

# Environmental Factors Influencing Churches to Sponsor Public Schools in Turbo Division, Uasingishu County

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**Abstract:** - The purpose of the study was to investigate environmental factors influencing churches to sponsor public schools in Turbo Division, Uasin Gishu County. The specific objective focused on establishing environmental roles that influence churches to sponsor public schools. The study adopted descriptive survey research design and a target population drawn from 97 public schools. The respondents involved were from 41 church sponsored schools of which 23 were public primary schools and 18 were public secondary schools. The respondents were school management committee, Head Teachers and Board of Management. Data was collected using questionnaires, oral interviews and observations. The data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques and presented using tables and figures. The results indicated that the environmental roles that influence churches competition to sponsor public schools include- the competition for more religious influence, recognition and fame as well as autonomy over decision making and use of resources. On the other hand the sponsor is perceived in the public eye to be contributing less to schools in terms of provision of infrastructure and supporting the human resource. It is recommended that the sponsors' role should be re-defined to take an active part in environmental infrastructural development of schools in order to maintain the sponsors' status and schools' expectations in Kenyan's public schools irrespective of their key mandate or locality.

**Key Words:** Environment, Influence, Sponsor

## I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

After Berlin conference of 1884 to 1885, the imperialist powers occupied parts of Africa and had impact on development of education through establishment and sponsorship of mission schools in different environments. The first Africans who went to the sponsored mission schools became administrators and office clerks in Africa. Most missionaries were very much interested in opening up more mission schools in various environments as they believed that education went hand in hand with evangelization. Hence they too set up schools and sponsored them so as to develop specific personnel with the aim of spreading religion and winning more followers in the areas they occupy. (Kimengi and Lumallas, 2009).

During the eighteenth century, the clergy managed education in Kenya in different parts. They built new schools, financed them, recruited and trained teachers, oversaw the

implementation of the curriculum and, taught catechism and approved new teaching approaches (Republic of Kenya, 1992). On the other hand the state supported churches by granting land. By 1920, the missionaries were increasingly committed to education not only to meet the demands of converts in several parts but also forestall any attempts by the government to monopolize education (Sheffield, 2004). Overtime the government of the day set up their own schools in different regions of Kenya to promote the colonial segregation policy for the Europeans, Asians and Africans as per the Fraser Commission, 1909.

At independence in 1963, the Kenyan government recognized the role played by church missionaries in the promotion of education in different environments. It noted that there was need of support from the Christian churches to shoulder the cost of running the education sector in several areas. The schools that were established by the church remained under the sponsorship of those churches but registered as public schools. The Phelps-stokes Commission of 1924 had earlier strengthened this co-operation between the colonial government and the missionaries where the government was to leave the religious initiated schools in the hands of respective churches. Provision of education is seen as a vehicle for progressive development. That is why it is given prominence in Kenya.

According to Thung'u (2008) argues that in 1890 to late 1960's different sponsors fulfilled their expectations in sponsoring of schools in different Kenyan environments. They played roles such as providing funds to run school affairs; they employed teachers, provided facilities and equipment among others. Today churches compete to sponsor public schools in different areas, but once they acquire them, there seems to be no or very little input in sponsorship. It is therefore on this basis of the above background that the study seeks to investigate these environmental factors that influence churches to sponsor public schools.

## II. THE CONCEPT OF SPONSORSHIP

The involvement of religious sponsors in formal education in different environment was introduced to the people of Kenya by missionaries as a strategy for evangelical success (Eshiwani, 1993). The principal motive of most of the

missionary groups in different areas especially the protestant ones was to reform the social sector of the African life (Shidende, 2010). According to Kanuku (2007), a church is a local assembly of believers as well as the redeemed of all ages who follow Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Hence, according to Christian missionaries in Kenya, an education that was not provided by the church was incomplete in different areas.

According to Kamunge report of (1988) to him, Harambee movement has been very useful in enhancing the cost sharing as parents and community still contributed in sponsoring schools in different parts of Kenya. Many commercial banks in Kenya like Equity and Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB) among others do sponsor needy bright students and schools in terms of material and fees. We also have companies in Kenya who participate very much in sponsoring schools activities; good examples are being Mumias Sugar Company that sponsor Mumias complex school. Other organizations like Kericho Valley Development Authority (KVDA) and Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA) do sponsor schools within their jurisdiction and children of their workers.

### III. THE CONCEPT OF ENVIRONMENT

According to Cheboi, (2013), the government spends up to 70% of its GDP to fund education in general and budgeting allocation in 2006/2007 financial year amounted up to 92.868 billion. The religious sponsoring of education in Kenya according to Sifuna, Chege and Oanda (2006) started in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Whereby, the missionaries first came and established monasteries in different areas of Kenya and later on they established mission stations especially in the coastal area. During this time, Muslims who had settled in the coastal area earlier had put up "madrazas" where formal learning took place. With the coming of more missionaries like Church Missionary Society, Roman Catholic, Friend Quakers churches among others increased in school sponsorship competitions activities in the mainland between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to Thungu (2008), about education commission in Kenya, what mainly influenced missionaries' activities in Africa parts, was to spread the gospel in their respective established schools found in different environments, where they gave out instructions in those mission schools to; win converts, train catechists, train workers and introduce Western civilization.

During 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, sponsorship activities increased in the Kenya inland in different areas, especially following the building of Kenya-Uganda railway. Apart from Christian Missionaries' Society, to Thungu (2008), about education commission report history, there existed competition between missionaries and the colonial government before independence in different regions. The main problem in the sponsorship competition, was who best can control African Education especially in Kenya Highland Environment. Missionaries wanted education which faith was very much emphasized so as to win more converts. While on the other hand colonial government wanted Africans to be given

technical and agriculture oriented education so that settlers will in the long run benefit from skillful Africans' cheap labor.

In doing so, the colonial government gave missionaries education policies and frame work they were to operate on following the recommendation of Frezer report of 1909. Missionaries were very much annoyed, which finally created a sharp conflict between the two. However, the matter was solved following the Education Commission of 1919.

According to Victoria Church Missionaries (2008), in their competition with other missionaries in sponsorship, they claimed that they have known the capacity of handling whatever the number of church community and school sponsorship issues in different environment than any other mission group in East Africa. The Victoria Missionaries claims to be sponsoring several activities ranging from building health centers, donating books to schools, paying fees, donating uniforms, shoes and sanitary pads for the girl child, fighting female genital mutilation (FGM) and finally doing serious campaign against the practice of early girl child marriage.

According to Mabeya, Ndiku and Njiru (2009), whom they did their research on the roles of the churches on matters pertaining schools sponsorship activities in different parts of Uasin Gishu County. The researchers found out that the church sponsors have no significant relationship with the role played in the schools. Instead, the church sponsors makes use of school facilities for non-academic purpose. To them, despite of churches sponsoring public schools in different environment, currently their roles as sponsor is not very much seen. Then what are these environmental factors that influence churches in sponsoring of public schools in different environment.

Several authors like Okullu, (1996), did research on roles of churches on matters pertaining school sponsorship in different environment. According to Okullu in his work, he recognizes the earlier role of the church as sponsors, as to him apart from curing the soul; they were very much involved in developments of education through their initiative efforts and through church sponsoring activities.

### IV. THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Sponsors have been accused of interfering with the schools core business by closing down schools, some have ejected and even evicted principals posted to the school by the Ministry (Cheruiyot, 2003). According to Gikandi (2005) some sponsors meddling with schools destabilize the instructive activities in schools. In different areas, churches are struggling to ensure that several public schools are registered under their name as sponsors. Recently in Turbo Division in the year 2009, there was a struggle in registration of schools between African Inland Church (A.I.C) and the Catholic Church and finally the school was registered under AIC sponsorship. The question that the researcher seeks to address is why the

churches compete for school sponsorship during registration. One thus asks “what are these environmental factors that influence churches to sponsor public schools”.

V. OBJECTIVE AND ASSUMPTION OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study was therefor to establish environmental roles and their influence in the sponsoring of public schools by churches. The researcher assumed that some of the selected schools have experienced the challenges associated with church sponsorship in different study area environment.

VI. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study employed descriptive survey research design as it enables researchers to collect more in-depth information from the sampled population using the shortest time possible. The design was considered appropriate for the study because according to Kothari (2004) survey is concerned with

describing, recording, analyzing and reporting conditions that exist or existed. For this study the descriptive survey design enabled the researcher in giving environmental comparisons that influence churches in sponsoring public schools in the study area.

The location of the research study was carried out in Turbo Division, Eldoret west Uasin Gishu County. The Division has experienced rampant competition between different churches. It comprises two zones with 56 public schools and 41 public schools making a total of 97 church sponsored public schools (AEO, 2014).

Target Population and Sample Size

During the study the researcher derived its population from 97 schools whose respondents were picked from school management committee that is Parents and Teachers Association (PTA), Board of Management (BOM), Sponsor nominated members, Head teachers (HTs) of public primary schools and secondary schools principals under church sponsorship. The target population is presented in table below;

Table 1:

ZONE	Population		Sample			
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Total	%
<b>Turbo</b>	37	19	17	6	23	30%
<b>Sugoi</b>	25	16	13	5	18	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>30%</b>

Eldoret West AEO’s Office, 2014.

The sample size should not be too big or small ;( Kothari 2004).The researcher combined purposive and simple random sampling procedures. The researcher purposively selected respondents from church sponsored schools in the study area since they are relevant to the study, then followed by simple random sampling to obtain respondents from the schools to be included in the study. During the study the researcher sampled 41 respondents from each of the church sponsored public schools- that is 23respondents from each of the public primary schools and 18 from each of the public secondary schools out of the total 97 schools. The Head teachers and BOM\ PTA members nominated by the sponsors of those selected schools were purposively selected as respondents, since they had more information concerning church sponsorship activities in their respective schools they represent in the study area.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher employed the use of questionnaires and triangulate using oral interviews, observations and documentary analysis. This is because triangulation adds more value to data collected than obtained from a single data source, (Mwanje, 2008).

Data was collected using questionnaires. Borg et al.(1993), observes that questionnaires are used to obtain descriptive information from a larger sample. It also ensures objective

replies due to its confidentiality. The researcher used both open ended and structured questionnaires. Structured questionnaires included use of Likert rating scale method. The questionnaires were administered to the head teachers and Board of Management nominated by the sponsors.

An oral interview was used to supplement information obtained through questionnaires. The head teachers were also interviewed orally to capture other details that could not be captured by questionnaires.Observation was done in the schools during visitation hours in order to verify responses given in the questionnaires and interviews.

During the study, the researcher visited the selected public church sponsored schools to deliver the questionnaires to the respondents to be collectedafter one week. The researcher used the purposely chosen respondents as they are very much informed on matters concerning church sponsorship activities in the schools they head or represent in different environment.

Validity and Reliability

Content validity was determined by making logical links between questions and objectives of the study. The researcher made sure that the items in the instruments is well balanced so as to capture all the study intents ,that is, should have similar and equal representation of the questions. After doing so, the

researcher presented the research instruments to experts for scrutiny and advice thus making the instrument valid. (Orodho, 2004).

To ensure that the instruments generate similar data if used by different researchers, as a measure of reliability, a pilot study of the two church sponsored schools was done in a neighboring Division. The pilot study ensured suitability and clarity of questions on the instruments designed, relevance of the information being sought and the language from the responses given. In addition, a measure of internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha formula was determined as a test of reliability. The results for correlation co-efficiency for the pilot study were 0.86%, indicating that the instruments were reliable.

*Methods of Data Analysis*

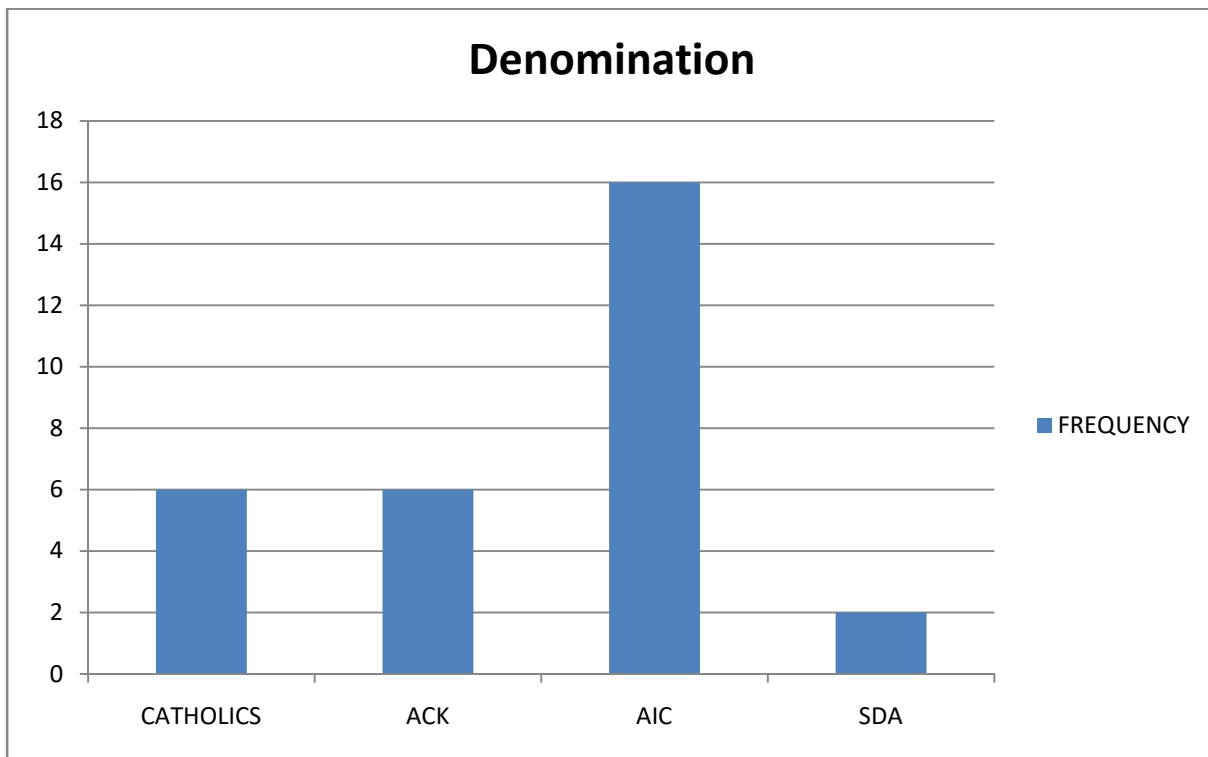
After collecting data from respondents of sampled schools, the researcher analyzed data qualitatively by first classifying data into different components. Then the units were fixed together so as to develop concepts of social sponsorship activities relationships. This helped the researcher to identify social

connectors that influence churches to sponsor public schools. The data was represented using themes. The data were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics, that is using frequencies and percentages with the aid of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 17 then presented using tables and figures.

VII. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

*School sponsorship by various denominations in the study area*

The researcher also considered sponsorship of public schools by various denominations, the distribution for primary schools were as follows: Catholics, 6(20%), ACK, 6(20%), AIC, 16(53.4%), and SDA sponsored 2(6.6%) of the primary schools. In the secondary schools the distribution of sponsorship by various denominations was: Catholic, 2(13.3%), ACK, 4(26.7%) and AIC sponsored 9(60%) of the public schools in the study area. From the study, it clearly implies that AIC sponsors more schools than any other denominations within Turbo Division environment. The information is summarized in figure below.



Church sponsorship in the study area.

*Environmental roles influencing competition of churches in sponsoring public schools*

Objective of the study was to establish the environmental roles influencing churches competition in sponsoring public

schools. The respondents were requested to rate question relating to environmental factors that are believed to influence churches in sponsoring public schools.

Statements	SA		A		UD		DA		SDA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
<b>The school sponsor will get more religious influence in the area</b>	10	8.1	55	44.7	19	15.4	34	27.6	5	4.0
<b>The school sponsor will be famous due to its school sponsorship activities</b>	7	5.7	71	57.7	15	12.0	17	13.8	14	11.4
<b>Donating seedling to the schools tree planting project</b>	7	5.7	9	7.3	23	18.7	63	51.2	29	23.6
<b>The church provide land for school construction</b>	9	7.3	10	8.1	14	11.0	69	56.2	25	20.3
<b>Church sponsor benefiting from school facilities for church activities</b>	35	28.5	55	44.7	0	0.0	14	11.3	8	6.5
<b>Providing clean water to the school</b>	10	8.1	15	12.2	19	9.8	54	43.9	25	20.3
<b>Installing electricity to the school</b>	16	13.0	10	8.1	13	10.6	61	49.6	24	19.5

On the statement that; the school sponsor will get more religious influence in the area, 10(8.1%) strongly agreed, 55(44.7%) agreed, 34(27.6%) disagreed and 5(4.0%) strongly disagreed. Concerning the statement that school sponsor will be famous due to its school sponsorship activities, 7(5.7%) strongly agreed, 71(57.7%) agreed, 17(13.8%) disagreed and 14(11.4%) strongly disagree. This was clear in the school sign post where the sponsor church name appear prominently as indicated in figure ... and ....On donating seedling to the school tree planting project in the area,7(5.7%) strongly agreed,9(7.3%) agreed,63(51.2%) disagreed and 29(23.6%) strongly disagreed.

Concerning sponsor churches providing land for school construction, 9(7.3%) strongly agreed, 10(8.1%) agreed, 69(56.2%) disagreed and 25(20.3%) strongly disagreed. On the church sponsor benefiting from school facilities for church activities, 35(28.5%) strongly agreed, 55(44.7%) agreed, 14(11.3%) disagreed and 8(6.5%) strongly disagreed. From the observation, it was found that individual members of the sponsor church also benefit from the school facilities. During the study, there were cows allowed to graze on the school grounds and on investigating, it was found that the animals belonged to a member of the sponsor church as indicated in figure bellow.



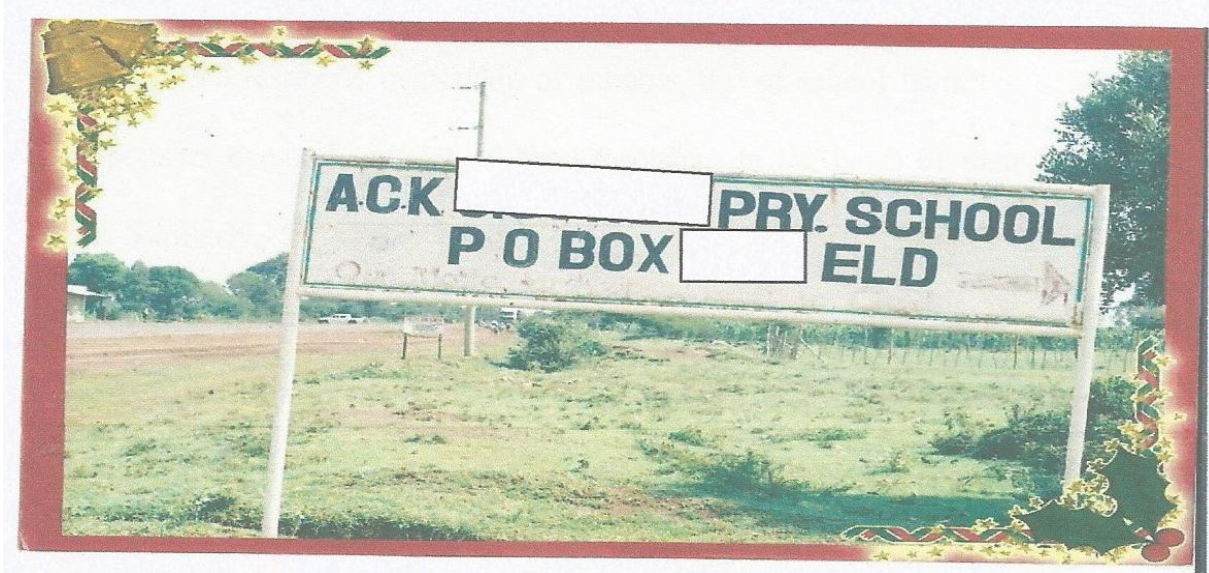
Animals grazing in the school field.

On providing clean water to the school, 10(8.1%) strongly agreed, 15(12.2%) agreed, 54(43.9%) disagreed and 25(20.3%) strongly disagreed. Installing electricity to the school, 16(13.0%) strongly agreed, 10(8.1%) agreed, 61(49.6%) disagreed and 24(19.5%) strongly agreed.

From open ended questions, the churches initiate other development projects alongside the schools they sponsor such as; polytechnics and health centers. When seeking for fame, church members donate land for school construction, there's competition for building more schools for political influence and leadership dominance in the area especially with the aim

of controlling school activities. The two figures below indicate how sponsor church indicate their name first in the

school sign post in seeking for fame in the study area.



School sign post and the Sponsor church name prominently appearing for publicity.



Public Secondary school indicating the sponsor.

The results agreed with Mwathi (2010), did a study on the challenges facing the church sponsors in the management of public secondary schools in Kibwezi, Makueni District of Eastern province. She established the following as some of the challenges: finances, Head Teacher's ownership of schools, and use of schools facilities, school land, and the sponsors demand for transfer of Head Teachers on the basis of faith among others.

Similarly, according to Wachinje (2012), sponsors contribute very little on moral matters and financial support to the development of church sponsored schools; problematic relationship between sponsors and head teachers(principals),for instance, sponsors interfering with the schools' core business; rejecting or evicting head teachers posted by TSC ;causing divisions in the schools by peddling

falsehoods against head teachers they do not like; the sponsors' interference or influence results in ineffective board of governor and issues with curriculum implementation and students admission; sponsor inciting students and parents to reject the head teachers they do not want; undermining head teachers openly, thus creating a difficult relationship between the head teachers and also sponsors in collaboration with the community politicians; interference with the school based selection and recruitment exercise thus posing serious challenges to the principals.

#### VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results indicated three environmental roles that influence churches to sponsor public schools:-For the school sponsor to get more religious influence in the area;Use school

sponsorship to gain fame and recognition in the area and the last factor was for the church sponsor to benefit from the use of school facilities for religious functions and or otherwise.

It was concluded that the sponsors should maintain their sponsorship status in different schools found in different environment subject to their contribution to their mandates as stipulated by the Education Act. It is also recommended that the sponsors' role should be re-defined to take an active part in financial and infrastructural development of schools in order to maintain the sponsors' status and schools' expectations in Kenyan public schools established in different environments.

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