Influence of Parental Socio-Economic Characteristics on Academic Performance among Secondary School Students in Kenya: A Case of Garissa County

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Abstract: **The study aimed at understanding how parental socio-economic factors influenced academic performance of children in Kenya. The study used Garissa County as a case to draw a conclusion. The study had the following specific objectives: to assess the role of household economic status on academic performance of children in selected secondary schools in Garissa County; to establish the nature of the relationships between social factors as measured by education level of parents on academic performance of children; to determine the influence of parenting style on academic performance of children; to evaluate the place of social safety nets on academic performance of the children. The study used qualitative and quantitative research methods. It adopted a descriptive research design. The target population was derived from the parents and teachers in Garissa County. A sample of 160 was used from the target population. Purposive and random sampling techniques were used to select participants in the study. Data was collected from a sample of 160 students currently attending secondary school in Garissa County. Data collection instruments included questionnaires, interviews and observation techniques. This quantitative data was complemented with qualitative data collected from key informants namely head teachers, deputy head teachers and local chiefs. Data was analyzed using frequency distributions, measures of central tendency and dispersion as well as cross-tabulations and the findings were presented using, graphs, diagrams, figures, reports and charts. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis methods. The study was conducted in Garissa County. The findings were used to address the issues affecting the education system in Kenya. As hypothesized, economic status of the household as measured by ownership of a car was found to be statistically associated with academic achievement of children. In particular, children from well off families were more likely than other to emerge top of their class. Mother's level of education was also found to be associated with better school performance but there was no statistically significant association between father's education and academic performance of the sampled children. Social safety nets were found to be non-existence. Based on these findings, the study recommended policy change to give more focus on the unique barriers to educational attainment in Garissa County. Finally, more research was recommended to shed light on other factors besides parental characteristics that hinder educational achievement in arid and semi arid areas. The study focused on the period between.**

Study Findings

i- The findings showed that majority of the students (63%) who came from households that own a car performed better in their academics they constituted only 12% of the total number of respondents. Acquiring symbols such as cars are thought to raise a family's status. This supported (Huskin & Meij, 2013) and agrees with (Uvarov & Yastrebov, 2014) who by using hierarchical regression models found out that students with families from higher economic standing performed better. On Household social factors and academic performance , the study showed that there was a 95% significance of the mother's level of education and how a student performed at school, in difference to the father's level of education where there was no significance. Majority of top performers (51.9%) came from households that mother's had secondary education and above. This is in contrast to 25% of top performers from a background of no maternal education. Indeed this supports claims by (Hernandez & Napierala, 2014) Additionally, according to (Rouse & Barrow, 2006) there is a connection between the mother's educational attainment and that of the children. On Parenting style and academic performance this study showed at 95% confidence level that the children from very supportive families achieved high educational levels. 42.6% of the top performers came from very supportive families, while 7.3% of the students from non-supportive families came top of their class. In relation to checking the performance of the students, 40.5% of the respondents performed best when their mothers checked up on their school work. Those who were never checked on, only 20.8% came top of their class and a whopping 50% were low performers. The study also revealed that there was no relation to performance of the student and the father's involvement in the school work. This finding was supported by (Hill & Taylor, 2004) who agreed that as much as these variables have a long standing basis in research, it is important to look at the context in which the involvement of a parent takes place. With respect to school feeding programme as safety net, the study found that there was no specific programme that focused on feeding the students principally because the target schools were secondary school. Such programme, although many and very important in ASAL regions, target only primary schools. In this regard, secondary schools offer meals as part of the package for the student which is factored in the school fees paid by the parent.

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The study assessed the influence of the social status and economic status of parents in Kenya. On the academic performance of their secondary school going children by using Garissa County as a case study. The findings of the study in Garissa County were generalized to similar situations in other counties in Kenya.

Education is seen as both an objective and component of development as well as "fundamental to the broader notion of expanded human capabilities that lie at the heart of the meaning of development" (Todaro & Smith, 2011). Education is the most important factor in development according to (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008). They are of the view that education is the most important force that propels national development because education has benefits to both the individual and the society at large. Education becomes an equalizer and a tool for families' social and economic development. Increased income levels are both a cause of, and indicative of, economic growth and development in a country and investment in education maintains a positive effect on both private (Acemoglu & Angrist, 1999)

For young people education is a critical factor for their survival as individuals and as communities. The changing times demands that quality education and training be provided to the youth so as to add value to their life. Implied in argument is that there cannot be any meaning development, however defined, without the requisite human resource needed to propel it (UNESCO 2014). This assertion is informed by the Human Development approach, which was pioneered and popularized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the global Human Development reports produced since the 1990s.

Education can therefore be viewed as a foundation on which a person develops capabilities so as to lead the kind of life he or she wants to live. It is also a measure of development because Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index based on three main indicators: longevity; educational attainment; and living standards. The approach embraces every development issue including: economic growth, social investment, people's empowerment, provision of basic needs and social safety nets, political and cultural freedom and other aspects of people's lives. Thus, human development focuses on a wide range of indicators of well-being or capabilities rather than merely income levels (Sen, 1999)To understand how parental characteristics influence academic performance of children, the proposed study is further guided by (Walberg, 1981) theory of educational productivity. The theory identifies 28 categories of learning influences and specifically highlights the roles of parental support as a key variable. In this regard, educational productivity theory posits that parental support increases connectedness to the family which translates into higher levels of motivation to excel in school. The overriding concern of this study was to analyse effects of social economic development on academic performance of public secondary school in Garissa County.

Statement of the problem

Human Capital theorists view education as the most important force that propels national development because education has benefits to both the individual and the society at large. Thus, any factor that compromises academic performance can be considered as a barrier to development. Investment in education contributes to the expansion of human capabilities, which is a key aspect of development. This idea is expressed by Sen , who asserts that a person benefits from education by increasing her assertiveness which includes better decision-making, more engagement in the political process and positive spill over effects to those around the educated person (Todaro & Smith, 2011)This increased human capability as a result of education is vital to consider as part of the significant benefits of investment in education, and its essential place at the heart of development. According to the County Education Office (2014), Garissa County however has persistently performed poorly in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations since the inception of 8-4-4 system of education in 1985 and this has been associated to a number of socio-economic development aspects such economic growth, social investment, Peoples' empowerment and basic needs provisions within the County. The County government and the national government have embarked on improvement of these socioeconomic development aspects in an effort to enhancing academic performance and what is not clear is if this has helped in improving the academic performance of the public secondary schools. On the other hand, what is not well understood is whether the best performing school in Garissa County is as a result of the improved socioeconomic development aspects. Schooling is affected by many factors including state policies on education, availability of schools, and community's views on importance of education. These factors are mediated by household socio-economic characteristics such parental education and economic ability to meet school related costs. Previous research has demonstrated that parents' education level has a direct influence on children's academic performance. This is because more educated parents can afford the required resource to finance their children's education. Besides, such parents are likely to hold positive views about education and to encourage their children to pursue education. They may also be stricter in terms of disciplining their which in turn leads to better retention and completion rates. The study therefore sought to understand the nature of the relationship between parental characteristics and their children's academic performance. The study also aimed at enhancing the knowledge gap in the area of socio-economic development and academic performance by analysing the relationship between social economic development and academic performance of public secondary school in Kenya by having garissa County as Garissa County.

Specific objectives

1. To assess the role of household economic status on academic performance of children in selected secondary schools in Garissa County,
2. To establish the nature of the relationships between social factors as measured by education level of parents on academic performance of children;
3. To examine the influence of parenting methods on academic performance of children;

4. To assess the place of social safety nets as reflected by school feeding programme on academic performance of the children.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The following theories guided the study:

Human Development Theory

The study was guided by human development theory as articulated by Sen in the '90s and further applied by the United Nations Development Programme through its human development assessment reports. This perspective views human development as encompassing all aspects of the individual player and not just income levels. Further, the focus on education is informed by Human Capital Theory which perceives education as the key development factor in any society. This important factor in individual and societal is influenced by many forces the main ones being parental characteristics such as level of education and economic status, which may be mediated by social safety nets such lity of cheap credit and strong family ties among others. These forces come into play even in the context of free education because of the other costs that are not catered for in the free education programme in Kenya. This shift in defining development was taken up by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the early 1990s. Human development is "the expansion of peoples' freedoms to live long, healthy and creative lives; to advance other goals they have reason to value; and to engage actively in shaping development equitably and sustainably on a shared planet" (UNDP, 2010). It involves enlarging people's choices and raising their standards of living through expansion of human capabilities and access to opportunities.

The human capital theory

Human Capital Theory plays a vital role in education and when it comes to education policy discourse worldwide, it has become the most powerful underpinning (Gillies, 2015). In concurrence (A. & T., 2008) allude that Human Capital Theory views education as the most important factor in development. This is because education plays a crucial role in shaping children's future, giving them tools to hold life together. Education is a prime mover of economic growth of a country. According to these authors education becomes an equalizer and a tool for families' social and economic development. For young people education is a critical factor for their survival as individuals and as communities. The changing times demands that quality education and training be provided to the youth so as to add value to their life. Implied in argument is that there cannot be any meaning development, however defined, without the requisite human resource needed to propel it.

Investment in education is widely considered to be of vital importance to development for many reasons and indeed human capital and particularly education is arguably the most significant factor in regional differences in development (Gennaioli, 2011)Factors that constraint the attainment of education is discussed in sub-section 2.2.3.

Educational productivity theory

While the human capital theory and human development theory situate education in the development discourse, the proposed study is anchored on educational productivity theory by Walberg (1981). Using a variety of methods, Walberg identified 28 categories of learning influence. Of the 11 most influential domains of variables, 8 involved social-emotional influences: classroom management, parental support, student-teacher interactions, social- behavioral attributes, motivational- effective attributes, the peer group, school culture, and classroom climate. Distant background influences such as state, district, or school policies, organizational characteristics, curriculum, and instruction are less influential. Walberg concluded that the direct intervention in the psychological determinants of learning promise the most effective avenues for reform. Walberg in his theory demonstrated the importance of the domains of motivational orientations, self-regulated learning strategies, and social/interpersonal abilities in facilitating academic performance. He reported, based on the large-scale implementation of a Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program, that student who became more self-aware and confident regarding their learning abilities, who were more motivated, who set learning goals, and who were organized in their approach to work (Self- Regulated Learning (SRL)) performed better in school. The theory further creates an avenue in this study in trying to understand the various characteristics of the parents which may influence the students' academic achievement/ performance in secondary schools. It provides a guideline on some of the aspects which the researcher may look into while checking on whether the parents meet those roles in motivating the students to learning and improve their academic performances.

The theory is also consistent with the family economy model. According to the family economy model, the household's decisions on children's education are influenced by three institutional-level forces namely: immediate labour demands and income opportunities; national policies on education and the extent of to which parents adhere to cultural dictates in their environment (Fuller & Liang, 1999)These processes are influenced by parental characteristics the main one being education.

Parent's level of education may influence student's academic performance in the following ways. First, Eccles and Davis-Kean (2005) argue that parents may learn something during schooling that will influence the way in which they interact with their children around learning activities at home. The parents' achievement may motivate these students to work hard, and at long run their academic performance improves. For instance, parents who are well educated or professional may provide their children with a favourable environment to

encourage or motivate them to develop similar interest and perform well in their parent's subject areas (Ozurumba, Briggs, & Ebuara, 2007). Given that these two theories are complementary rather than contradictory, the proposed study is informed by education productivity theory but also borrows from the family economy model.

The Family Economy Model

The family economy model was also useful in this study to the extent that it helped in describing how the family made decisions on whether to take the children to school or engage them in the labour market. According to the model, the household's decisions on children's education are influenced by three institutional-level forces namely: immediate labour demands and income opportunities; national policies on education and the extent of to which parents adhere to cultural dictates in their environment (Fuller B. L., 1999).These processes are influenced by parental characteristics the main one being education.

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Review of related empirical literature

Benefits of education

The literature reviewed explained that education has an influence on access to better payment. According to (UNESCO, 2014)education enables those in paid formal employment to earn higher wages. In El Salvador, only 5% of workers with less than primary education have an employment contract, leaving them noticeably vulnerable. By contrast, 47% of those with secondary education work under signed contracts. On average, one year of education is associated with a 10% increase in wage earnings. Returns to schooling are highest in sub-Saharan Africa, highlighting the need to invest in education in the region. Education is critical to escape chronic poverty. Ethiopia has reduced poverty by half since 1995 and raising levels of education, which are particularly low in rural areas, has made a difference. Between 1994 and 2009, for example, rural households where the household head had completed primary education were 16% less likely to be chronically poor (UNESCO, 2014) It was noted that education offers better livelihoods for even those in the non-formal sector. Many of the poor work as labourers or run microenterprises . The more educated they are, the more likely it is that they will start a business and that their businesses will be profitable. In Uganda, owners of household enterprises who had completed primary education earned 36% more than those with no education, and those who had completed lower secondary education earned 56% more. In Thailand, a year of education increased returns to household assets by 7%, primarily because educated households tended to invest the profits.

A comparative education in ASALs and other regions

In comparison with other counties, Garissa County falls entirely within the region that was previously marginalized North Eastern province. The region performs relatively poorer than the rest of the country with respect to all development indicators such as child mortality, educational attainment, and economic status. For instance, 77.7 percent of women aged between 15-49 in North Eastern province had no formal education compared with just 0.7 percent in Central province (Marco., 2010) and ICF Macro, 2010). The proportion of children aged 6 to 17 years who have never attended school is over 40 percent in North Eastern province which contrasts sharply with one percent in Central province (KNBS 2007). This information is presented in Table 1.1

Table 1.1 Percentage distributions of children aged 6-17 years by school attendance and region

Region	Ever attended	Never attended	Total count
Kenya	93.4	6.2	11,215,740
Rural	93.0	6.7	9,458,698
Urban	95.6	3.5	1,757,042
Nairobi	97.8	1.6	578,798
Central	98.9	0.9	1,291,503
Coast	90.7	9.0	1,040,095
Eastern	96.0	3.8	1,899,072
North Eastern	56.3	42.4	435,916
Nyanza	97.4	2.2	1,643,579
Rift Valley	90.9	8.3	2,824,458
Western	96.3	3.3	1,502,319

Source: Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey 2007 (KNBS, Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey (KIHBS), 2007)

Government response to schooling in arid and semi-arid areas in Kenya

Due to the realization that economic hardships are the main barriers to access to education, the government instituted the policy of free primary education in 2003 and free secondary education in 2008 which translated into marked increases in enrolment rates across. These efforts have not been able to reduce the level of educational disadvantage faced by children in ASALS. For instance, when the free primary education programme was instituted in 2003, gross enrolment rate increased to 107 percent in 2006 nationally but most

pastoralist communities had a rate of less than 50 percent (NKBS 2007).

The government has attempted to address challenges in education in Northern Kenya through various legal frameworks such as funding of low cost boarding schools and setting up a school feeding programme (Ruto, Ongweny, & Mugo, 2010)Further, upon realising that millennium development goals of relating to attainment of educations for all and eliminating gender disparities in education, the government has developed a policy framework for education for nomadic communities to specifically target such communicate and reduce the disadvantage brought by years of marginalisation. The goal of the policy is to achieve universal basic education and training by use of a combination of approaches such as setting up of mobile schools, formal schools, non-formal schools, and boarding schools.

Household socio-economic status and academic performance

Although Kenya instituted free primary education and free secondary education in 2003 and 2008 respectively, it should be noted that education is not completely free. Parents have to meet very many costs especially at secondary level hence parental economic ability remains a significant factor in determining access to education. Garissa County is ranked among the poorest counties in Kenya hence the household's ability to meet the cost of education plays a major role in academic performance ((Sawamura & Sifuna, 2008).The socioeconomic status of a family depends on the family income, parental education level, parental occupation, and social status in the community such as contacts within the community, group associations and the academic performance of a family (Okionga, 2013).Davis-Kean carried out a study on the influence of parent education and family income on child achievement in USA using a sample of 868 8-12 year-olds guided by family process and socialization models of achievement. The findings suggest that educated parents are thought to have higher expectations for their children's education, which predict greater educational attainment, which predict greater educational attainment for their children (Davis-Kean, 2005)Similar findings are shared by Olanike who found out that academic aspiration of school children is positively related to the standings of their children as children may tend to imitate their parents and so imitate and aspire to be as highly educated as their parents (Olanike, 2010)With respect to parenting characteristics, the literature demonstrated that there was a need, for instance to balance between household chores and school. According to (Moyi, 2011), too much engagement in chores outside the school gets into the realm of child labour which is bad to schooling. Children do best in school when parents provide predictable boundaries for children's lives, encourage productive use of time, and provide learning experiences as a regular part of family life (Moyi, 2011).When it comes to social and economic status in Garissa County, cultural aspects come in to play. (Biriye, 2011), demonstrates that culturally grounded communities in Garissa look down on education. Students are not given the parental support needed for good school performance. In fact, in some areas, girls are strongly discouraged from attending school and are married off at an early age. Households with higher socioeconomic status have access to resources that enable them to be able to support their children's development. In reality, as one of the indicators of socioeconomic status, parental income is parallel to the social and economic potential resources available to a student (Sirin, 2005).

Parental education and academic performance of their children

Another parental characteristic that influences education is parental education. The literacy level of Garissa County is 8.1 and 20.2 per cent for women and men respectively. There is a shortage of adult teachers, inadequate adult learning facilities and shortage of role models who have actually excelled in education (KNBS, Kenya Population and Housing Census, 2012)Parents who have more education are in a better position to provide their children with the academic and social support better for education success when compared to the less educated parents. Children who are encouraged in their studies by parents are more likely to do better in tests. An indication of parental encouragement is seen when parents give high priority to the provision of good facilities for quiet study and homework (Todaro & Smith, 2011).Parents' level of education is important in predicting children's academic performance (Davis-Kean, 2005); (Olanike, 2010). A study on educational achievement in institutions of learning of education and uneducated homes in Western Nigeria found out that the children who come from homes with illiterate parents perform abysmally as compared to the children from educated families (Ogunlade, 1995). The study also demonstrated that the children from the educated families concentrated more in class and were higher performers. This shows that education of a parent is of the essence in a child's academic performance.

Educated parents are able to connect more with their children and become more involved with the children's studies as they can help them choose subjects and ensure that the children are serious with their studies by working together with administrators (Good & Brophy, 1997). Parent's level of education may influence child's academic performance by influencing parent's level of expectations and motivation to child's education; children imitate parents and may aspire to be as educated as their parents; and determining parent's access to resources which determine parental support to children's education. Parental support is the financial and non-financial materials a parent provides to the child for his/her education (Hanafi, 2008)

The indicators include: the reading and writing materials bought; amount of fees paid in school; and whether a parent attended school meetings, checked child's performance at the end of the term, hired a private tutor for the child, provide fuel

for studying at home, assisted a child with class work or discussed child's progress in school with the teachers. Parents who have more education are in a better position to provide their children with academic and social support (Schiller et al., 2002 in Dimbisso, 2009). Parental education and income are highly correlated. With educated parents, children are better placed to also work hard at school as education is established at an early age. However, from literature, parent's level of education may not always influence academic performance. (Watson, 1965) casts doubts on the many reports that suggest that variables such as a parent's educational background can affect a child's academic performance. According to him, there is no correlation. Parents who are dissatisfied with their own achievement may encourage students to take school seriously or students who are dissatisfied with their living standards and due to the desire to get solutions to the problems they face, they are motivated to high performance. In a general sense however, (Ozurumba D. C., Briggs, Ebuara, & Emaughe, 2007) suggest that there is awareness by parents in the factors that determine the nature and effect of educational qualification in the present society. As such, most parents work out ways in which to achieve set goals and objectives.

Parenting practices

Parental support and encouragement plays a significant role in determining children's educational aspiration and achievement. According to Schiller et al. (2002) quoted by (Dimbisso, 2009)parents who have more education are in a better position to provide their children with the academic and social support better for education success when compared to less educated parents. Children who are encouraged in their studies by parents are more likely to do better in tests. An indication of parental encouragement is seen when parents give high priority to the provision of good facilities for quiet study and homework. Children do best in school when parents provide predictable boundaries for children's lives, encourage productive use of time, and provide learning experiences as a regular part of family life. This is more likely to occur if parents themselves have attended a high school, and realize what is required of the child, and have a practical insight into the part which they themselves need to play. Based on Baumrind's theory of parenting styles (Baumrind, 1991), four types of parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive-indulgent and permissive-uninvolved, dominate how children function socially, emotionally and cognitively.

In parenting studies, the focus is on authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles (Balter, 2000). Children whose parents employ the authoritative style of parenting tend to have higher academic achievement. This is attributed to the fact that the authoritative parents monitor the children's behaviour, they are democratic, discipline is based on reasoning and they encourage their children to be the best they can be. The children in return have high self-esteem and self-reliance. The parents give their children room to explore and be innovative as they cheer them on. They are keen on how the children fare in school and if there is any problem, they seek to solve it in a way in which the children feel that their opinions are taken in to consideration. The children are motivated to achieve higher and be better performers. On the other hand, with authoritarian parenting styles, order, discipline and authority are exerted with strictness and there is no democracy whatsoever between the parent and the children. Children had better listen to their parents failure to which they are severely punished (Baumrind, 1991).

As much as these children may be well behaved, there is quite a high tendency of them being moody, and anxious (Munyi, 2013). The harsh conditions at home in terms of the parenting styles may distract them from school work. For the adolescents it may brew a rebellious nature and delinquency may kick in. This in due course, brings about a lower academic achievement.

Household access to social safety nets

The last factor of importance in this study was existence and efficacy of social safety nets, which was linked to economic constraints to access to quality education among children from low economic settings. One of the key social safety nets is the school feeding programme. According to (Bundy, Burbano, Grosh, & Gelli, 2009)school feeding programs are attractive in that they are able to address more than one development goal at the same time, showing substantial benefits for both the education and social protection of children from impoverished families. School feeding can impact educational attainment by increasing enrollment, attendance, cognition, and educational achievement, although the scale of benefit and the evidence of effect vary by program type.

The social safety net roles of school feeding programs include an immediate response to social shocks as well as social protection over the longer term. Well-designed school feeding programs that include micronutrient fortification and de-worming can provide additional nutritional benefits and should be designed to complement nutrition programs for younger children, which remain a clear priority for targeting malnutrition overall. Given the value to education and social protection, there is a need for these sectors to be more systematically engaged in the development of school feeding programs, including research, design, and policy dialogue (Bundy, Burbano, Grosh, & Gelli, 2009)

Summary of gaps

This study was found to be crucial as no other research as no other research has been conducted in Garissa County on the role of parental characteristics that also captures the place of discipline in academic performance among children.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative research methods. It used descriptive and survey research design. The

study was conducted in Garissa County. The study employed purposive and random sampling methods.

Sample and sampling procedures

All the 4 school head teachers and their deputies as well as all the administration chiefs of the locations where the schools are located were selected to take part in the study as key informants as they were perceived to be knowledgeable on the issues under study and for which they are either responsible for the execution or they personally executed them. The total number of respondents will be 170 as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Sampled respondents of the study

Category of Informants	Number of Schools	Respondents	Percent
Students	4	160	10.5*
Head teachers	4	4	100
Deputy head teachers	4	4	100
Chiefs	2	2	25
Total		170	

*Each school has about 380 students hence total number of students is about 1520. 160 therefore translate to 10 percent.

Data collection methods

The data collection instrument (questionnaire) was pre-tested on a pilot set of respondent teachers for comprehension, logic and relevance. Respondents in the pre-test were drawn from 2 schools which were to be similar to those in the actual survey in terms of background characteristics. All the aspects of the questionnaire were pre-tested including question content, question difficulty, layout wording, sequence, and form and instructions. The feedback obtained was used to revise the questionnaire before administering it to the study respondents.

IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

.The study sought to assess the role of household economic status on academic performance of children in selected secondary schools in Garissa County; establish the nature of the relationships between social factors as measured by education level of parents on academic performance of children; examine the influence of parenting methods on academic performance of children; and assess the place of social safety nets as reflected by school feeding programme on academic performance of the children. The data that was collected from the respondents was further analysed by use of tables, percentages, pie-charts, and graphs. Detailed explanation of the representation is also given.

Table 4.1: Percent distribution of respondents by selected background characteristics (N=160)

Characteristic	Categories	Percent	Number
Type of school	Boys boarding	25.0%	40
	Boys day	25.0%	40
	Girls boarding	25.0%	40
	Girls day	25.0%	40
Gender of student	Male	50.0%	80
	Female	50.0%	80
Age	13 to 15	36.2%	58
	16 to 17	35.6%	57
	18 and above	28.1%	45

4.2 Characteristics of study respondents

All study respondents were asked several questions about their demographic characteristics such as gender and parental social and economic indicators such as parental education. Table 4.1 is a percent distribution of respondents by different background characteristics.

4.3 Household characteristics of study respondents

As noted above, the study asked respondents about their households' characteristics and their responses are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Household characteristics

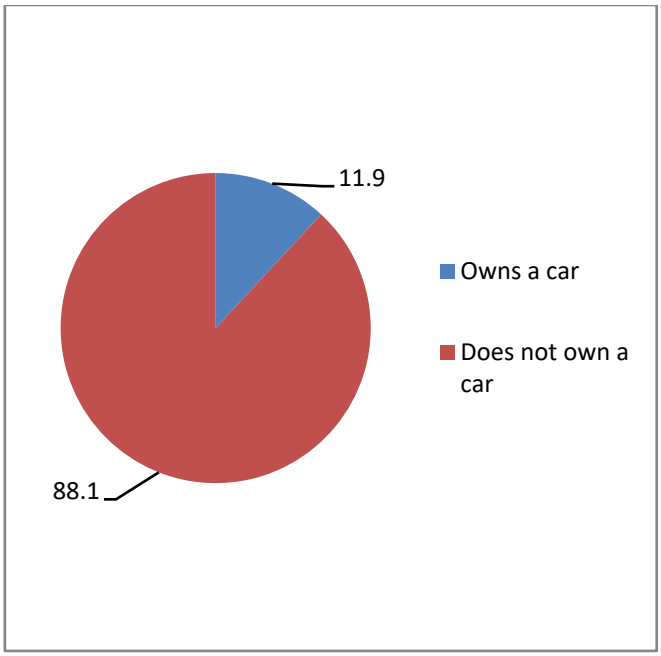
Education	Categories	Percent	Number
Mother's level of education	No education	29.4	47
	Primary	38.8	62
	Secondary and above	31.9	51
Father's level of education	No education	31.2	50
	Primary	48.1	77
	Secondary and above	20.6	33
Household owns a car	Yes	11.9	19
	No	88.1	141
Household owns a motor cycle	Yes	27.5	44
	No	72.5	116

4.4 Household economic status and academic performance

The first objective of the study was to assess the role of household economic status on academic performance of their children. Although it would have been very insightful to ask the children about their parent's income as a measure of economic status, the nature of the study site militated against this approach. This is because most members of the community from which the sample was do not have a regular income hence it is practically impossible to accurately capture their economic status by use of income data. For this reason, the study used proxy measures of economic status namely ownership of a car and ownership of a motorbike. This approach, which was first used by Filmer and Prichett (2001), has been adopted by many institutions including the World and United Nations Agencies and international programmes such as the Demographic and Health Survey (see for example construction of wealth in Kenya Demographic and Health Survey or 2014, KNDS and ORC Macro 2014). Such measures have been found to be stable over time and are much more applicable in settings where income data is not readily available.

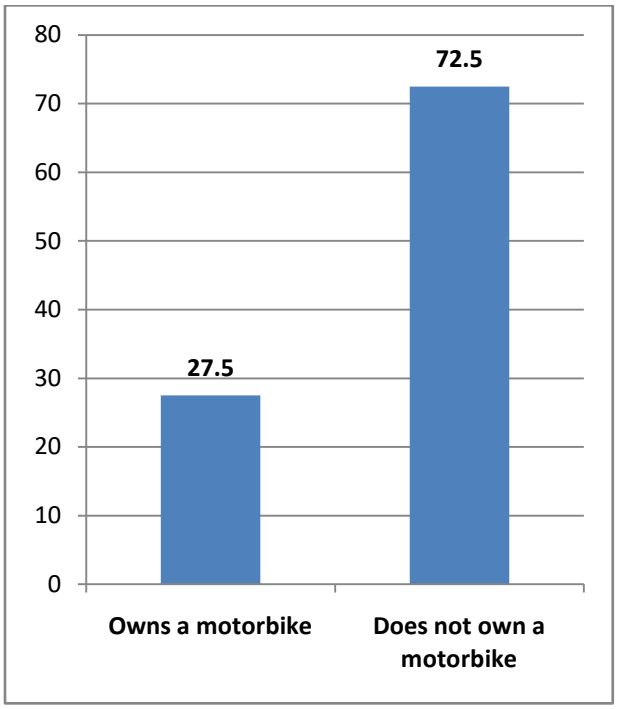
Figure 4.1 is a percent distribution of households according to ownership of a motorcar. It can be seen that only 12 percent of the students came from household with motorcars while 88 percent did not own motorcars.

Figure 4.1: Percentage of students according to household ownership of a car



Similarly, majority of the students came from households without a motorbike as shown in Figure 4.2. It can be seen that only 28 percent of the students said that they came from a household with a motorbikes while 72 percent came from households with no motorbikes.

Figure 4.2: Percentage of students by ownership of a motorbike



The following section assesses the nature of the association between household ownership of these durable goods on the one hand and academic performance on the other. In this study, academic performance was measured in terms of self-reports by respondents about their relative position in class in the previous school terms, which was the first term because data for this study was carried out in the second term.

On the other hand, the respondents' parents' level of education was also sought. It was revealed that 30per cent of the mothers had no formal education, 39% had reached up to primary level and 32% secondary education. In contrast, 31% of the fathers had no formal education, 48% had reached up to primary level and 20% secondary level.

Table 4.3 is a percent distribution of respondents across different academic performance categories and whether their household owns each of the two indicators of academic performance. Analyses clearly show 63 percent of students who came from households that own a car came top of their class. Results indicate that owning a car is generally associated with high academic performance (X^2= 8.290; 2 df). Owning a car in an area like Garissa shows that the family has a higher social status and this will affect the students' performance in academics positively.

On the other hand, there is no statistically significant association between ownership of a motorbike and academic performance. Results imply that having a motorcycle is not a predictor of academic performance.

Table 4.3: Ownership of car and motorbike and academic performance

		Position in class			
		Top	Middle	Low	Total
Family owns a car***	Yes	63.2	26.3	10.5	100.0
	No	30.5	39.0	30.5	100.0
Family owns a motor cycle	Yes	27.3	34.1	38.6	100.0
	No	37.1	38.8	24.1	100.0
Total		34.4	37.5	28.1	100.0

*** Means that the association is statistically significant at 95 % confidence level (Chi-square value of 8.290; df=2)

4.5 Household social factors and academic performance

Table 4.4: Percent distribution of respondents by maternal education and academic performance

		Top	Middle	Low	
Mother's level of education completed*	No education	25.0	31.2	43.8	100.0
	Primary	34.1	43.5	22.4	100.0
	Secondary and above	51.9	29.6	18.5	100.0
Total		34.4	37.5	28.1	100.0

*Statistically significant at 95% CL (X^2 =11.458; df=4; p-value=.022)

With respect to the mother's level of education, table 4.4 above shows that majority (43.8 percent) of sampled respondents were low performers when the mother had no education. Those whose mother's had completed secondary education, majority (51.9 percent) were top performers.

In contrast, results presented in Table 4.5 show that father's level of education is not statistically associated with academic performance of the children. Although the proportion of children reporting being in the top one-third of the class seems to increase with increase in father's education level, differences across the categories are not statistically different. This leads to the conclusion that with respect to parental education, only mother's education is associated with children's academic performance.

Table 4.5: Percent distribution of respondents by fraternal education and academic performance

		Top	Middle	Low	
Father's level of education completed*					
	No education	26.9	38.5	34.6	100.0
	Primary	33.8	37.7	28.6	100.0
	Secondary and above	48.4	35.5	16.1	100.0
Total		34.4	37.5	28.1	100.0

* Not statistically significant (X^2 =5.036; df=4; p-value=.284)

4.6 Parenting style and academic performance

The second objective of the study was to examine the influence of parenting methods on academic performance of children. The underlying hypothesis as derived from the literature was that good parenting practices such as supervision and concern with a child's academic performance are associated with better educational outcomes of the children. Thus, to address this objective, all respondents were asked a series of questions about supervision and perception of adequacy of support they received from their parents.

Table 4.6 presents analysis of the association between children's perception of the adequacy of support that they receive from their families on the one hand and their academic performance on the other. It can be seen that the children who viewed their households as very supporting of their educational goals are proportionately more like to performance between in class, that appear in the top one-third of the class, and these results are statistical significant at 95 percent confidence level (X^2 =18.818; df=4; p-value=.001).

Table 4.6: Percentage of students according to views on familial support

Adequacy of support	Position in class			
	Top	Middle	Low	Total
Very supportive	42.6	36.1	21.3	100.0
Somehow supportive	44.8	31.0	24.1	100.0
Not supportive	7.3	48.8	43.9	100.0
Total	34.4	37.5	28.1	100.0

*Statistically significant at 95 CL (X^2 =18.818; df=4; p-value=.001)

Parenting styles was also assessed by asking respondents how frequently their mothers and fathers checked their school performance at the close of the terms, given that checking on performance is an indicator of parental involvement in children's academic life, which is considered a motivator for good performance. According to Table 4.7, the more frequently a mother checks a child's school performance at the end of the term the higher the child's performance. As indicated from the table, 40.5 percent of the respondents performed best when their mother checks their school work but when the student is never checked on, only 20.8 percent came top of their class, while majority (50 percent) were low performers. These results are statistically significant at 95 percent confidence level (X^2=13.099; df=6; p-value=.041).

Table 4.7: Distribution of students by academic performance and frequency with which the mother checks school performance at end of term

	Position in class			
Frequency	Top	Middle	Low	Total
Always	40.5	39.2	20.3	100.0
Sometimes	30.0	50.0	20.0	100.0
Rarely	33.3	25.9	40.7	100.0
Never	20.8	29.2	50.0	100.0
Total	34.4	37.5	28.1	100.0

Further, respondents were asked the same question but with respect to the father and their responses are presented in Table 4.8. Evidently, there is no statistically significant association between father's involvement in checking academic performance and actual performance by the child.

Table 4.8: Distribution of students by academic performance and frequency with which the father checks school performance at end of term

	Position in class			
Frequency	Top	Middle	Low	Total
Always	27.3	36.4	36.4	100.0
Sometimes	34.3	42.9	22.9	100.0
Rarely	46.6	32.8	20.7	100.0
Never	23.8	35.7	40.5	100.0
Total	35.0	36.3	28.7	100.0

It may be noted that these views are in tandem with the views of teachers who argued that mothers are more likely to be at home hence their role in academic achievement of their children is vital. Fathers on the other hand may be absent most of the times hence their place in the child's life is not as pronounced.

Strictness of parental supervision is another variable that is hypothesized to influence academic performance of children. To assess this view, all respondents were asked give their views on how strict they considered parental supervision and their views were cross-tabulated with their academic performance. Results presented in Table 4.9 shows that there is no statistically significant association between strictness and academic performance. Table 4.9: Distribution of students according to their academic performance and views on strictness of parental supervision

	Position in class			
Strictness	Top	Middle	Low	Total
Very strict	35.6	44.1	20.3	100.0
Strict	37.7	30.4	31.9	100.0
Lax	28.1	37.5	34.4	100.0
Total	35.0	36.9	28.1	100.0

The findings seem to contradict the views of teachers in that there was consensus among teachers that strict discipline at home is a predictor of academic performance. This contradictory finding may be a result of the children's failure to accurately give the level of their parents' strictness. In other words, the subjective nature of the views might have compromised the results.

4.7 Access to social support structures

The last objective of the study was to assess the place of social safety nets as reflected by school feeding programme on academic performance of the children. The key finding here is that there are no meaning household-level social safety nets such as education insurance. As the World Bank argues, the main provider of social safety nets in low income countries such as Kenya is the government itself (WorldBank, 2015).

This assertion is supported by discussions with head teachers who said that the concept of education insurance is non-existent in the county. The only safety net in the context of this study that is worth mentioning is informal support that parents receive mainly from their relatives.

4.9 Discussion

This study sought to show the relationship between parental socio-economic characteristics and academic performance among secondary school students in Kenya with a case of Garissa County.

The specific objectives were to: assess the role of household economic status on academic performance of children in selected secondary schools in Garissa County; establish the nature of the relationships between social factors as measured by education level of parents on academic performance of children; examine the influence of parenting methods on academic performance of children; and assess the place of social safety nets as reflected by school feeding programme on academic performance of the children. To achieve these objectives, quantitative and qualitative data was collected from sample of students in four secondary schools in Garissa County as well as head teachers from the selected schools.

4.9.1 Socio-economic status of households

With respect to socio-economic status of households and academic achievement, the findings of this study are largely similar to those of previous study. Specifically, this study found that owning a car (a proxy measure of economic status) is closely associated with academic performance. This finding is supported by a study by (Caro, McDonald, & Willms, 2009) who found that the higher the economic status of a household, the better the academic performance of the children as parents take care of their children's education effectively. Similarly, (Kim, 2002)insists that a strong relationship exists between a parent's economic standing and the academic success of their children.

4.9.2 Social factors

This study observed the social factors from a standpoint of the parental level of education. It observed that there was no correlation between the fathers' level of education and the academic performance of the children.

However at 95% confidence, it revealed that a mother's level of education affects the academic performance of the children. This is agreed by Baker and Stevenson (Baker & Stevenson, 1986) who suggest that mothers who have at least a college education are better placed to manage their child's academic achievement as opposed to mothers who have no education.

They suggests that in most family setups, it is the mothers that are involved in the day to day schooling activities of a child. Her educational level will indicate her experience and knowledge. It is this knowledge and experience that is passed on to the children.

4.9.3 Parenting styles

The research findings concluded that children from supportive families and those whose mothers' check their school progress tend to emerge top in their academic performance. In his study, (Muola, 2010) observed that there was no significant relation of a parental involvement to academic achievement. However, this is contradicted by many scholars (Hill & Taylor, 2004) ; (Baumrind, 1991). It is asserted that motivating and supporting a child will no doubt lead to academic success.

The study also showed that how strict a parent is had no relation to the student's performance. This is in line with studies by (Garg, Levin, Urajnik, & Kauppi, 2005 that are based on (Baumrind, 1991) parenting styles. Garg et al see no relationship between the parenting styles and academic competence.

V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

On the relationship between household economic status; education level of parents; parenting methods on academic performance of children; and the place of social safety nets as reflected by school feeding programme on academic performance of the children:

i- The findings showed that majority of the students (63%) who came from households that own a car performed better in their academics they constituted only 12% of the total number of respondents. Acquiring symbols such as cars are thought to raise a family's status. This supported (Huskin & Meij, 2013) and agrees with (Uvarov & Yastrebov, 2014) who by using hierarchical regression models found out that students with families from higher economic standing performed better.

On Household social factors and academic performance, the study showed that there was a 95% significance of the mother's level of education and how a student performed at school, in difference to the father's level of education where there was no significance. Majority of top performers (51.9%) came from households that mother's had secondary education and above. This is in contrast to 25% of top performers from a background of no maternal education. Indeed this supports claims by (Hernandez & Napierala, 2014) Additionally, according to (Rouse & Barrow, 2006) there is a connection between the mother's educational attainment and that of the children.

ii- On Parenting style and academic performance this study showed at 95% confidence level that the children from very supportive families achieved high educational levels. 42.6% of the top performers came from very supportive families, while 7.3% of the students from non-supportive families came top of their class. In relation to checking the performance of the students, 40.5% of the respondents performed best when their mothers checked up on their school work. Those who were never checked on, only 20.8% came top of their class and a whopping 50% were low performers. The study also revealed that there was no relation to performance of the student and the father's involvement in the school work.

This finding was supported by (Hill & Taylor, 2004) who agreed that as much as these variables have a long standing basis in research, it is important to look at the context in which the involvement of a parent takes place

iii-With respect to school feeding programme as safety net, the study found that there was no specific programme that focused on feeding the students principally because the target schools were secondary school. Such programme, although many and very important in ASAL regions, target only primary schools. In this regard, secondary schools offer meals as part of the package for the student which is factored in the school fees paid by the parent.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The study found out that economic factors had a positive relationship with academic performance. The higher the economic standing in the community, the academic performance was also higher.

On the social factors, the parental level of education had an impact on the children's academic performance. A mother's level of education was perceived to greatly affect the child's academic performance as opposed to the father's level of education.

On the parenting styles, it was concluded that that a mother's support in school work and also the frequency at which she checks school performance affected the child's overall academic performance positively. It was also observed that strictness of a parent had no relation to academic performance.

The level of penetration of safety nets particularly educational insurance is zero. The only social safety nets are the support given by the government by way of general educational support to all children in the formal educational system. A little informal support also exists by way of financial support from family relations.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The researcher recommended that a stable income is vital for the children to realize academic success.
2. The researcher also recommended that that for the children's academic performance to be positive, it was imperative for the uneducated parents more so the mothers to attain adult education.
3. The researcher also suggested that the parents should be more involved in their children's academics so as

to increase performance. In this regard, emphasis should be on the fathers and they should not leave the mothers and teachers to be involved in the child's school work.

4. Education insurance is another possible intervention that can be used to increase educational attainment of children in ASAL areas.