws.

- Institutional capacity -to formulate and execute a national policy an institutional mechanism (such as a ministry or a department) within the government must be created to monitor enforcement.

I.L.O convention No. 182 is considered by many as perhaps the most significant legal instruments to tackle child labour. It defines the worst forms of child labour and asks all government to ban them. These are all forms of slavery, child prostitution, the use of children for illicit activities, especially drug trafficking and work exposing children to grave health and safety hazards.

#### **F. Parents' political involvement**

Mason et al (2011) defines politics as the process of influencing the allocation of scarce resources. Robins and Callans (2009) noted that since the political spot light turned into the early years sector during the late 20 Century, there has been a flurry of activity in relation to policy and legislation, creating a driving force to raise quality within this complex and diverse sector and working towards more commonality and integration of services. They noted that over the past ten years, there has been a rapid expansion of services to support children and families. This expansion has been driven by a desire to improve educational standards, take children out of poverty and provide the foundation upon which young children can thrive and develop.

Calhoun et al (1995) define politics as the process by which people gain, use and lose power. Accordingly, there is an element of politics in almost all social relationships. Parents seek to maintain power over their children, husbands and wives exercise power over each other; teachers wield power over their students and business executives over their employees. They argue that when they speak of politics as the pursuit of power, they are usually referring to power in the sense of the ability to exert control over other people's behaviour or experience, even when they resist. Politics is the art of guiding or influencing governmental policy. It is the art of winning and holding control over a government. Politics as any activity of a person or group of person aimed at recruiting or mobilizing supporters in competition or rivalry or a competition of special or particular kind (Gitonga 1991).

Bigham and Ray (2012) noted that working through the political dynamic in public school system fall within the realm of school leadership. Politics are present at every level of the school leaders involvement in the educational process, ranging in scope from local to national. The challenges facing the school leader is to acknowledge the reality that politics is a part of the daily routine and to work with that process to ensure that educationally sound decisions ultimately result for the student in the school. The term 'politics' is commonly found in the organizational context, and often

carries with it a negative connotation. While recognizing the importance of national level politics, most experienced educational leaders would attest to the statement that local politics are very real and have the ability to influence decision making processes. The responsibility of educational leaders is to ensure that students learn regardless of political implications. Ultimately, the educational decisions made must be based on what is best for the students in school. Ranson (1994) noted that education is inescapably political and sometimes is used consciously to promote political purposes. Education is political not only because of its impact upon the distribution of power and advantage in the society but also directly in the way it may seek (or not) to influence the polity.

Barton and Armstrong (2007) had noted in their study that they need to emphasize that social, political and educational movements which support the struggle for equality and widening participation in community education, regardless of difference, have to contend with the might of other, dominant and deeply entrenched processes, ways of thinking and organization which are based on a construction of the normal and normative ways of thinking about teaching and learning and desirable outcome of education.

Marphatia et al (2010) in their ILOPS research shows that Parents Teachers Association (PTAs) and school Management Committee (SMC) members play a key role in both encouraging and dissuading parental involvement. Most teachers are keen to engage with parents but are wary of encouraging them to monitor teaching and learning as this gives parents too much power over them, local power dynamics which may make school governing bodies appear inaccessible to parents, often do not encourage participation either. In this way, there appears to be a block or a wall whereby there is no mutual communication. Parents in turn may start criticizing administration and there after affects the performance of pupils in their examinations.

### **9.1 Summary of literature review**

Many writers have written much about Education but still there are some areas which have not been dealt with critically. The sessional paper No. 1 of 2005 as one of the most recent policy documents in education, training and research provides a new direction on the provision of education and training at all levels. In the document, the government outlined strategies that seek to improve access, quality, equity and completion rates. The sessional paper was based on the recommendation of the rational conference of education, training and research that was held in November 2003 and that was attended by over 800 key players in the sector. The paper underlined the government's commitment to achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2005, a

key strategy towards attaining the overall goal of Education For All (EFA) by 2015 and Millennium Development Goals (MDG's). UPE is intended to ensure that all the children eligible for primary school have an opportunity to enroll and remain in school, to learn and acquire quality basic education. In this view therefore, anything which seems to be tampering with acquisition of the basic education should be brought on board and be dealt with immediately and thoroughly.

Despite the rationale for attaining Universal Primary Education, this area of study needs scrutiny to find out what might be wrong since the performance of KCPE is still wanting and needs to be addressed by all the stakeholders. In this view, it has prompted the researcher to find out whether child labour, parents' political involvement, level of income or level of education has some influence on the KCPE performance in the area of study.

## **10. Research methodology**

### **10.1 Research designs**

The study employed descriptive survey research design. (Orodho 2010) notes that this design involves collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. Descriptive survey is a method of collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the study (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999). The descriptive research design was used because it describes the way things are in their natural states. The possible approaches include participant's observation where the researcher interacts naturally with the respondents in a natural setting making and recording his/her observation without undue influence on the respondent (KIM 2009).

The descriptive design is the most frequently used method of collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social issues.

The study was carried out in public primary schools of Mwea-East district which was part of the former Mwea division of the former Kirinyaga district. The researcher was concerned about how the KCPE performance has been deteriorating for a long time. Other researchers had researched on other areas and that was one of the reasons why the research was done in this area to find out what was really happening as far as KCPE performance was concerned.

### **10.2 Target population**

The study targeted 24 public primary schools of Mwea-East district. The research limited itself to the public headteachers, parents and some teachers. The research

targeted a population of around 7440 persons from the 24 public primary schools in Murinduko Zone. Therefore, N = 7440.

### 10.3 Sampling techniques

Stratified random sampling was used in this study. The sampling was chosen because the study obtained a representative sample. In this case study, purposive sampling was used to select the individuals' schools. If the population from which a sample is to be drawn does not constitute a homogeneous group; then stratified sampling technique is applied so as to obtain a representative sample (Orodho 2010).

The area of study was in Mwea-East district in Kirinyaga County. This district has two locations namely Nyangati and Murinduko. Murinduko zone which is in Murinduko Location was purposely selected by researcher as the area of study. This zone has 24 public primary schools. It has 4 sub-locations which are Kamunyange, Mugamba-ciura, Riagiceru and Murinduko. In each sub-location, there are 3 public primary schools which the researcher picked purposively. The researcher used cluster sampling to sample 12 public primary schools as Kothari (2004) notes that clusters happen in some geographical subdivisions. In every school 2 teachers were sampled randomly; a male and a female to avoid gender bias and then 2 parents plus their headteacher. This made a total of 5 respondents per school. The number of respondents used by the researcher was therefore 60 which represented the population of 7440. To select respondents the researcher used stratified random sampling and where possible a male and a female were chosen to avoid gender bias. The population of 7440 was represented by 60 respondents. In each school, on headteacher, two teachers and 2 parents were purposively selected. Parents and teachers formed 40% each and headteachers 20% as shown in table 1.3.

**Table 1.3:** Number of respondents and their percentages

Respondents	No. of respondents	Percentage
Headteachers	12	20
Teachers	24	40
Parents	24	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

### 10.4 Research instruments

This study used questionnaire as the main research instruments. According to Lockesh (1984), a questionnaire is a device consisting of a series of questions dealing with some psychological, social or educational topic(s) sent or given to an individual with regard to some problems under investigation. Questionnaires are the commonly used

instruments to collect information about the population (Orodho 2010). Interview schedules and observations were also employed. This was because some parents may not be able to write their answers in the questionnaire. A research assistant was employed. There was no disturbance of absenteeism of respondents, and hence follow up was not necessary. If some of the subjects were absent from a scheduled data collection session, follow-up procedures should be described. Interview schedules contained questions to guide the mode of the interviews and were oral, face to face question-response. Questionnaires were administered with both structural and non-structural questions.

### **10.5 Pilot study**

Piloting was done on a small representative sample that was not included in the sample. The questionnaires were tried out in a selected sample which was identical to the actual sample used in the study. Once the questionnaire has been constructed, it should be tried out in the field. Through piloting, deficiencies may be uncovered that were not visible by simply reviewing the items (Orodho, 2010). The aim of piloting was to find out weakness in the questionnaires for example, insufficient space to write the response, clustered questions and wrong phrasing of questions. It also enabled the researcher to determine the validity and reliability of the questionnaires.

### **10.6 Validity**

Orodho (2010) define Validity as the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences which are based on the research results. It is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999). The research instruments were first piloted on the sample to find out if everything worked well to detect any potential misunderstanding or biasing effects of different questions. It also helped to test the feasibility of the study techniques and to perfect the questionnaire concepts and wording. Convergent and discriminatory validity was estimated in order to test if the questionnaire measured what it was intended to measure.

### **10.7 Reliability**

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials (Orodho, 2010). The stability of questions was assessed in terms of test-retest reliability. The questionnaires were tested on a selected sample school. These were tried severally on some respondents to find out whether they were measuring what they were intended to measure. The interview schedules

were also tried on some selected respondents to measure their suitability. In each case, adjustments were made to make the instruments reliable.

### 10.8 Data analytical plan

The researcher analyzed and presented the data using statistical measurements of central tendency such as mean, mode and median and then he represented them in frequency tables, charts and graphs. Qualitative data from interviews was analyzed. Quantitative data from questionnaires was analyzed using SPSS.

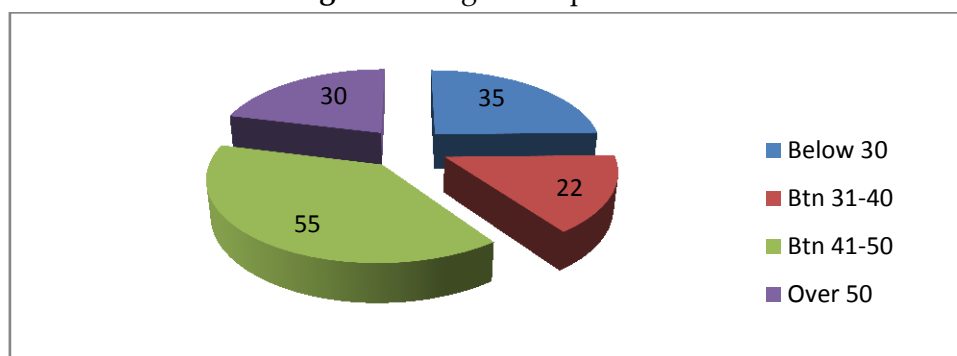
The data was analyzed using descriptive statistical methods especially the measures of central tendency (mean, mode and median). Frequency distribution tables were used showing the values that a variable took and the frequency with which each value occurred. The data was presented using histograms, pie-charts and bar graphs. The analysis was pegged on the objectives of the study that is, the influence of parents' level of income, education, political involvement and child labour on KCPE performance.

## 11. Data Presentation, analysis and discussion

### 11.1 Characteristics of respondents

The response rate was 90%. Most of the respondents who were below 40 years of age took only 35%. This means that majority of the respondents who were interviewed had a great experience of life's challenges as shown in fig 1.2.

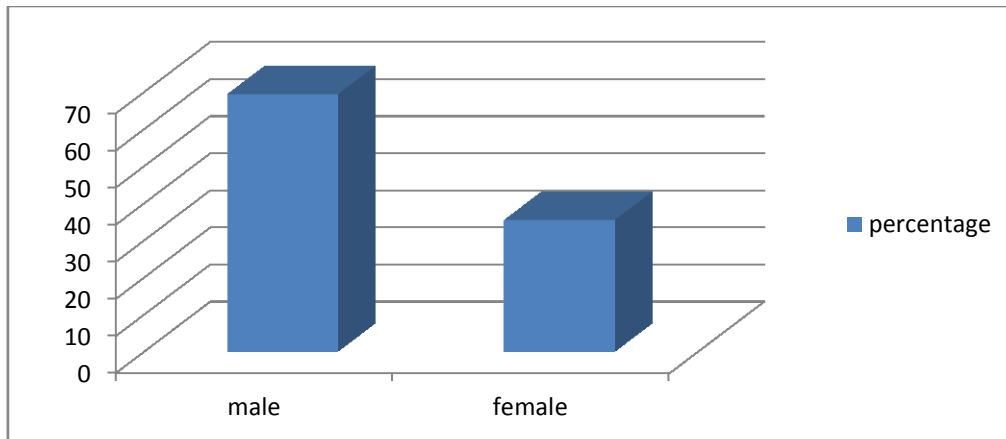
Figure 1.2: Age of respondents



Respondents who were over 40 years of age took 65%. This means that majority of them had children in school. They were also raising up other smaller children and had challenges as they did it in their schools. Those who were between 31 and 40 were 22%. Those who were below 30 years of age took 13%.



**Figure 1.3: Gender of Respondents**



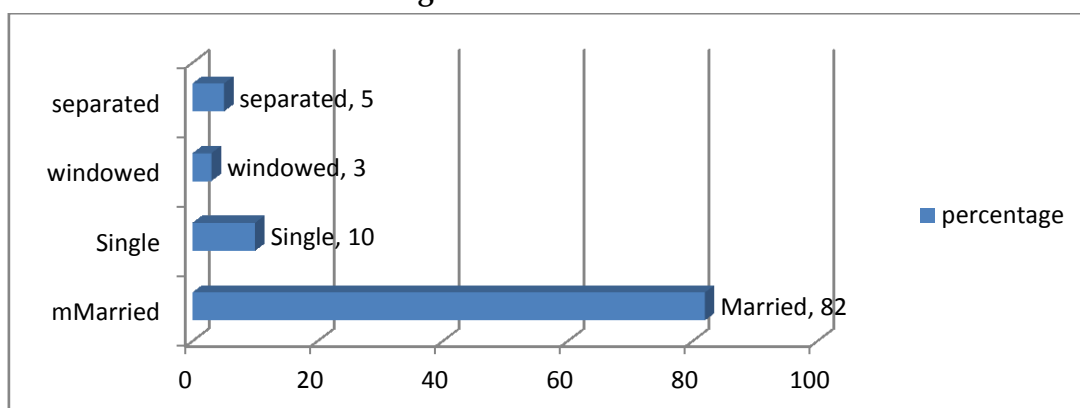
### 11.2 Gender of respondents

Majority of the respondents were males. They were almost double the female respondents. The headteachers who were interviewed formed 91.67% males and 8.33% females. The number of male teachers interviewed was equal to the number of female teachers i.e each gender took 50%. The male parents interviewed formed 66.67% and females 33.33%. Despite the fact that the researcher had created a situation of equalizing the number of the male and female respondents, such situations occurred where there was only one female headteacher in the 12 schools selected. To add to that most of the SMC's had more male officials than females. When the researcher analysed all respondents -i.e headteachers, teachers and parents as far as gender was concerned, he found that 69.45% were males and 30.55% females as it can be seen in Figure 4.2. Female respondents were therefore almost half the male respondents.

### 11.3 Marital status

Most of those who participated in filling in the questionnaires were married. This is evidenced in fig. 1.4.

**Figure 1.4: Marital Status**

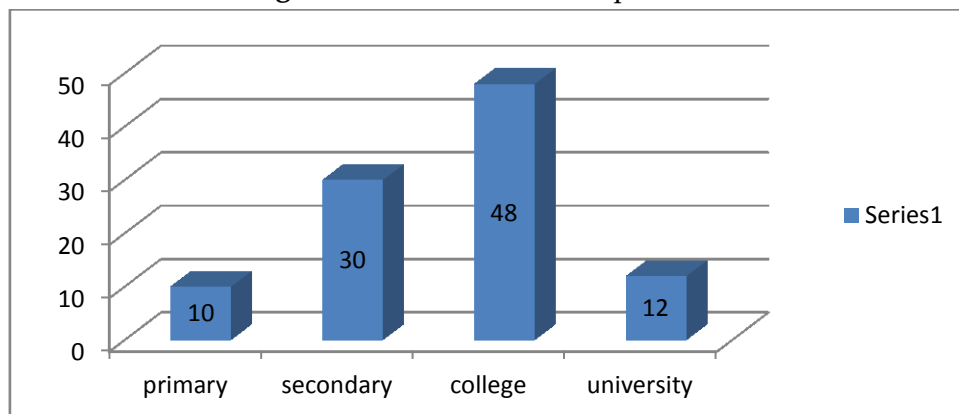


As it can be seen in figure 4.3 married respondents comprised of 82%. This means that most of the respondents had stable families and had children in school. Those who were single were 10% of the total number of respondents which means they reared their children alone. Those who were separated were 5% and those who were widowed were 3%. Those who were single, widowed or separated reared their children alone and had a great burden of keeping their children in school. Eqwuatu and Umeora (2007) had found that marriage and child bearing which plays a central and prominent role in the traditional African culture, may serve as an additional burden on the Nigerian female medical student, affecting her academic performance.

### 11.5 Education levels of respondents

Almost half of the respondents interviewed through questionnaires had attained college education as indicated in Fig. 1.5

Figure 1.5: Education of Respondents



In the above chart majority of respondents had secondary and college education because they took 78% of respondents. Only 12% had attained university education and were more than respondents with primary education. Those who went up to primary level were 10% of the total number of respondents. However, this did not correlate with Wambua's (2012) observation that students' academic performance corresponded with the parents' level of education. This means that at least most of them, knew the necessity of educating their children.

### 11.6 Problems faced by most learners

In relation to problems faced by learners, findings are presented in fig. 1.6.

**Figure 1.6: Learners' Problems**

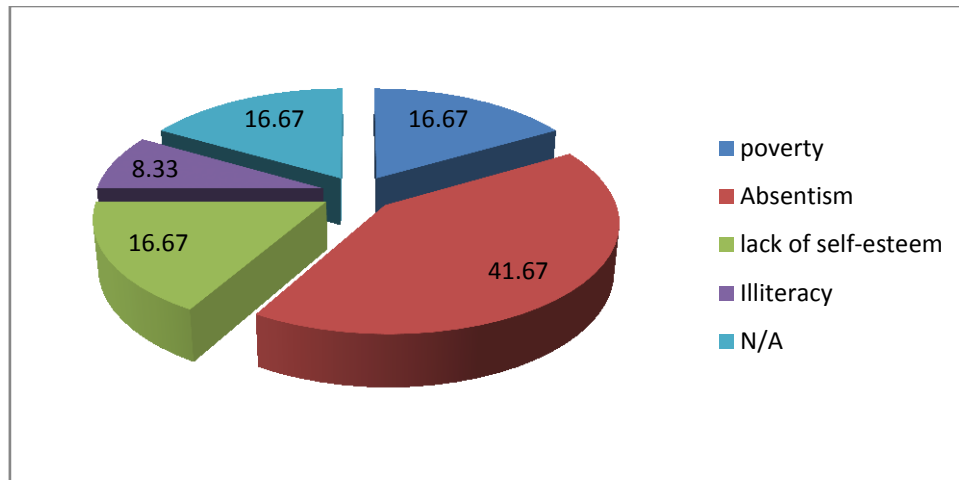


Figure 1.6 shows the problems faced by most learners were absenteeism which took 41.67% followed by poverty and lack of self-esteem which took 16.67% each. Those who felt it was due to illiteracy comprised of 8.33%. According to majority of teachers who were interviewed therefore, absenteeism was the major problem which was faced by most learners. They said that most pupils engaged themselves in rice harvesting particularly during the harvesting season. Others were employed in quarries to mine stones. The main reason why they do was due to poverty. They go to get money in order to subsidize their home income. Again, most pupils lacked motivation and hence were not self-driven and did not value education. There are also no role models who could be emulated. Most parents also do not value education. This concurred with Mittler (2009) who noted that children from families living in poverty tend to benefit less from schooling than those coming from more advantaged background. The former were proving to be absenteeism, illiteracy and lack of self-esteem.

### **11.7 Family assets and performance**

The first task of the researcher was to find the extent in which the parents' level of income affected pupils KCPE performance in Murinduko zone.

#### **11.7.1 Parents income**

The researcher wanted to find out whether parents level of income affected the KCPE performance in this region. This was the level of parents' income that varied in accordance with various occupations. Income was presented with various sources. Fig. 1.7 shows the sources of income.

**Figure 1.7: Major Sources of Income**

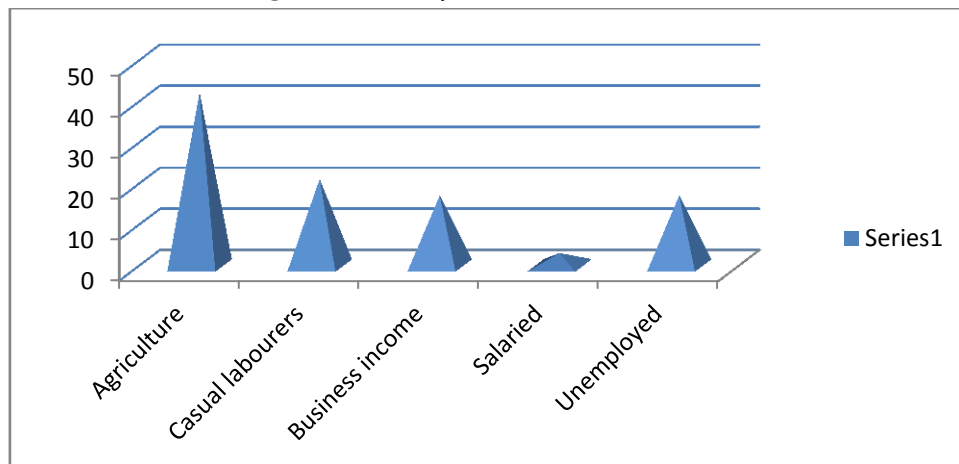


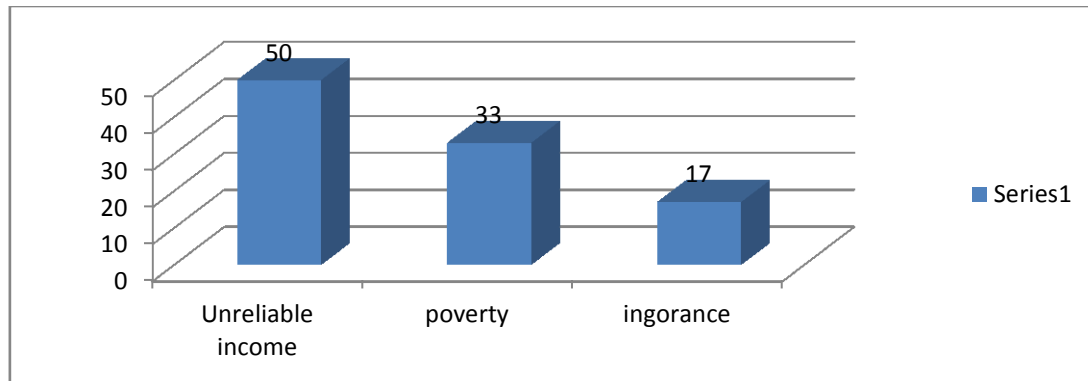
Figure 1.7 shows that Agriculture and casual labourers represented 63%. Those who were unemployed and those with business income took 17% each. The farming mostly done is rice farming and horticultural farming, for example, they grow tomatoes, French beans, cabbages, melons and kales. Some parents were employed as casual labourers in these farms in order to subsidize their income. Those who engage themselves in business run retail shops at home or in village towns. Others sell kales, onions and tomatoes in structures which they erect at the gates of their residences.

This affects the performance of pupils who hail from such families. Very few parents were salaried because they took 3%. This means that if for example, their farms do not produce or there are adverse climatic conditions, then the income would be low. Dah and Lochner (2012) had also noted that children growing up in poor families are likely to have harsh home environments and are faced with challenges that should continue to affect their development. This also concurred with Mittler (2009) who also noted that children from families living in poverty tend to benefit less from schooling than those coming from more advantaged backgrounds.

### 11.8 Delayed school levies

In this question, the researcher wanted to find out reasons behind some parents delaying in paying school levies. This is explained in fig 1.8.

**Figure 1.8: Delayed School Levies**



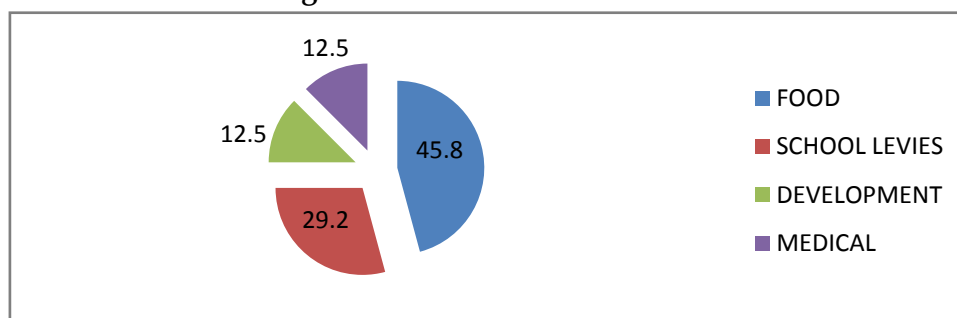
As evidenced in figure 1.8, most of the parents had unreliable income which carried 50% of the respondents while poverty carried 33%. Therefore, poverty and unreliable income comprised of 83%. Those who delayed paying the school levies because of ignorance took only 17%. Majority of the parents delayed levy payment due to unreliable income. Most parents therefore are poor and do not have a reliable income.

This is the reason why they engaged themselves in casual labour like mining stones in quarries or in farms of well up farmers. The income is not reliable because it is not a must that one gets such labour. Some parents are ignorant because they do not see the value of education or they do not know whether their children can benefit from education. This means that most parents were poor and hence could not pay levies in time. This also means poverty has been a contributor to poor performance. This concurs with Bishop (1994) who states that children of upper income group tend to get more years of schooling than low income groups. Onzima (2010) had also noted that there was a positive correlation between the parent’s level of education, income and occupation with pupil’s educational performance. In the same way, Macionis (2005) had also noted that the extent of schooling in any society is closely tied to its level of economic development.

### 11.9 Uses of income

This question aimed at finding out how parents used their income. Fig 4.8 shows how parents used their income.

**Figure1.9: How Income was used**



In figure 1.9, food took the greatest part of their income followed by school levies. Food took 45.8% and school levies 29.2%. From this figure, It is very clear that majority of parents used the greatest part of their income on food. It took almost half of their income in buying food. Food and school levies took 45.8% and 29.2% respectively. In the same way, medical and development took 12.5% each. This means that majority of parents used the greatest part of their income in buying food and hence very few parents could afford, to save their income. It means majority of them are poor and mostly live below the poverty line. This concurred with Hijaz and Naqvi (2006) who found that besides other factors, parent's level of income, mother's education and age constitute factors influencing the learner's performance.

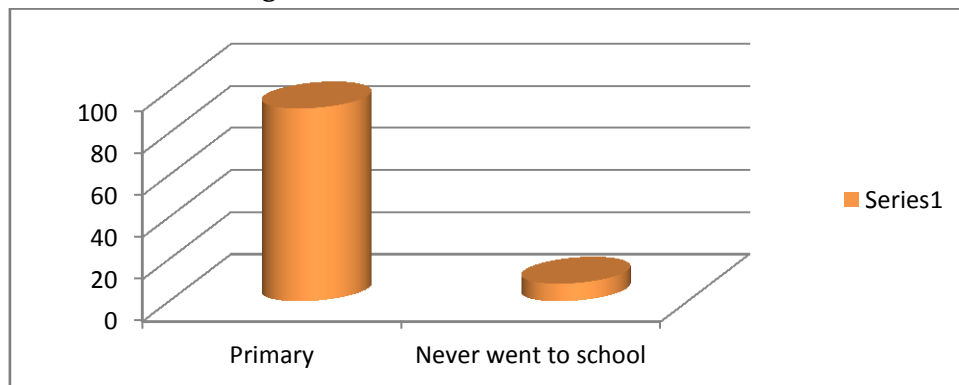
### 11.10 Parents level of education and performance

The researcher wanted to find out whether parents' level of education had an impact on learners' performance. The following themes explain this.

#### 11.10.1 Influence of parents level of education

The researcher here wanted to find out whether parents level of education had some influence on the KCPE performance in this region. Fig 1.10 shows levels of education various parents had attained.

Figure 1.10: Parents' Level of Education

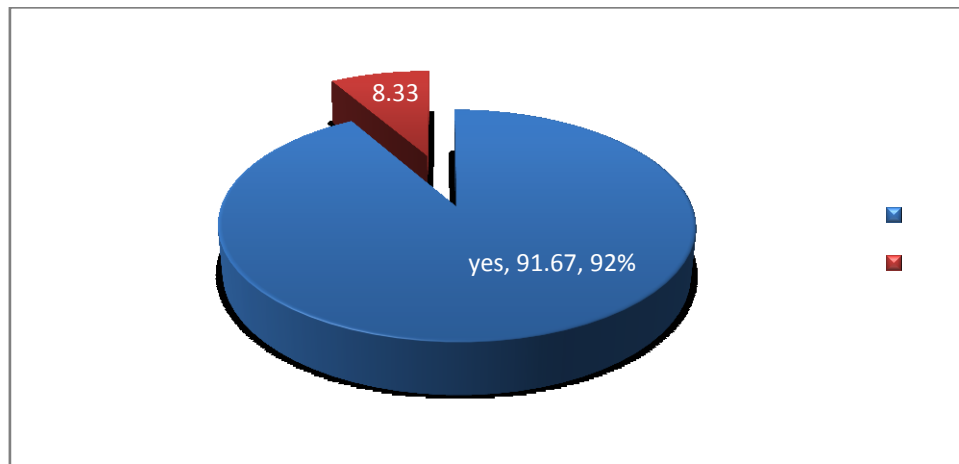


Majority of parents attained primary level of education. They attained 91.67% and those who never went to school had 8.33%. From fig. 4.9, very many parents had only the basic education and those who never went to school were few. This means that there is some relationship between pupils' performance and parents' level of education. In this area, therefore the parents' level of education influenced the learners' performance. This agrees with Odhiambo (2005) who noted that parental education and encouragement are strongly related to improved students' achievements.

### 11.10.2 Parents' education level influence on learners' performance

This question was aimed at finding out whether the parents' level of education influenced the learners' performance. Fig 1.11 shows whether the parents' education level had some influence on learners' performance.

**Figure 1.11:** Parents' Educational Level Influence on Learners' Performance

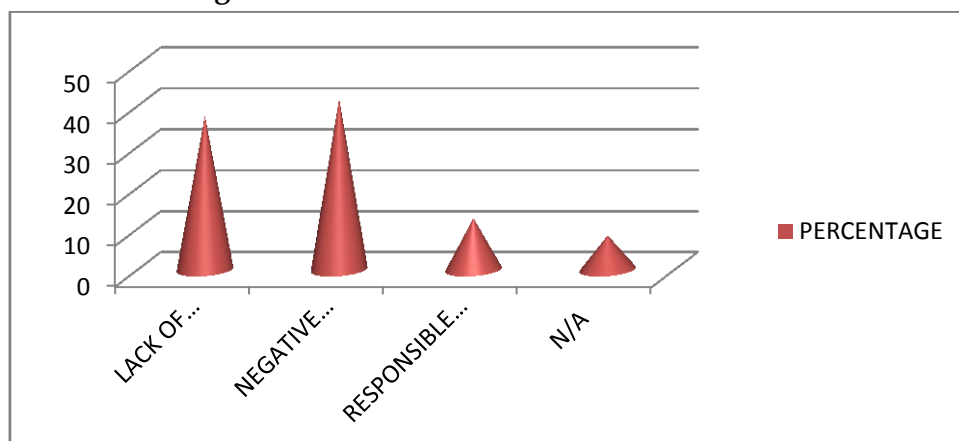


In figure 1.11, respondents who felt that parents' level of education influenced learners' performance took 91.67%. This means that there is a very strong relationship between parents' level of education and learners' performance. This again concurred with Otewa et al (1997) who in their findings revealed that socioeconomic status, parental level of education, family size, family type and parental involvement affect the academic performance of pupils.

### 11.12 Reasons why parents' education level affects learners' performance

The question aimed at finding out reasons why parents' education level affected learners' performance as shown in fig. 1.12.

**Figure 1.12:** Effects of Parents' Education Level



Majority of respondents felt that parents' education level affect learners' performance due to negative attitude and lack of motivation which took 41.67% and 37.50% respectively. This means that the poor performance is brought by lack of motivation and negative attitude towards education. Pupils also lacked role models because if their parents are not educated, then their pupils won't be motivated to put more efforts in school. This agrees with Phillips (1998) who had noted that parental education and socio economic status have an impact on student's achievement. The study also concurs with Otewa et al (1997) who in their findings revealed that social economic status, parental level of education, family size, family type and parental involvement affect the academic performance of pupils.

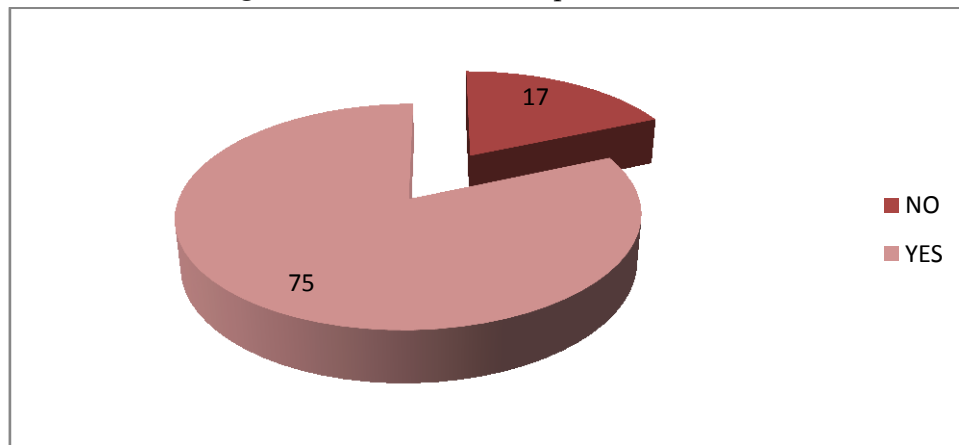
### 11.13 Political involvement and learners' performance

This other task of the researcher was to find out the manner in which parents' political involvement affected the pupils KCPE performance in Murinduko zone.

#### 11.13.1 Parents participation in politics

The researcher in this question wanted to find out whether parents participated in politics. The results are as explained in fig 1.13.

Figure 1.13: Parents Participation in Politics



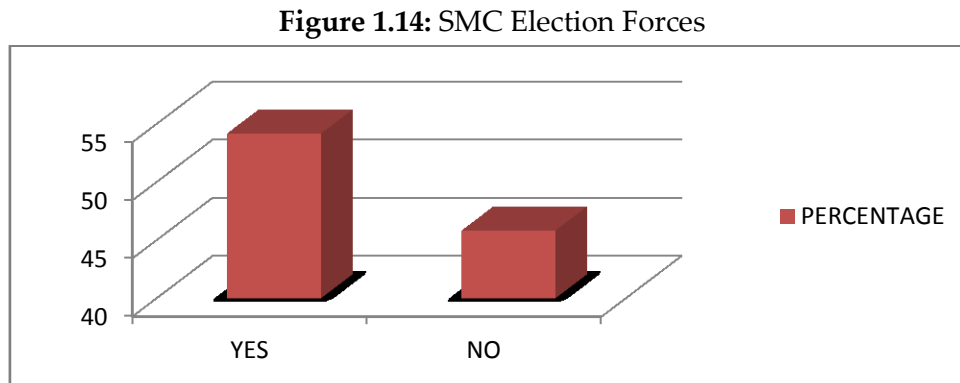
From the figure 1.13 above 75% of the parents participated in politics and only 25% do not take active role in politics. It can therefore be concluded that the kind of politics played in this zone negatively affects academic performance and education in general. There are incidences where parents rise up against school administrators forcing some of them to be transferred and others interdicted. This scenario gears the poor performance in national examinations. This one supports Marphatia et al (2010) who in their research found that most teachers are keen to engage themselves with parents but



are wary of encouraging them to monitor teaching and learning as this gives too much power over them.

### 11.13.2 Outside forces influence on SMC election

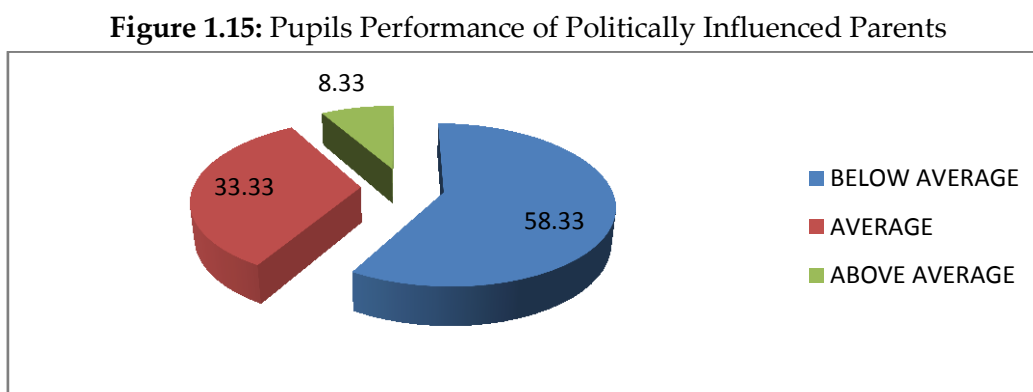
The researcher in this question wanted to find out whether the outside forces influenced the SMC election. Fig 1.14 shows how various respondents responded.



In the above chart majority of respondents felt that there were outside forces which influenced the election of SMC. This one means the elections are carried out under the influence of some outside forces. These forces include the local leaders like the clan heads, sub-chiefs, some councilors and even the sponsor who might want some particular people to be elected and not others. If for example, the school is sponsored by the Catholic Church, they might influence the election of the chairman in favour of their faith. This may affect performance particularly if those elected do not support the school administration.

### 11.13.3 Performance of pupils' from political parents

The researcher in this question wanted to find out whether pupils from political parents performed better than those who were not.



In fig 1.15, pupils from political parents were below average which had 58.33%. Those who were average took 33.33% and 8.33% of the respondents felt that children from political parents were above average. This means that pupils from political parents do not perform well particularly if the politics is negative. The work of these parents is to criticize the school administration and this affects pupils and in turn fails to perform well in their KCPE. This agrees with the findings of Barton and Armstrong (2007) who noted that we need to emphasize that social, political and educational movement which support the struggle for equality and widening participation in community education.

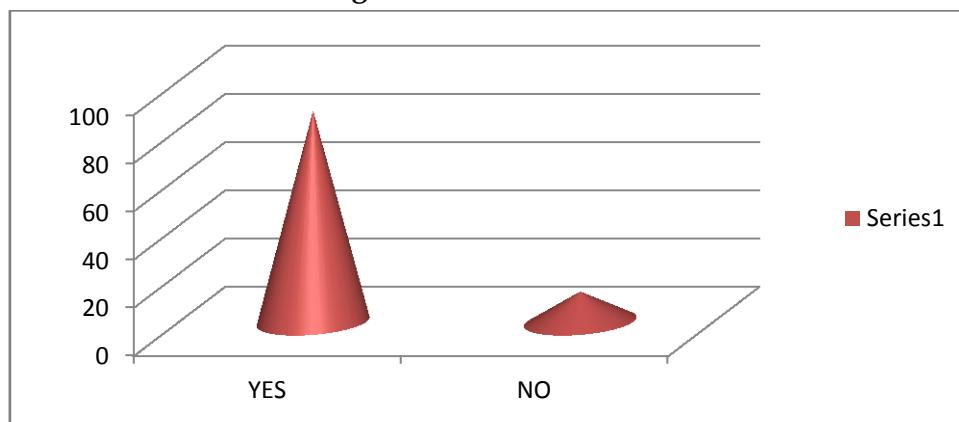
#### 11.14 Child labour and KCPE performance

The last task of the researcher was to find out how child labour influenced the pupils' performance in Murinduko zone.

##### 11.14.1 Child labour prevalence

The researcher in this question wanted first of all to find out whether children were exposed to child labour. Fig 1.16 shows how they responded.

Figure 1.16: Child Labour

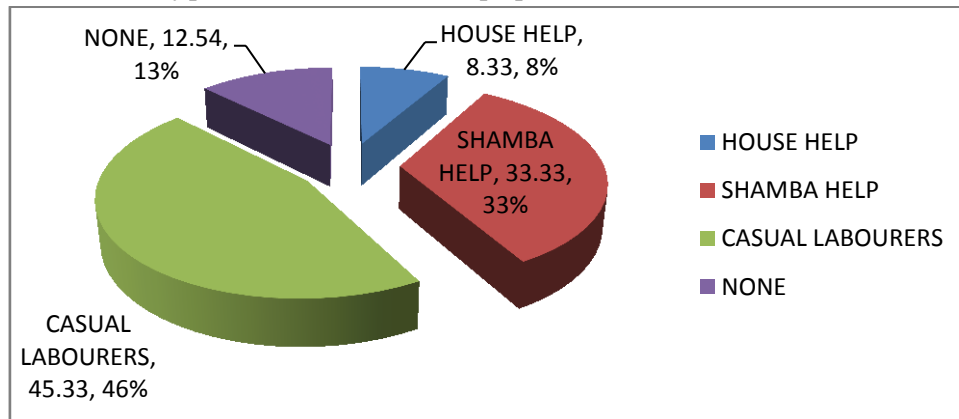


In figure 1.16, 87.5% of respondents said that children are exposed to child labour. Only 12.5% said they were not. From the researcher's observation, children are made to help their parents in rice farms, casual labour and in farms to subsidize their income. Their children also looked very weary and tired. This affects the pupils KCPE performance. This squarely concurred with Omega (2012) who observed that pupils were involved in domestic chores, commercial children labour and household poverty which affected their academic performance. It also agrees with Orazem and Gunnarson (2003) who had also noted that child labour had adverse consequences for test scores.

### 11.14.2 Activities which pupils are involved in as child labour

The main aim of this question was to find out the type of activities which pupils are involved in as child labour as shown in fig. 1.17.

**Figure 1.17:**Type of Activities which pupils are Involved in as Child Labour

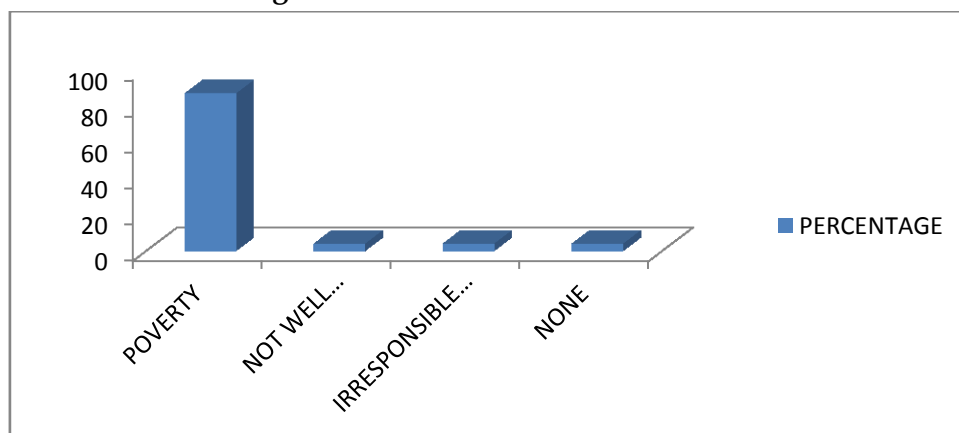


From figure 1.17, casual labourers took 45.83%; shamba help took 33.33% and house (help 8.33%. It is clear that most children are employed in farm activities or as house helps. They could be seen by the researcher helping in watering farms of some well up farmers. Some are employed in quarry to mine stones. Children exposed to such kind of labour may not do well in their KCPE examination. This agrees with Jensen (2009) who noted that children raised in poverty are faced with overwhelming challenges that undermine good school performance. They are forced to participate in income generating activities to subsidize family income.

### 11.14.3 Reasons why some parents expose their children to child labour

In this question, the researcher wanted to find out reasons behind parents exposing their children to child labour. Fig 1.18 shows how respondents reacted.

**Figure 1.18:** Reasons for Child Labour

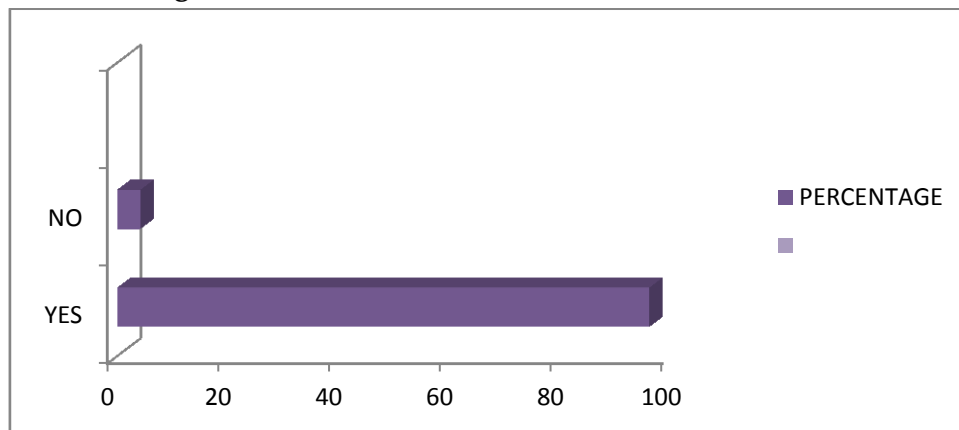


According to figure 1.18, poverty was the major reason as to why pupils were exposed to child labour because it took 87.5%. Respondents who felt that they were not well informed took 4.17%. Those who said that it was due to children's' irresponsibility comprised of 4.17% and those who felt there was no reason for child labour had also 4.17%. Majority of respondents therefore felt that the main reason why pupils were exposed to this kind of labour was poverty. Therefore, the main reason behind was to subsidize the family income.

#### 11.14.4 Children exposed to child labour and performance

The researcher in this question wanted to find out whether children exposed to child labour performed better than those who were not. Fig 1.19 shows various responses from respondents.

**Figure 1.19:** Child Labour in Relation to Performance



Majority of respondents, which took 95.83% said that children exposed to child labour do not perform better than those who were not which had only 4.17%. According to fig. 4.18 almost all respondents felt that children exposed to such labour cannot perform well in their examinations. With this therefore, child labour contributes greatly to poor performance in this zone. This agreed with Orazem and Gunnarson (2003) who found that child labour had adverse consequences on learner's performance. All the same, Watson (2008) had found that short term impact of child labour may be negligible although this only holds for the relatively low levels of child labour undertaken by the Vietnamese children.

## 12. Summary of the research findings

Respondents who had attained the age of 40 years and above comprised of 65%. Among the head teachers interviewed, 91.67% were males and hence only 8.33% were females. Among the parents who were interviewed, 66.67% were males and only 33.33% were females. This means that there was no gender balance. There was gender balance amongst teachers who were interviewed because both male and female teachers took 50% each. Majority of respondents argued that most parents were casual labourers and therefore had unreliable income.

Majority of parents never paid the agreed levies in time due to their low and unstable income. Most parents used their source of income on food. The rating of parents' literacy level is below average. Many parents have only the basic education and have negative attitudes towards education. Majority of parents are not motivated to encourage their children in learning. This is out of ignorance or lack of role models in their community.

Majority of pupils were given some work after school. Most of them were given the work as house helps or casual labourers to subsidize family income. Children participated in income generating activities. Pupils exposed to such work did not perform well in class.

Majority of parents participated in politics. They did not attend meetings without being coerced. Parents involved in politics go against school development and always criticize payment of some school levies. They made resolutions in the school development by raising their hands. Where majority decisions did not stand, parents were forced against their will. There were some instances where parents demonstrated against teachers for misuse of funds and poor performance of their children in national examinations.

## 13. Conclusion

The study was concerned with the contribution of parental socio-economic status on pupils' KCPE performance in Mwea-East District, Kirinyaga County, Kenya. The parents' level of income had some effects on pupils' KCPE performance. This was because for such pupils to perform well, they should remain in school, be provided with basic needs especially food and shelter and the learning environment must be conducive. A parent who did not have enough income was not able to keep his or her children in school and therefore such children were not able to perform well in KCPE.

The parents' level of education contributed a lot in the pupils' performance. Such

a parent was able to see the value of education and could motivate and encourage his/her children to continue working hard for better performance and hence such a child was able to do well in class work.

The parents' who were involved in politics contributed a lot in pupils' performance. The parents who refused some headteachers and even teachers to work adversely affected performance. Child labour had a great influence on the pupils' performance. Pupils absented themselves or were absented by their parents to help in subsidizing income by participating in income-generating activities. Some worked in quarries to mine building stones, while the rest as casual labourers in farms of well-up farmers, others as house helps and mostly 'bodaboda' motorbike taxi business which was making pupils run away from school in search of money. Such pupils did not do well in their performance. All in all, as it was reflected in table 1.1 the stakeholders and the administration should with one accord join hands in order to make the community change their attitude towards education so that performance in this zone may improve.

#### **14. Recommendations**

1. To try and eradicate poverty in the area, the government and the stakeholders should join hands and look for financial and material help from donors, sponsors and even World Bank finances. They can do it by trying to seek for loans or volunteers. The government should also consider this area as one of the semi-arid areas so that when it is planning for the ASAL areas, this area can be considered for more funds. Feeding programmes can also be introduced to sustain pupils' in schools.
2. The school management should identify the pupils from very poor backgrounds and try to help them acquire some financial assistance through bursaries from the CDF. They can also arrange with the chiefs for 'barazas' to enlighten the community on the importance of education. At the same time, they should join hands with the schools' administration so that where parents deny their children their education rights, they can face the law.
3. The parents should liase with the school administration to get financial support from the government through CDF. For the educated parents, they should motivate their children to realize the significance of education in one's life.
4. The pupils should enumerate some learned role models in the region and yearn to be like them. At the same time where they are denied their rights of education because of child labour or any other right, they should report to the nearest local

administration. They should not remain silent particularly when they are not attending school since they are supposed to be in school.

## References

1. Allais F.B. and Hagemann F. (2008). *Child labour and Education: Evidence from SIMPOC Surveys*. [www.oil.org](http://www.oil.org) date of retrieval 30<sup>th</sup> November 2013.
2. Ambajo, A.A. (1997). *Parental Social-economic status and its Influence on the Standard One Enrolment in Primary Schools*. A case of Migori District Thesis.
3. Armstrong, M. (2006) *A Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice*. USA: Kogan page Limited.
4. Barton and Armstrong (2007). *Policy, Experience and change; Cross cultural reflections on inclusive Education*. The Netherlands Springer.
5. Bigham G. and Ray J. (2012). *Decisions*. [www.cie.asu.edu](http://www.cie.asu.edu) (date of retrieval 30<sup>th</sup> November 2013.)
6. Bishop, G. (1994). *Alternative Strategies for Education*. London: Macmillan Education Limited.
7. Borg, W.R. (1989). *Applying Educational Research: a Practical Guide for Teachers*. New York: Longman.
8. Buchmaan, C. (2002). *Getting Ahead in Kenya: Social Capital Shadow Education and Achievements*". In *research in Sociology of Education Volume 14: Schooling and Social Capital in Diverse Cultures*, fuller, Bruce and Emily, Hanuum, eds. London: Elsevier Science.
9. Calhoun, C., Light, D. & Keller, S. (1995). *Understanding Sociology*. United States of America. Glencoe/McGraw-Hill.
10. Chevalier, A., Harmon, C., Sullivan, V. O. and Walker, 1, (2005). The impact of Parental Income and Education on the schooling of their children. [www.iza.org](http://www.iza.org) (date of retrieval 30<sup>th</sup> November 2013.)
11. Craft, A. (1996). *Primary Education Assessing and Planning Learning*.
12. Dahl, G. B. and Lochner, L. (2012). The impact of family Income on child Achievement: Evidence from the Earned Income Tax Credit. [www.ucsd.edu](http://www.ucsd.edu) (date of retrieval 30<sup>th</sup> November 2013.)
13. Daily Nation of Monday, July 18, 2011. An article by Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka urging schools not to send students for fees
14. D'souza, A. (1989). *Leadership. A Trilogy on Leadership and Effective Management*. St. Paul Publications Africa.

15. Eshiwani G.S. (1993). *Education in Kenya since Independence*. Nairobi. East African Educational Publishers.
16. Eqwuatu, V. E. and Umeora, O. V. (2007). A comparative study of marital status on the Academic Performance of the female medical undergraduate in a Nigerian University. [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov) (date of retrieval 25th January 2014)
17. Family Planning Association of Kenya (2001). Revised Edition. What everyman should know?
18. Fitzgerald, D. (2004). *Parent Partnership in the Early Years*. Great Britain. Anton Rowe. Ltd.
19. Gitonga, A.K. (1991). *The Science of Election Campaigning. How to win Elections*. Nairobi: Cosmopolitan Publishers Limited.
20. Gitonga, M.F. (1997). *A study of Absenteeism and its effects on Academic Achievement among Marginalized Urban Children*. Unpublished Med Thesis Kenyatta University.
21. Hammer, B. (2003). *ETS identifies affecting Student Achievements*. Washington update.
22. Heady C. (2000). *What is the Effect of Child Labour on Learning Achievement? Evidence from Ghana*. [www.unicef.irc.org](http://www.unicef.irc.org) (date of retrieval 15th November 2013)
23. Heneman, H. G. (1994). *Personnel Human Resource Management*. New Delhi: Universal books stall.
24. Hijazi S.T. and Naqvi S. R. (2006). *Factors Affecting Students' Performance*.
25. Jensen, E. (2009). *Teaching with Poverty in Mind. What being poor does?* [www.ascd.org](http://www.ascd.org). (date of retrieval 16th November 2013)
26. Kabiru M. N. and Njega A.W. (2007). *Child Development*. Nairobi. Focus Publishers Ltd.
27. Kaplan, R. S. & Norton, D. P. (1996). *The Balanced Scorecard: Translating Strategy into Action*. New haven; Harvard. Business school press.
28. Kenya Institute of Management (KIM 2009). *Fundamentals of Management Research Methods*. Nairobi Macmillan Publishers Limited.
29. Kothari C.R. (2004). *Research Methodology: Methods and techniques*. New Delhi. New Age International (P) Ltd. Publishers.
30. Lockesh K. (1984). *Methodology of Educational Research*; New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House PVT Ltd.
31. Lockheed, M. E., Verspoor, A. M., Block, D., Englebert, P., Fuller, B., King, E. et al (1991). *Improving Primary Education in Developing Countries*; New York. Oxford University Press.



32. Loveridge, A. J. (1965). *The Management of Education*. London. Pall Mall Press Limited. Macionis J.J. (2005). *Sociology*; New Jersey: Upper Saddle River.
33. Marphatia A. A., Edge K, Legault, E. and Archer, D (2010). *Politics of Participation; Parental support for Children's Learning and School Governance in Burundi, Malawi, Senegal and Uganda*. [www.actionaid.org](http://www.actionaid.org) (date of retrieval 18th November 2013).
34. Mason D. J., Leavitt, J. K. & Chaffee M. W. (2011). *Policy and politics in Nursing and Health Care*. United States of America. Saunders Elsevier Inc.
35. Mayer, S. E. (2010). Revisiting an old question: How much does parental income affect child outcomes. [www.irp.wisc.edu](http://www.irp.wisc.edu) (date of retrieval 30th November 2013).
36. Mittler, P. (2009). *Working Towards Inclusive Education Social Contexts*. Great Britain David Fulton Publishers.
37. Mogaka, M.M. (2011). *Influences of Parents' Socio-economic Status on their Children's Performance in KCPE (2007-2010): A case of Keurnbu Division, Kisii County*: Unpublished Med Project Kenyatta University.
38. Mugenda, O. & Mugenda A. (1999). *Research Methods. Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Nairobi: Acts Press.
39. Mutie, E.K. and Kyung, S.P.M (2011). *Guidance and Counseling for Schools and Colleges*. Oxford University Press. East Africa Ltd.
40. Ngugi, J.K. (2005). *A project on influence of Head teachers, leadership styles on students KCSE performance in public secondary schools*. Maragwa District Kenya.
41. Odada, O. & Odhiambo L. (1989). *Report of Proceedings of the workshop on cost sharing in Kenya*. Nairobi: UNICEF Kenya Country Office.
42. Odhiambo, G.O. (2005). *Teacher Appraisal: the Experiences of Kenyan Secondary School Teachers*: *Journal of Educational Administration* Vol. 43 No.4 PP 402-416.
43. Okurnbe J. A. (2007). *Educational Management: Theory and Practice*. Nairobi University Press. Sunlitho Ltd.
44. Omega H.M. (2012). *Influence of Child Labour on Pupils Performance at the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Tiriki Division, Hamisi District*, date of retrieval 15th November 2013.
45. Onzima, R. (2010). *Parents Socio-Economic Status and Pupils Educational Attainment: Case study of St. Jude Primary School in Malaba Town Council-Uganda*. [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu) (date of retrieval 1ih November 2013).

46. Orazem, P. F. and Gunnarson, V. (2004). Child Labour, School Attendance and Academic Performance. A review. [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org) (date of retrieval, 15th November 2013.)
47. Orodho L. A. (2010). Techniques of Writing Research Projects and Reports in Education and Social Sciences. Nairobi: Kanezja HP Enterprises.
48. Otewa, F., Role, E and Makewa, L.N. (1997). Parental Factors Affecting Academic Achievement of Grade six pupils in Kisumu city, Kenya. [www.nesweb.com](http://www.nesweb.com) (date of retrieval 22th November 2013).
49. Phillips, M. (1998). Family background, parenting practices and the black-white-test score gap. The black-white test score gap, Washington, D.C., Brooking Institution Press.
50. Psacharopoulos, G. (1995). Education for development. New York. Oxford University Press
51. Ranson, S. (1994). Towards the Learning Society. London. Cassell.
52. Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (1976)
53. (Gachathi Report). Nairobi: Government Printer.
54. Republic of Kenya (1991). Second University: Report of Presidential Working Party (MacKay Report). Nairobi: Government Printer.
55. Robbins, A. and Callan, S. (2009). Early Years Settings. London. SAGE publications Ltd.
56. Robbins, S.P. (2008). The Truth about managing people. Great Britain. Pearson education Limited.
57. Sen, A. K. (1980). Level of Poverty: Policy and Change. Washington D.C. The World Bank.
58. Shiundu S. & Omulando SJ. (1992). Curriculum Theory and Practice in Kenya. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
59. Silsil, P. (2009). The Kenya handbook for Teachers: the Resourceful Manual for Interviews, Promotions and Professional Growth. Nairobi: Shrends Published Ltd.
60. Singleton, R. A. (1993). Approaches to Social Research; New Delhi, Vikas publishing House PVT Ltd.
61. Suleman, Q. Aslam, D.H., Hussain, I Shakir M. and Zaib-un-Nise (2012). Effects of Parental socioeconomic status on the academic achievement of secondary school students in District Karak (Pakistan). [www.macrothink.org](http://www.macrothink.org) (date of retrieval 12th November 2013)
62. Teklemariam, A. (2009). Managing Education. A handbook for students-teachers, trainers and school principal. Nairobi. The Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

63. Thompson, J. D. E (1995). Curriculum Development in Non-Formal Education. Nairobi: African Association for Literacy and adult Education (AALACE).
64. UNICEF (1989). Adjustment with a human face Voll. London. Claredon Press.
65. UNICEF (1989). Situation of the Analysis of Children and Women in Kenya. Nairobi.
66. Wambua P. M. (2012). Parents' Socio-economic Characteristics and Students performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education. The case of Kalama Division, Machakos District. <http://erepository-uonbi.ac.ke> (date of retrieval 3rd December) 2013.
67. Watson, A. (2008). The impact of Child Labour on the Educational Achievement of Children in Vietnam.
68. [www.younglives.org.uk](http://www.younglives.org.uk) (date of retrieval 15<sup>th</sup> November 2013).
69. [www.nsmnurses.asn.au/topics/8391.html](http://www.nsmnurses.asn.au/topics/8391.html).
70. [www.un.org/Cyberschoolbus/briefing/labour/labour.pdf](http://www.un.org/Cyberschoolbus/briefing/labour/labour.pdf)

Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Education Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).