Determinants of Secondary School Academic Performance Differences of Students drawn from Private and Public Primary schools in Kenya

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Abstract
Pupils from private primary schools have been out-performing those from public primary schools at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination. KCPE is a national examination taken by primary school pupils upon completion of their primary school education. This examination is used to promote students to secondary school where they learn for four years and sit for Kenya certificate of secondary examination (KSCE) before joining university. However when pupils from private primary school are admitted to public secondary schools they are unable to compete effectively with those from public primary schools. This has resulted in secondary school students from public primary schools out performing students drawn from private primary schools even in KCSE. This study sort to find out the factors contributing to this trend. The research design was causal-comparative. The population of the study comprised of year 2004 and year 2005 form four students in Nakuru District. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 240 students. The instruments used to collect data were Questionnaires and Students' Academic Performance Summary Form. Descriptive statistics used involved means and standard deviation while inferential statistics involved t-test. The study found out that the trends of academic performance were similar where students from both private and public primary schools got higher mean scores in form 1, the mean scores dropped in form 2, then increased in form 3, in Mock and in KCSE. However, the mean scores of students from private primary schools were below the mean scores of students from public primary schools. This implied that students from public primary schools performed better in secondary school than students from private primary schools. Students from private primary schools had higher mean scores in KCPE than those from public. In forms 1, 2, 3, Mock and KCSE, students from public primary schools had higher mean scores than those from private primary schools. The study also found that there were a number of factors contributing to the decline in academic performance of secondary school students drawn from private primary school to be below that of students drawn from public primary schools.

Key words: *Academic performance, Public Schools, Private Schools, examinations, Kenya*

1. Introduction

Academic achievement or **(academic) performance** is the outcome of education or the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals. There are various factors that may potentially influence academic performance. They can be grouped into four broad categories:

- individual level factors — including the student's own physical health status and social and emotional wellbeing
- socioeconomic status
- family and household environment factors
- School related factors.

This study examined the secondary school effect on student academic performance of private and public primary school students. The question of whether schools differ significantly in impacting students' academic achievement is essential in education. Hence, identifying school

factors that make schools more effective is crucial. Students' educational outcome and academic success is greatly influenced by the type of school which they attend. The school one attends is the institutional environment that sets the parameters of a students' learning experience. Depending on the environment, a school can either open or close the doors that lead to academic achievement. Coleman and his colleagues (1966) were the first to study the association between school inputs and student achievement using national probability samples of elementary and secondary students. In their pioneering work, Coleman et al. estimated education production functions in order to quantify the association between students' academic performance in standardized tests and school and family input measures. One of the key findings of the Coleman report was that when the socioeconomic background of the students was held fixed, the differences among schools accounted "for only a small fraction of differences in pupil achievement" Coleman et al (1966).
In other words, variations in school characteristics were not closely associated with, and had hardly any effect on, variations in student achievement. The Coleman report generated a series of studies that were conducted to further assess the effects of school resources on academic achievement. The findings of numerous studies are mixed and inconclusive. Some researchers have concluded that there is little or no evidence of a relationship between school factors and student achievement (Hanushek, 1986; 1989), whereas others reported that the impact of school factors on test scores may be substantial (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996).

Four basic inputs have been identified as important in an effective school (Heneveld & Craig, 1996). These are availability of instructional materials, a curriculum with an appropriate scope, sequences and content that is related to pupils' experiences. The authors further identified time of learning and teaching practices as other important inputs that make a school to be more effective. In his study involving 72 empirical studies of students' achievements worldwide, Fuller (1986) found achievement to be significantly related to the length of time a student is in contact with the teacher, teacher's tertiary training and availability of instructional material. Kingdom (1999) found that the cognitive acquisition of students benefited systematically and strongly from schools' improved physical and teaching facilities. UNESCO (2005) in assessment of quality in the implementation of Education for All observed that in low income countries, increased spending to provide more textbooks, reduce class size and improve school facilities had a positive impact on learners' cognitive achievement.

According to Considine and Zappala (2002) the type of school a child attends influences educational outcomes. Considine and Zappala (2002) cite Sparkles (1999) whose study in Britain shows that schools have an independent effect on student attainment and that school effect is likely to operate through variation in quality and attitudes, so teachers in disadvantaged schools often hold low expectations of their students which compound the low expectations the students have, hence leading to poor performance by the students. Kwesiga (2002) agrees that school has an effect on the academic performance of students but argued that school facilities determine the quality of the school, which in turn influences the achievements, and attainment of its pupils. Sentamu (2003) argues that schools influence learning in the way content is organized and in the teaching, learning and assessment procedures. All these scholars agree in principle that schools do affect academic performance of students. Felder, Mohr, Dietz and Ward (1994) carried out a study on the differences between students from 55 rural students and 65 urban students, in their study, differences in academic performance were observed with the urban

students doing better on almost every measure investigated. The urban students outperformed rural students and they continued to perform better in chemical engineering courses in subsequent semesters.

Some researchers have held the view that school ownership and funding does indeed have an effect on performance of the student. Crosne, Johnson and Elder (2004) found that school ownership (that is schools owned by private individuals and those owned by the government) is an important structural component of the school. Private schools, they argue, tend to have both better funding and small sizes than public schools. They found that additional funding of private schools leads to better academic performance and more access to resources such as computers, which have been shown to enhance academic achievement. Sampson (2004) also noted that private schools have alternate sources of funding, higher levels of discipline, and are very selective and these may contribute to higher academic performance. Considine and Zappala (2002) concluded in their study on school background that students from independent private schools were more likely to achieve higher end of school scores. Crosne, Johnson and Elder (2004), Sampson (2004) and Considine and Zappala (2002) share a similar view that; private schools were more likely to have a greater number of students from high SES families, and to select students with stronger abilities and greater financial resources. In their conclusions, they maintained that the type of school affects the academic performance of students. Their views are summarized by Miller and Birch (2007) in their study on the influence of high school attended on university performance who argued that outcome at university differs according to the type of high school attended. The studies cited led the researcher to hypothesize that the student's school background is positively related to academic performance of undergraduate students.

For many years, private schools have complemented the government's efforts of providing education in Kenya (Siringi, 2003). Besides, they also increase competition for students and raise the quality of education offered (Waihenya, 2000). The government's policy is to encourage the private sector to invest in education in order to ease pressure on public schools (Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST), (1990). Although there were fewer private schools before the 1990s whose aim was to genuinely fill up the gap left by public schools, there was a proliferation of private primary schools in Kenya between 1998 and 2005. Most of these private primary schools out-perform public primary school in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education Examination (KCPE). For instance out of 100 KCPE candidates who sat their examination in 2004, only one came from public primary school while the rest came from private primary schools (Ochieng, 2005). Ochieng attributed this poor performance of public primary schools to the introduction of Free Primary Education which affected the quality of education in these schools. Abagi & Odipo (1997) in their study that investigated the efficiency of primary school education in Kenya found that children whose parents were unable to afford cost of instructional materials among other requirements tended to go to schools irregularly, which in the long run negatively affected their performance in national examinations. However, many public primary schools in Kenya continue to suffer from inadequate physical facilities such as desks and school buildings to a point where some pupils learnt under trees (Oywa, 2002). According to the Kenya Private Schools Association (KPSA 2003), private schools take top positions in KCPE national examinations due to the following reasons (Waihenya, 2004):

- Their classes are kept in particular (desirable) sizes and

they do not operate under pressure from any quarter.

- Teachers' recruitment in some of these schools is selectively done and they can afford to get the best because of the better remuneration they give.
- The private schools organize training workshops for their teachers during school holidays to equip and motivate them to become better in their work.
- The work relations between managers of private schools and the teachers are very good

The literature on poor academic performance by school pupils reveals as causes factors related to personal characteristics of pupils (Thompson & Standford, 1975; Reinhart, 1976 and Belkin, 1981) and factors related to the pupils' environment - the school and the home (Little & Thompson, 1983). In support of the pupil environment as a factor in academic achievement Maclean (1966) and Little and Thompson, (1983) note that the difficulties resulting in failure by the pupils may not necessarily lie with the child but with the educational system and in particular the school. Lockheed and Komenan (1989) report that if we control for the student background, school characteristics have significant effects on academic achievement and that in many cases the effects of the school characteristics are greater than the effects of family background.

According to Wehlace and Rutter (1984), although a number of study findings reveal that academic failures are caused by factors related to the social, family and personal characteristics of the pupils, these results have been negligible in the obvious implications they carry for shaping school policy and practice. They were therefore of the opinion that research efforts should be better focused on understanding the characteristics of the school and how these affect the student performance rather than trying to identify factors which are least amenable to change. They further argue that research efforts continue to focus on the relatively fixed characteristics or attributes of the students- the effect of such research efforts may tend to absolve schools from blames for their lack of success with the pupil academic performance. The issue therefore is: what are these school-related characteristics or factors which adversely affect pupil academic performance in public secondary schools? In an attempt to explore this issue the study reported below was carried out.

2. Methodology

Causal-comparative research design was adopted for this study. This research design looks back 'after the fact' to relate the dependent variable to the independent variable (Coolcan, 1994). The design uses a naturally occurring treatment or used subjects having a self-selected level of the independent variable. The researcher studied the dependent variable without manipulating the independent variable (treatment).

The design was found suitable for the study because, as Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) assert, causal-comparative design allows a comparison of groups and also the researcher is not able to manipulate the independent and dependent variables because their effects have already occurred implying that the researcher's task is to establish the relationship between them. This design enabled the researcher to carry out a comparison of students' academic performance between those who went through private and those who went through public primary schools. The design was useful in exploring and explaining the existing status of the two variables. This entailed an empirical collection of data on the academic performance trends of secondary school students from private and from public primary schools in Nakuru district, Kenya, and therefore the researcher describes actions as they are or as they happened rather than manipulation

of the variables.

the 19 provincial schools in larger Nakuru district. The accessible population for this study was 2 520 KCSE ex-candidates year 2004 and 2530 year 2005 Form Four students in the 19 provincial schools in Nakuru district. The categories of schools in the district are 3 boys' schools, 3 girls' and 13 co-educational (mixed) schools. Table 1 shows the study population.

Table 1: Form Four Students population in Provincial Schools in Nakuru District (Year 2004 and 2005)

Table 1: Form Four Students population in Provincial Schools in Nakuru District (Year 2004 and 2005)

School Category	Number of Schools The target population of the study was all year 2004 and year 2005 form Four students' ex-candidate in	Number of Students 2004	2005
Boys'	3	251	260
Girls'	3	342	350
Mixed	13	1927	1920
Total	**19**	**2520**	**2530**

The sampling technique used was equal proportion stratified random sampling which enabled the researcher to ensure a fair and equal proportion or distribution of students from Boys', Girls' and Co-educational (Mixed) schools. Kathuri and Pals (1993) recommend that this method be used when the population to be sampled is heterogeneous in terms of certain required characteristics. The 19 provincial schools were grouped into three strata: Boys' only, Girls' only and Co-educational schools. The schools in each category formed a sampling frame. Then using equal proportion stratified sampling, two schools from each stratum/category were randomly selected to give rise to a total sample size of six schools.

Kathuri and Pals (1993) and Borg and Gall (1996) state that a sample should be large enough to represent the targeted population. However, Kathuri & Pals (1993:53) observe that the minimum, acceptable sample sizes depend on the type of research: for this causal-comparative research-15 subjects per group are recommended. Based on this observation, a sample size of 20 students per school (10 students who went through private primary schools and 10 from those who went through public schools) was randomly selected to get a sample size of 240 students (120 from private primary schools and 120 from public primary schools) and this sample size was considered adequate for the study. The second stage was selection of a stratified proportional random sample of students from the six schools. Form Four class registers for 2004 and 2005 in the six schools were used as the sampling frame. 20 students in total were chosen from each of the sampled school.

The instruments used to collect data were two questionnaires, one for the year 2004 and year 2005 students (Students' Questionnaire) and another one for teachers (Teachers' Questionnaire). With 10 closed-ended items, the instrument (Students' Questionnaire) was used to solicit information from the year 2005 Form Four students on aspects which include the students' demographic data such as age and parents SES; type of primary school attended; a comparison of the primary school and secondary school in terms of teacher's dedication to their work,

level of student's motivation to excel in examination, time spent in academic activities and number of examinations and CATS (continuous assessment tests) supervised and finally the factors affecting secondary school students' academic performance. The closed-ended questions in the questionnaire were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. For all the questions, strongly agree (SA) scored lowest (1) while strongly disagree (SD) scored highest (5).

Teachers Questionnaire solicited information from teachers about the factors affecting secondary school students' academic performance. The instrument contained 11 closed-ended items which required the teachers to provide data about the students' (learners') attitudes towards teachers, the ability of learners to read independently, their willingness to answer questions in class, ability to socialize with the others, enthusiasm to ask teacher questions outside the class, finishing homework in good time and confidence in answering questions. The closed-ended questions in the questionnaire were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. For all the questions strongly agree (SA) scored lowest (1) while strongly disagree (SD) scored highest (5).

These research instruments were pilot-tested in two randomly selected provincial secondary schools in Nakuru district. These two schools were excluded from the actual study. Pre-testing the instruments was meant to estimate their reliability in collecting the anticipated data.

3. Results

In order to establish factors contributing to the secondary school students academic difference in academic performance of students drawn from private and public primary schools both teachers and students gave their views on the factors influencing the established performance trends. Their responses were as follows. The study sought to know from the teachers the factors contributing to the performance trends established in the previous sections whereby students originating from public primary schools finally do better than those from private primary schools in school tests, mock and even national examinations. Table 2 gives in summary the factors studied and the mean scores obtained

Table 2: Mean Score of Teachers' Responses on factors contributing to the academic performance differences.

Item	N	Mean	SD
Students with private primary school background have higher selfesteem than those with public school background	11	3.3	0.924
Students with private primary school background are more in class than those with public school background	11	3.64	0.924
Students with private primary school background are more timid in class than confident those with public school background	11	2.18	0.751
Students with private primary school background co -exist better with others in class than those with public school background	10	3.30	1.160
Students with private primary school background ask more questions in class than those with public school background	11	2.82	0.982
Students with private primary school background answer more questions in class than those with public school background	11	3.64	1.120
Students with private primary school background finish their homework in good time than those with public school background	11	3.82	0.874
Students with private primary school background are better in studying on their own than those with public school background	10	2.30	1.135
Students with private primary school background are more disciplined compared to those with public school background	10	3.82	1.08
Students with private primary school background perform poorer in teacher made-tests than those with public school background	9	3.78	1.093
Students with private primary school background perform poorer in Mock and KCSE exam than those with public school background	10	2.30	1.059

Table 2 shows views of the teachers invoWlved in the study on the factors contributing to the trend of academic performance;

- Students from private primary schools have higher self esteem than those from public primary schools.
- Students from private primary schools are more confident than those from public primary schools.
- Students from private primary schools co-exist better with other students than those from public primary schools.
- Students from private primary schools ask more questions during lessons than those from public primary schools.
- Students from private primary schools answer fewer questions in class during lessons than those from public primary schools.
- Students from private primary schools finish their homework in good time compared to those from public primary schools. .
- Students from private primary schools are better at studying on their own than those from public primary schools.
- Students from private primary schools are more disciplined compared to those from public primary schools.
- Students from private primary schools perform poorer in teacher made tests than those from public primary schools.
- Students who came from private primary schools performed better in Mock and KCSE exams than those from public primary schools.
- Students from private primary schools are more timid in class compared to those from public primary schools.
- Students with private primary schools background have a higher esteem than those with public primary school background.

Students' Responses on Factors Influencing the Established Performance Trends

Students were asked to give their views on the factors contributing to the performance trends established in the previous sections whereby students originating from public primary schools finally do better than those from private primary schools in teacher made tests inform 1, 2, 3, Mock and national examinations.

Table 3 shows views of the students involved in the study on the factors contributing to the trend of academic performance.

Table 3: Mean scores of Students` Responses on Factors influencing their academic Performance trends in Secondary School

Item	SSPs(N=64)		SPVs (N=57)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
The number of students in class in my current school is greater tha n the number of pupils in class of the primary school I attended	2.72	1.24	2.38	1.32
Pupils who did well in the primary school I attended were less rewarded than students who do well in my current school	2.95	1.38	2.02	1.44
The number of class assignments given in the primary school were less than those given in secondary school	2.83	1.44	1.89	1.48
The number of class tests (CATs) given in primary school I attended were less than these in my current school.	3.17	1.45	2.36	1.52
Teachers in the primary school I attended were friendlier than those in my current school	3.05	1.20	2.81	1.33
Teachers in the primary school I attended missed more lessons than teachers in secondary school	3.31	1.23	1.78	1.25
Pupils in the primary school I attended were friendlier than those in my current school	2.14	1.20	3.26	1.18
Teachers in the primary school I attended spent more time with learners than in secondary school.	2.01	1.30	2.98	1.41
Pupils in the primary school I attended were less disciplined than those in se condary school.	2.65	1.27	2.04	1.20
Time spent in curriculum activities was less in primary school than in secondary school.	3.16	1.40	2.13	1.21
Meals provided in primary school were better than those provided secondary School	1.99	1.43	3.86	1.41

4. Discussion

The results of this study indicate that factors that contribute to the academic performance differences of secondary school students drawn from private and public primary schools where students from public primary school perform better than those from private primary school to be the following: few pupils in a classroom (small class) translate to a small pupil-teacher ratio while many pupils in a classroom (big class) translate to a higher pupil-teacher ratio. Some scholars are of the opinion that classes of fewer than 15 pupils are optimum while others consider classes of at least 20 as small enough. Classes with more than 25 pupils are considered large.

A good number of students with private school background agreed that the pupil –teacher ratio in secondary school was higher than in primary school. A number of studies have found an association between class size and pupils' achievement (Iacovou, 2001; Karler, 2004). Pupils in small classes were found to perform better than those in large classes. The authors however point at the controversy as to what constitutes a small class that would result to significant improvement in pupils' performance. Hanosheck (1998) was of the opinion that, when all other things are equal, smaller classes are preferred to large ones. Smaller classes have a number of merits which include students receiving more individualised instruction which improve their achievement (Harker, 2004) and Hanushek, 1998).

It has been said that the reasons why most private primary schools performed better than public schools is that they have better resources, have a low student teacher ratio and that they drill their pupils in order to pass examinations. These have been given as reasons for their superior KCPE examination performance when compared to public primary schools (Kamau; 2003 and Oywa; 2003). Indeed a study that involved meta-analysis of 175 articles related to education and financing showed that the level of resources in a school had a positive relationship with student's achievement (Association of supervision and Curriculum Development, 2004). This study found out that increased resource allocation could have a significant positive effect on students' achievement. The findings of this study do not conform to a number of comparative studies done between students in private and public school in other counties. A recent study in USA (United States of America) found out that, First Year University students from private schools scored higher in all subjects than those from public schools when average test scores were compared (Sadovnic et al 1994). In Britain, Sulivan and Health, (2002) found that private school students regularly top "league tables" of educational success in public examinations for (GCSE), which most pupils take at the end of compulsory schooling at age sixteen.

This would then mean that students from private primary school where classes were small (low pupil-teacher ratio) performed better in KCPE but on reaching secondary school they performed poorly because pupil-teacher ratio was high. This means that in secondary school, they lacked individualised attention which they were used to in private primary school which resulted in their performance going down. High pupil-teacher ratio in public primary schools made pupils perform poorly in KCPE. On reaching secondary school where pupil-teacher ratio was low these students from public primary schools perform better than those from private primary schools.

Other research on the relationship between class size and student performance has identified conflicting results (Toth & Montagna, 2002). The results of some studies show no significant relationship between class size and student performance (Hancock, 1996; Kennedy & Siegfried, 1997), while other studies favor small class environments (Gibbs, Lucas, &

Simonite, 1996; Borden & Burton, 1999; Arias & Walker, 2004). Results vary based on the criteria used to gauge student performance, as well as the class size measure itself. When traditional achievement tests are used, small classes provide no advantage over large classes (Kennedy & Siegfried, 1997). However, if additional performance criteria are used (e.g., long-term retention, problem-solving skills), it appears that small classes hold an advantage (Gibbs et al., 1996; Arias & Walker, 2004).

Majority of the students with private school background stated that time spent on curriculum activities in secondary school was less than in primary school. On the other hand majority of the students with public primary school background stated that time spent on curriculum activities in secondary school was more than in primary school. According to Abagi and Odipo (1997), private primary school pupils are in contact with their teachers for more time than those in public primary schools. Studies carried out in different countries have shown that the amount of time available for instruction (curriculum activities) and how effectively this time is used by the students and teachers is consistently related to how much students learn at school and achievement (Heneveld & Craig, 1996).

Berhener (undated) points out that many studies have found a positive correlation between times spent on task and achievement. He defined time spent on task as the time a learner is engaged in a particular learning task. With reduction in time spent on curriculum activity compared to private primary schools; students from these schools have their achievement dropping also. But for students from public primary school, an increase in time spent on curriculum activities in secondary school improved their performance. Abagi and Odipo (1997) revealed that a lot of teaching time in public primary schools in Kenya is lost through various non-teaching activities such as staff meetings preparation of the timetables and cleaning the compound by the pupils during teaching time among others.

The current study found that students from private primary schools felt that the number of class assignments and homework was more in primary school than in secondary school. On the other hand students from public primary schools felt that the number of class assignments and homework was less in primary school than in secondary school. Assignments and the close evaluation of homework were found to boost students' learning (Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991). Homework is seen as a tool of instilling value to independent learning that is important in academic achievement. The fact that in secondary schools, students from private primary schools performed poorer than those from public primary schools meant that they never internalised the value of independent learning in primary school. Therefore, the students from private primary school with decreased assignments and homework in secondary school had their independent learning activities reduced hence performed poorly. For those from public primary schools, they had increased assignments and homework in secondary school which boosted their performance.

On friendliness of teachers, students with private school background felt that their teachers in primary were friendlier than those in secondary school. Teachers' continued employment is also dependent on pupil performance in private primary schools in the subjects they teach. They therefore become more close to their students and use all methods they can to coerce them to learn and pass examinations. This close teacher-student relationship is however not maintained in secondary school. This is because the classes are large and unlike in private primary schools, greater emphasis is placed on student's autonomy in learning. This observation is supported by the MOEST

(2003) study which found that students of private primary school found secondary schools lacking in terms of warm human relationship. These students also generally found the secondary school environment inferior to their former private primary school. This perception is likely to affect student's academic performance. This is why students from private primary schools performed poorly in secondary school.

On the other hand, students from public primary schools felt differently. They felt secondary school teachers and students were friendlier than those in primary school. This boosted their performance in secondary school. Studies have found students satisfaction with the school learning environment to be an important factor in student's achievement. Norang (1981) argued that academic performance is influenced by the manner in which students get along with friends and classmates and also with the character of their relationship with teachers.

The fact that students from private primary school found their secondary school teachers and colleagues less friendly when compared to students from public primary schools suggests that, these students may not be as comfortable in secondary school as those from public primary schools. This could be one of the reasons why private primary school students performed poorly than those from public primary school who felt that the teachers and students were friendlier.

Students with private primary school background were of the opinion that teachers in private primary schools spent more time in the school compound than in secondary school. On the other hand students with public primary school background agreed that teachers in public primary schools spent less time in the school compound than in secondary school. Since most private schools have boarding facilities, pupils are in contact with the teachers for longer periods than in public primary school, most of which are day schools (Ramani, 2001). With the reduction in time spent by teachers in secondary school, it means that the interaction between teachers and students which will mean more learning hence better achievement is reduced. This makes the private primary school students perform poorly in secondary school. A 2001 workshop on private education heard that many pupils from private schools had difficulties in fitting in public secondary schools where students are expected to learn on their own with minimum support from teachers (Aduda, 2001b). On the other hand, since most public primary schools are day schools, students from public primary schools spend less time with their teachers hence got less attention which led to poor performance.

The finding in this study shows the number of CATS (tests) in secondary school was less than those in private primary school, just like it was with number of assignments. This agrees with the allegations that private primary schools, learning has been reduced to drilling for passing examinations without paying due regard to more important values such as independent and creative thinking (Kamau, 2003). Thus, the demand for schools to achieve a higher mean score seems to override the interests of the child. Children are 'spoon –fed' and drilled on how to pass KCPE examination through vigorous practise with many examination papers. The pupils are rarely given a chance to express their own independent views especially if they do not conform to the teachers' ideas (Mwakisha, 2003).

This situation has been made worse in Africa by examinations that emphasise the accumulation of factual knowledge and neglect general reasoning and problem solving activities (Kellenghan, 1992). Thus doing well at KCPE examination may not always be a sign of mastery of curriculum content. In fact, Bigge (1971) argued that capacity to memorise and retain

material probably bears no positive relationship to capacity for intelligent behaviour. He adds that some students who memorise standard curriculum material usually make high marks but are at a loss when placed in situations that may require reflections. They, therefore, perform poorly when problem solving teaching is employed. Therefore, when these private primary school students who are used to role learning and drilling go to public secondary schools where learning uses more problem solving approach with no 'spoon-feeding' and drilling they are unable to perform. This is because they were not used to expressing their own independent views. On the other side, pupils from public primary schools were already used to studying on their own without vigorous memorisation and drilling hence they performed better than their counterparts from private primary schools in secondary school.

Rewarding of high performers in examination was more in private primary schools than in secondary school. This rewarding is always used as a motivation to even perform better or to sustain good performance. Poor performers have also been found to improve their performance with increased rewarding on every improved performance. Private primary schools motivate their students by giving rewards, taking the students who perform well for school trips while others even pay fees for the best students. Good meals given in private primary schools also serve as a motivation factor. This makes these students perform well even in KCPE examination.

On reaching public secondary schools where the level of motivation is low, these students do not perform as well as when they were in private primary schools. This makes them be outdone by those from public primary schools who may find rewarding more in public secondary school than it was in primary schools. This is in line with many studies that have found motivation to have a positive relation with academic performance. Teachers tend to believe that when students are motivated to perform competently on academic tasks, they will learn in accordance with their academic abilities. Another benefit of having highly motivated students in a class is that they make the teacher's job of managing the instructional programme simpler. Academically motivated students tend not to disrupt the instructional environment; they infrequently need to be disciplined; they listen when listening is appropriate because they are interested in what is being said. They discuss when discussion is appropriate because they want to share their thoughts with others. Moreover, when learners are academically motivated, their teachers often become professionally motivated, working hard to provide students with worthwhile educational experiences and finding more satisfaction in doing so (Cheryl, 1992).

Referring to Tables 2 and 3 above, the analysed data reveals that factors that contributed to poor secondary school performance of students drawn from private primary schools in no specific order were:

- Increased class size in public secondary school which increased pupil-teacher ratio
- Reduced rewarding in secondary school which reduced motivation level
- Reduced number of class assignments in public secondary schools
- Reduced number of class tests (CATs) in secondary schools
- Reduced teacher commitment shown by missing many lessons in public secondary school
- Teachers being less friendly in public secondary school
- Learners being less friendly in public secondary school
- Reduced teacher- learner interaction in public secondary schools
- Reduced discipline of students in public secondary schools
- Reduced time spent in curriculum activities in public secondary schools

- Low quality food given in public secondary school

On the other hand, factors that caused better public secondary school performance of students from public primary schools were:

- Reduced class size in public secondary school which increased teacher- pupil ratio
- Increased rewarding in public secondary school which reduced motivation level
- Increased number of class assignments in public secondary schools
- Increased number of class tests (CATs) in public secondary schools
- Increased teacher commitment shown by missing many lessons in public secondary school public secondary school
- Increased teacher- learner interaction in public secondary schools
- Increased discipline of students in public secondary schools
- Increased time spent in curriculum activities in public secondary schools
- Better quality food given in public secondary school

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