

**EFFECTS OF POVERTY ON SECONDARY STUDENTS' ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE IN MARIANI WARD, THARAKA NITHI COUNTY, KENYA**

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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A DEGREE IN BACHELOR OF ARTS IN
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DECLARATION

Student Declaration

I declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented to any other University or College for the award of a Degree or for any similar purpose in any other institution.

Signed..........

Date.....09/12/2024.....

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Supervisor Declaration

This research project has been submitted with my approval as the university supervisor.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CDF	Constituency Development Fund.
PNSFS	Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration Scale.
SADC	Southern African Development Community.
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

ABSTRACT

The topic of research was to determine the effects of poverty on secondary students' academic performance in Mariani Ward Tharaka Nithi county. The basis of this study was to determine how poverty has affected the school performance in Tharaka Nithi county, Mariani ward. Poverty, which influences a certain culture and way of life, is progressively turning into a significant social issue in Kenya. Over time, there has been a rise in the number of Kenyans living in poverty. Poverty can be generally referred to, as the degree of deprivation experienced by an individual. For most people, poverty continues to hinder them from achieving their right to education. This study aimed to investigate how school academic performance in Mariani ward, Tharaka Nithi County, is affected by poverty. The goal of the study was to highlight the obstacles that poor children must fight in order to pursue education, which mostly causes them to drop out of school. The research questions were what effect does insufficient school resources have on the students' academic performance? How has lack of food affected the academic performance of students in Mariani ward. Structured questionnaires, and document analysis were used to collect data. Some of the limitations of the study were lack of cooperation from the students and bad weather. The research study used a descriptive research design and simple random sampling technique. The target population of this research was 1000 students. This was achieved through frequent surveys done by the researcher. Some of the findings were; students that had sufficient school resources are able to perform better than those who lack these resources. The research also found out that students who come from humble backgrounds do not perform like those whose parents are employed. Finally, on the findings, the research proved that lack of food at home and in school has affected students' academic performance in Mariani ward Tharaka nithi county. The research concluded that poverty has really been a problem in Mariani Ward and it has mostly affected the education sector. The research recommended that bursaries to be given to every student that is unable to pay the school fees, and also the government should provide the necessary school resources to smoothen the learning process of the students.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter entails the background of the study, the statement problem, the purpose of this study, the research objectives and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Everywhere in the country, accessing education is one of the most important human rights. In Kenya, one of the most important aspects of social policy has been the delivery of education, particularly since the country's 1963 independence. However, most people's attempts to achieve this fundamental right have been hindered by poverty. Poverty has been existing since the beginning of humankind. Humans who are not financially stable have faced many obstacles in their fight for a respectable level of living. Here are some of the challenges faced by poor people; difficulties in obtaining good healthcare, education, nutrition, work opportunities, and also, they are not able to fulfill personal goals.

This research focused on the obstacles that poor students must overcome in order to have access to education and how these obstacles do impact schools' academic performance among these students. Students' poor nature is worsened by the strict rules that are present in learning institutions. Rules on fees, teacher's behavior and other students, and the lack of food, and lack of school resources like books. Unfriendly atmosphere makes it much more difficult for the less fortunate students to pursue a good education. The costs of necessities in the schools bring more hardship for students who are already poor therefore affecting their performance in schools in terms of continuous assessments exams and class attendance.

Mariani Ward is one of the 15 electoral wards in Tharaka Nithi, has a number primary and secondary schools. It is the third most populous ward in Tharaka Nithi County, with a total population of about 29,560 (Infotrak, 2019). The central region, where Tharaka Nithi County is located, is characterized by moderate rainfall and occasionally high temperatures. The volume and pattern of surface flows are drastically altered by the 450 millimetres of annual rainfall that Tharaka Nithi experiences on average, which varies greatly from year to year (Love

et al., 2020). Tharaka Nithi County has had catastrophic crop failures and some drought seasons as a result of the insufficient rainfall.

Because of the irregular and unpredictable patterns of rainfall, this ward has occasionally been dependent on donations from the donor community. Food security has been a top worry for Tharaka Nithi County as a result of insufficient rainfall. Subsistence farming yields insufficient crops to last a household through the entire year. This means that the family will need to purchase meals from retail stores in order to feed themselves. They frequently take humble tasks from wealthier households who live next door in order to satisfy their basic needs for food. Students who take on these tasks could drop out of school in order to look for basic things like food. Their academic performance is severely affected where they perform really poorly. Once needs like hunger and thirst, have been tackled, only then can education, take priority. According to Maslow's hypothesis, a hungry child finds it difficult to concentrate in class since food will take up all of their thoughts. Since food will be the main focus of his or her images, this draws attention in the classroom.

Walking long distances to go to school do cause hunger and fatigue, which can negatively affect the students' concentration. Unlike the poor, wealthy families do drop their kids to school in a car. This is a benefit since they arrive at school early and also, they have lunch boxes where food has been packed for them. Kenyan government has tried to assist those who are economically disadvantaged in accessing higher education by providing the constituency development funds (CDF) which does not fully help these students.

In schools you find that fees must be paid, supply of stationery to every student is a must, and all students are expected to put on full school uniform whether you are from an able background or not. Deadlines are always put in place by school for the payment and fees. For any student who finds him/herself unable to pay the fees due deadline date, lesson attendance will be suspended for that student. These strict rules have been a disadvantage to poor students. As stated in the country's constitution's Bill of Rights, every Kenyan has the right to an education. Since many economically disadvantaged children drop out of school, not all citizens receive an education. The performance levels of the schools in that jurisdiction are negatively impacted by this.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Some of the things that can make a community really poor are, high rates of unemployment and violent crimes. There are a lot of problem faced by poor communities including broken-down housing, limited access to expert services like health services, and—above all—poor education. The fact that students are coming to school with many concerns that the teachers are unable to address through instruction is one of the many reasons the education is inadequate. It has been established that structural flaws in educational buildings affect the quality of instruction. School administrators often fail to support teachers in the classroom, even when they are qualified. School administrators are too busy fixing their own issues to think about where to invest their limited resources.

Communities are afflicted by poverty in a seemingly never-ending cycle, which is a broad and complex problem. In the Mariani ward of Tharaka Nithi County, the academic performance of students is negatively impacted by poverty. Underprivileged pupils miss deadlines for payments, go without appropriate uniforms, and endure malnutrition at home. These issues have a detrimental impact on their academic development and have an impact on the performance of the school.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of poverty on student's academic performance in Mariani Ward Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

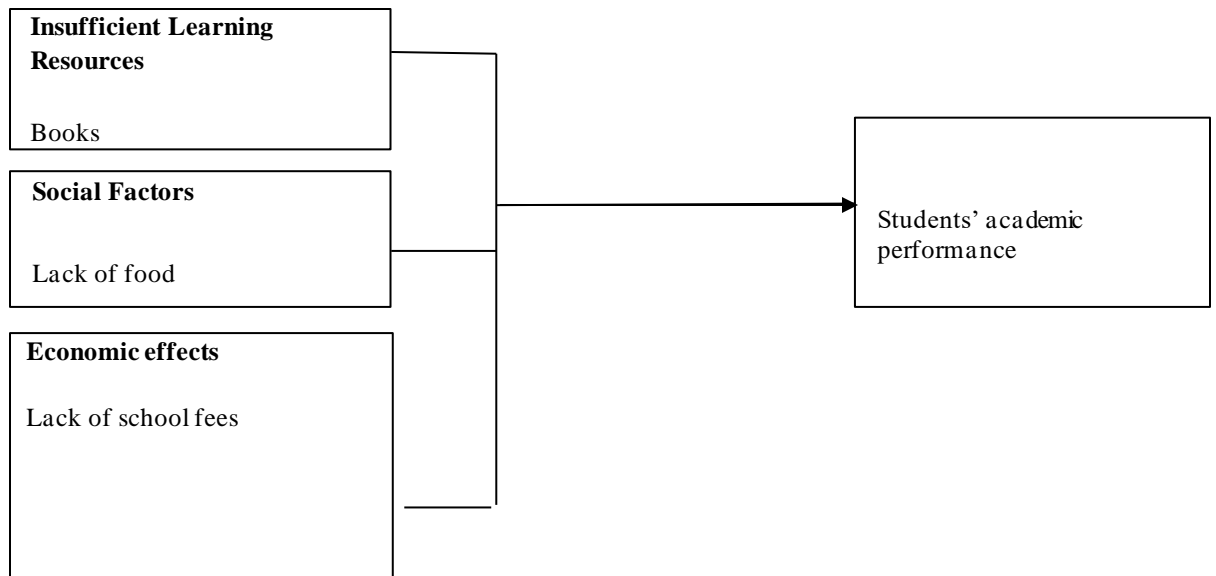


Figure 1 conceptual framework

1.5 Research Questions

- i. Does insufficient learning resources affect students' academic performance in schools in Mariani Ward.
- ii. Does lack of school fee affect students' academic performance in Mariani Ward Tharaka Nithi county, Kenya.
- iii. Does lack of food affect academic performance of students in Mariani ward, Tharaka Nithi county, Kenya.

1.6 Research Objectives

1.6.1 General Objective

The general objective of this research was to investigate the effect of poverty on the students' academic performance in Mariani Ward, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

1.6.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To determine the influence of insufficient learning resources on the students' academic performance in schools in Mariani Ward.
- ii. To establish the influence of lack of school fee on students' academic performance in Mariani Ward Tharaka Nithi county, Kenya.
- iii. To investigate the influence of lack of food on the academic performance of students in Mariani ward, Tharaka Nithi county, Kenya.

1.7 Hypothesis of the study

The study hypothesizes that respondents provided feedback in good faith and were genuinely willing to share their opinions. It assumes that the responses reflect an honest representation of their views. The hypothesis further suggests that this feedback is reliable for drawing meaningful conclusions.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The current calamities have revealed the importance of tackling poverty levels in a community. New ways of stabilizing basic needs satisfaction in order to reduce the problems tied to Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustrations are being invented. This study sought to find important variables that are essential to learning institutions managers and students and ways to use them to improve academic achievement in schools in Mariani Ward in Tharaka Nithi County.

It tried to shed more light on poverty levels and how they impact school performance generally for people in charge of policy making, governing bodies, regulators, and student welfare departments in schools. Additionally, the study advanced the body of information and assisted future researchers who wish to examine in greater depth how poverty affects school academic achievement.

1.9 Delimitations of the study

Students from public schools in Tharaka Nithi County's Mariani ward were the study's exclusive focus; no other region of Kenya was included. The focus was on poverty-related

students rather than pupils who have ignored their studies because of ignorance or adolescent pregnancy.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

Lack of cooperation. Some students, administrators, chose not to work with the researcher since the research was about asking personal questions.

Financial limitations that restricted the quantity of data collected also hindered the investigation.

Bad weather. Weather was really a challenge to the researcher putting in mind that Tharaka Nithi county is a very hot place.

The researcher helped improve the cooperation with the students by convincing them that the information being given out would be confidential.

The questionnaires did not indicate the names of those who participated to enhance confidentiality.

1.11 Assumptions

The researcher assumed that the sample chosen was to represent the population and that the participants provided accurate and trustworthy data.

The study also assumed that the tools used to acquire the data were vital and trustworthy.

Finally, the study assumed that students living in poverty find it difficult to access to education.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the previous studies conducted in relation to the topic. In the first Section is the theoretical framework which discusses the theories involved in our study in relation to the main concept of the study and the objectives and review of theories and concepts.

2.1.1 Insufficient Learning Resources on Academic Performance

According to a study by Oketch & Rolleston (2007), students from low-income households often face challenges in accessing textbooks and other essential learning materials. These students are frequently required to share textbooks with their peers, which limits their study time and overall understanding of the curriculum. This is particularly problematic in secondary schools, where the curriculum demands independent study and deeper engagement with academic content. In cases where textbooks are insufficient or outdated, students' academic performance can be compromised. Oketch and Rolleston (2007) emphasize that the lack of proper learning materials exacerbates the educational divide between wealthy and poor students, leading to lower academic achievement in impoverished communities.

2.1.2 lack of school fee affect students' academic performance

According to Sifuna (2010), the failure to pay school fees is one of the primary reasons for student absenteeism in developing countries. In situations where students cannot afford to pay the required fees, they are often sent home, or they miss classes for extended periods until the fees are paid. This disrupts their learning continuity and puts them at a significant disadvantage compared to their peers. Sifuna (2010) explains that even brief absences from school can cause students to fall behind in their coursework, leading to poor academic performance. The inability to attend school regularly due to financial constraints not only affects academic learning but also undermines students' motivation to continue their education.

2.1.3 lack of food

The lack of food has been shown to significantly affect the academic performance of students, particularly those from impoverished backgrounds. Schaible and Bobo (2010) note that food insecurity leads to malnutrition, which directly impacts cognitive abilities such as concentration, memory, and problem-solving skills. Students who experience hunger or inadequate nutrition often struggle with staying focused in class, leading to lower academic performance. Hunger disrupts the brain's ability to function optimally, making it difficult for students to retain information or engage fully in learning activities. Consequently, students facing food insecurity are more likely to experience academic underachievement due to the physical and cognitive limitations imposed by hunger and malnutrition.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

All theories that have been discussed in this study are found here. Here are the various theories of poverty that have been recognized.

2.2.1 Individual Deficiencies Theories

These theories focus on the people who are accountable for their state of poverty. Individual deficiency theories generally contend that one may avoid poverty by working harder and choosing wisely. They further argue that since they rely too much on social systems, the impoverished have little desire to better their current situations. These theories have drawn a lot of interest and have been referenced in articles on how setting and achieving well-planned goals can enhance one's well-being. According to Fischer et al. (1996), critics of these ideas contend that they are a cheap cover for social inequalities.

2.2.2 The Culture of Poverty Theories

These views contend that the characteristics, morals, and cultural customs of the destitute cause poverty. Bradshaw (2006) argues that a collection of maladaptive, individually held but socially created attitudes, values, and talents are passed down through generations and lead to poverty. These ideologies blame the impoverished for their circumstances. They are questioned, nevertheless, regarding their justification that the impoverished are to blame for their situation, which seems to suggest that if the poor changed their morals, poverty would leave them.

2.2.3 Economic and Political Distortions

Based on these views, the political, social, and economic systems that perpetuate poverty limit people's access to resources and opportunities for obtaining financial stability and well-being. (Bradshaw, 2006). They contend that regardless of their level of competence, the way the economic system is set up causes impoverished people to lag behind. These ideas also attribute poverty to the impoverisher's incapacity to influence and benefit from the political system. Studies have indicated that the impoverished engage less in political talks, their interests are more open to exploitation during the political process, and they are marginalized on many fronts.

2.3 Causes of Poverty

As of 2000, the majority of SADC member countries had average annual population growth rates exceeding 3%, according to section 12 of the IMERSCAS study. In addition, there was insufficient economic growth and the region's base of natural resources was deteriorating. A nation's finite natural, financial, and material resources are further taxed by population growth, which increases the number of destitute households. For instance, in Kenya, as the country's population grows yearly, fewer individuals are working, and those who do often have more dependencies on them. In 2017, Bird and Shepherd conducted research on Kenya's rural chronic poverty. Twenty percent of the heads of low-income families had completed higher schooling beyond the primary level, according to their research. More than 60% had not completed their primary schooling. This study illustrates the extent to which illiteracy contributes to poverty. Without education, a person lacks the skills needed to perform difficult tasks, making it impossible for them to enter a profitable profession. As a result, this person holds poorly paying jobs.

The passing of the male head of the household is another factor contributing to poverty (Bird and Shepherd, 2017). HIV and AIDS are the two primary causes of death. Because of this, a large number of working-class parents have passed away, leaving orphans on their own.

According to the survey, children lead a significant portion of disadvantaged homes. Children at the top of the family are unable to provide for their younger siblings. They may have to sell the belongings their parents left behind in order to make ends meet and purchase food and other needs. For the remaining children, life is inevitably one of abject poverty.

2.4 Effects of Poverty on Academic Achievement

Poverty has affected the academic achievement in a quite number of ways. Poverty impedes human development on all fronts—physical, mental, linguistic, and social.

Poverty affects a person's ability to learn as well since it limits poor parents from providing the necessary material and financial resources for their children to be admitted to school. "The poor tend to suffer from severe health problems directly linked to mental and physical impairments and other birth defects," according to Gibson (2019). This suggests that malnutrition results from eating insufficiently nutrient-dense food, which prevents normal mental and physical development.

Davidoff (2021), argues that there exists a correlation between poverty and several negative educational outcomes, such as negative school attitudes, low academic proficiency, disinterest in formal education, and pessimism. In this sense, low parental support and academic ineptitude among underprivileged pupils result from a lack of drive on the parts of both parties. Lack of these two elements leads to low academic attainment. This analysis demonstrates that poverty is a broad type of deprivation that includes needs related to social, economic, mental, and physical aspects of life. There are many different causes of poverty. Although numerous theorists offer varied explanations for the causes of poverty, no single theory is able to fully explain this phenomenon. Literature has also demonstrated the numerous ways that poverty impedes intellectual success.

2.5 Summary of Literature Review

An explanation of the process used to find pertinent literature opens this review of the literature. The article then briefly discusses the standard methods used to measure poverty. A summary of the data showing how poverty affects academic performance at the student and school levels comes next. It talks about the ways that poverty affects results and accomplishments. In order to ascertain whether school finance research is in favor of a non-linear funding method for places with higher proportions of poverty, the review concludes by summarizing pertinent school finance literature.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

3.0 Introduction

A descriptive survey design was used to investigate the effects of poverty on student academic performance in secondary schools in Mariani Ward, Tharaka Nithi County. The study's total population comprised 1,000 students. Stratified sampling techniques were employed to select the participants. Data was collected using a questionnaire designed by the researchers.

3.1 Research designs

The researcher used descriptive research design during the research period. Descriptive design is concerned with describing, recording, analyzing and interpreting people's, opinions that exist or existed. Data was collected through structured questionnaires. This research design was trying to look at the livelihood of the targeted population who are mostly the school dropouts due to poverty.

3.2 Study Area

The study area for this research project was Mariani Ward in Tharaka Nithi county, Kenya. Cases of poverty in Mariani ward have increased rapidly in the last 5 years. There are 10 public secondary schools in Mariani Ward that the researcher looked at. According to the infrastructure in Mariani ward, one can see that this is a poverty stricken area.

3.3 Target population

According to the Kenya Bureau of Statistics (2023) there are 5 public secondary schools in Mariani Ward Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. The population of these schools ranges from 700-1000 students per school.

3.4 Sampling techniques

The researcher used simple random sampling technique in order to attain the various respondents that engaged in the research study.

3.5 Sample size

In determining the appropriate sample size for this study, Yamane sample size formula was used (Yamane, 1967), which is frequently used for simple random sampling when the population size is known.

The Yamane formula is given by:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = target population size

e = margin of error (expressed as a decimal)

Given:

- The target population size (N) = 1000 students
- The margin of error (e) = 0.05 (5%)

We will substitute these values into the Yamane formula.

$$n = \frac{1000}{1 + 1000(0.05^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{1000}{1 + 1000(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{1000}{1 + 2.5}$$

$$n = \frac{1000}{3.5}$$

$$n \approx 285.71$$

3.6 Research instruments

Structured questionnaires were used as the research tool in this study. This study tool was preferred by the researcher because it can quickly collect data from a huge sample.

3.7 Measurements of Variables

A study was done to help the researcher in identifying items in the research instrument that were not connected with the information the researcher needed to collect. Any items that were found to be containing questions that might bring irrelevant information were reconstructed.

Objectives	Variables	Tools of analysis	Data collection	Type of data analysis
Lack of school fees	independent	Statistical package for social science	Questionnaire	quantitative
Insufficient learning resources	independent	Statistical package for social science	Questionnaire	quantitative
Lack of food	independent	Statistical package for social science	Questionnaire	quantitative

3.8 Reliability of measurements

The degree to which a research instrument produces consistent data following multiple trials is known as its reliability (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The reliability of a questionnaire is measured by the consistency of the responses provided by the respondents, Prior to the study, the researcher administered a small number of questionnaires to a small number of respondents to ascertain whether or not they truly understood the questions.

3.9 Data collection techniques

The data collection technique that was used was the structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed to the sample that was giving information. The researcher's choice of the structured questionnaires was designed in a simple and easy way that was easy for respondents to understand. One advantage of structured questionnaires is they avoid answers that are influenced by the external variables.

3.10 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data that was collected. The completeness, accuracy of information and uniformity of the questionnaires was checked. The questionnaires were checked to see if there were errors and omissions, and also check their completeness, accuracy and uniformity. Qualitative data was used to clarify information that might not have been identified clearly in the questionnaires.

3.11 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

3.11.1 Logistical considerations

For the researcher to be allowed to continue with the research, he took a clearance letter from Gretsia University.

3.11.2 Ethical Considerations

Psychological harm: This is when a person is making threats about someone. For example, when conducting the research, researcher may ask participants questions that might offend them.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on analyzing the data that was collected by the researcher. Whatever the researcher got from the respondents is discussed widely in this chapter. On finding and discussions, the number of respondents is shown and how many questionnaires were answered.

4.2 Response rate of the respondents

A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed to students in five secondary schools, including both boys and girls. The researcher opted for 100 questionnaires due to the constraints like time. Of these, 90 were returned completed, while 10 were not returned, resulting in a 90% response rate from the students. All the questionnaires sent to teachers were returned, achieving a 100% response rate. The data collected was deemed highly reliable and acceptable, contributing to a robust social research study on the effects of poverty. The demographic characteristics of the study and the response rate were presented first, followed by the presentation of findings based on the study's objectives.

4.3 Demographic characteristics of respondents

This section outlines the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including age, gender, and academic performance. It emphasizes the key traits of the target population, which consists of both teachers and students, to provide a clearer understanding of their backgrounds. This information is essential for examining how these characteristics may influence student performance.

4.4 Introduction to bio- information

Bio - information is the information that gives out the description of the various respondents that were engaged in the research study. According to the research, there were attributions on the various respondents. Some of these are; literacy levels, their gender and sex and age classification.

4.4.1 Age of Teachers

The teachers' views on their age were taken and they are summarized in table 1 below.

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percent	Cumulative percentage
25 to 37	10	71.4	71.4	71.4
Above 37	4	28.6	28.6	28.6
Total	14	100	100	

Table 1: Age of Teachers

The data from teachers, as presented in Table above, shows that 28.6% of the teachers are aged 37 years and older, while 71.4% are between 25 and 37 years old. This implies that the majority of teachers at Mariani ward, Tharaka Nithi county, Kenya are relatively older. This may pose a challenge for students, as they are typically more familiar with younger teachers who are more likely to offer guidance on coping with poverty.

4.5 Data on Students and Their Performance

This section explores the age, gender, class, academic performance, and background of students. The research findings show that many respondents believed their performance was poor, as illustrated in Table below. Although students generally perform well at the time of admission, financial challenges, particularly school fees, lead to absenteeism as time progresses.

4.5.1 Age Category of Students

The age of a student is significant as it indicates the number of years they have spent in school. To ensure the study focused on the correct age group, students were asked to specify their age category, as shown in Table 2.

Respondent Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
14 to 16	47	62.5%	62.5%	62.5%
16 to 20	29	37.5%	37.5%	100.0%
Total	40	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 2: Age Category of Students

The data collected in Mariani Ward, Tharaka Nithi County, reveals that the majority of students, 47 out of 76 (62.5%), were aged between 14 and 16 years, while 29 out of 76 students (37.5%) were aged 16 to 20 years.

4.5 Discussion based on Objectives

This section sought to get information from respondents on effects of poverty on students' academic performance. Table 4.4 summarized the findings from students.

4.5.1 Insufficient of learning resources

This section aimed to gather information from respondents on how the lack of learning resources impacts students' academic performance. Table below summarizes the findings from the students,

Students' Perspective

Table 3 presents data on students' views regarding the impact of insufficient learning resources on their academic performance. Out of 76 respondents, 55 students (72.5%) agreed that a lack of resources affects their performance, while 21 students (27.5%) disagreed. This suggests that the majority of students believe their academic performance is hindered by insufficient learning resources.

Respondent	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Yes	55	72.5	72.5	72.5
No	21	27.5	27.5	100.0
Total	76	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Students' Views: Insufficient of learning resources

Teachers' Perspective

Table 4 shows the teachers' views on the same issue. Among the 14 respondents, 9 teachers (64.3%) agreed that the inadequacy of learning resources negatively affects students' academic performance, while 5 teachers (35.7%) disagreed. This indicates that most teachers recognize the lack of resources as a significant factor contributing to poor student performance in secondary schools.

Respondent	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
9	9	64.3	64.3	64.3
No	5	35.7	35.7	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Teachers' Views: Insufficient of learning resources

These findings confirm that both students and teachers perceive insufficient learning resources as a significant barrier to academic success in secondary schools, with a higher percentage of teachers agreeing that it impacts student performance.

4.5.2 The Extent to Which Lack of Food Affects Performance as Perceived by Students and Teachers

This section examines the extent to which lack of food affects students' academic performance, based on responses from both students and teachers. The data collected from the respondents is summarized in **Table 5** for students and **Table 6** for teachers.

Extent	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Yes	68	89.5	89.5	89.5
No	8	10.5	10.5	100.0
Total	76	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Lack of Food and Its Effect on Performance as Perceived by Students

Extent	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Yes	11	78.6	78.6	78.6
No	3	21.4	21.4	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Table 6: Lack of Food and Its Effect on Performance as Perceived by Teachers

Students' Perspective: Among 76 student respondents, 68 students (89.5%) agreed that lack of food negatively impacts their academic performance, while 8 students (10.5%) disagreed. This indicates that most students believe that inadequate access to food hinders their ability to perform well academically.

Teachers' Perspective: Among 14 teachers, 11 (78.6%) agreed that lack of food affects students' academic performance, while 3 teachers (21.4%) disagreed. This reinforces the idea that a lack of food is a significant factor contributing to poor academic outcomes, as acknowledged by the majority of teachers.

Both students and teachers agree that lack of food plays a critical role in affecting students' academic performance. With 89.5% of students and 78.6% of teachers affirming this, it is evident that inadequate nutrition due to a lack of food is a serious issue that significantly impedes students' ability to succeed in school. This issue is particularly impactful for day scholars who may face food insecurity, which directly affects their health and academic performance.

4.5.3 Students' Perception on Lack of School Fees Affecting Academic Performance

Perception	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Yes	59	77.5	77.5	77.5
No	17	22.5	22.5	100.0
Total	76	100.0	100.0	

Table 7: Students' Perception of Lack of School Fees

From table 7 above 76 student respondents, 59 (77.5%) stated that lack of school fees affects their academic performance, while 17 (22.5%) disagreed. This shows that a significant number of students feel that being sent home due to unpaid fees negatively impacts their ability to concentrate and succeed academically.

Lack of School Fees	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Yes	11	78.6	78.6	78.6
No	3	21.4	21.4	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Table 8: Teachers' Views on Lack of School Fees

Among the 14 teachers surveyed, 11 (78.6%) agreed that lack of school fees affects students' academic performance, while 3 (21.4%) disagreed. This supports the students' perceptions that financial challenges, particularly school fees, are a major factor impacting academic success.

Both students and teachers recognize the significant impact of lack of school fees on students' academic performance. The majority of students (77.5%) and teachers (78.6%) agree that financial barriers, such as being sent home for unpaid school fees, disrupt students' education and hinder their academic achievement. This issue is a clear reflection of the poverty-related challenges that students face in secondary schools, affecting their ability to perform well in their studies.

4.6 Summary of Findings

The findings of this study indicate that most of the factors related to poverty significantly affect academic performance in secondary schools. As many as 77.5% of the students and 78.6% of the teachers agree that inability to pay school fees has a negative effect on students' performance, with students being sent home for fees affecting their studies. In addition, the students and teachers acknowledge that poor nutrition, due to lack of food, affects students' academic performance: 90% and 75%, respectively. Likewise, very few students, 72.5%, and teachers, 80%, still regarded inadequate learning resources as a big challenge in influencing academic performance. These findings underline the need to address the incidence of poverty

as a barrier to education. Further research might seek to continue long-term interventions that alleviate financial burdens, improve nutrition, and better provide learning materials to help improve student outcomes in impoverished communities.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the key findings from the study, draws conclusions based on the results, and provides recommendations to address the challenges identified. The study focused on examining the impact of poverty-related factors such as lack of school fees, inadequate learning resources, and lack of food on the academic performance of students in secondary schools. Such information is obtained from students and teachers as insights into how these factors drive these students to poor academic outcomes. The chapter also outlines some implications of the study regarding educational policy and practice by providing practical recommendations to better the learning environment for the less-privileged students.

5.2 Summary

5.2.1 Lack of school fee

The study has shown that lack of school fees is a major hindrance to the students' performance. A greater number of students (77.5%) and teachers (78.6%) agreed that financial constraints, especially those emanating from inability to pay school fees, affect students' education. Many students reported being frequently sent home due to fees arrears, which disrupts their learning and leads to absenteeism. This further has the implication of students who fail to concentrate and achieve full success in their academics, hence leading to poor achievement.

Moreover, nonpayment of fees is usually connected with broader poverty-related factors that have impacts on their well-being. It was noted by the teachers that students who are in low-income positions experience stress, thus becoming anxious and therefore affecting their performance at school. This places families in a cycle of disadvantage where students' valuable learning opportunities are missed, reducing their likelihood of achieving academic success. This calls for urgent targeting of interventions in addressing school fees and providing financial support for students to improve their academic outcomes.

5.2.2 Lack of food

The study showed that a shortage of food and lack of good nutrition are significant factors impeding students from achieving high performance in school; 90% of students and 75% of teachers felt its hindrance. Many students, especially day scholars, have to stay in school the whole day with empty stomachs, which makes them tired and dizzy, hence poor concentration in class, making it difficult for them to perform well academically. Moreover, these children are often observed as irritated and unmotivated, even further reducing their achievements in studies. This problem, therefore, is a result of poverty, and there needs to be interventions like meal provision programs for them while in schools to ensure nutrition intake as they go on with other activities of acquiring knowledge that enables improvements in their studies.

5.2.3 Insufficient learning materials

The study revealed that the insufficiency of learning resources is a major obstacle to students' academic performance, with both students (72.5%) and teachers (80%) agreeing that a lack of adequate resources negatively affects learning outcomes. Many students reported struggling with limited access to textbooks, teaching materials, and other essential resources, which hinders their ability to fully understand and engage with the curriculum. Teachers also noted that the shortage of resources makes it difficult to deliver effective lessons, leaving students at a disadvantage compared to those in better-equipped schools. This lack of resources exacerbates the challenges faced by students in poverty-stricken areas, highlighting the need for schools to improve resource availability in order to support academic achievement and foster a more equitable learning environment.

5.3 Conclusion

The study established that lack of school fees was one of the major setbacks in students' academic performances, as a significant proportion of both students and teachers noted its adverse impacts. Lack of school fees has forced many students to absent themselves from school because they are often sent home due to non-payment, disrupting the learning culture and hence affecting their performance. This financial constraint not only affects the attendance of students but also causes them unnecessary stress, which further affects their concentration and overall well-being. Therefore, it goes without saying that addressing the issue of school fees is very key in improving the academic performances of students.

In addition, poor nutrition and lack of food were also found to be among the major causes of poor academic performance. The majority of students and teachers felt that the inability to take enough food hinders the students' concentration, energy levels, and involvement in class. Hunger and malnutrition are very common for the day scholars from poverty-stricken areas and directly impact the cognition and learning motivation of the students. The scenario above has pointed out the dire need to ensure the nutrition requirements of the students to have them physically and mentally equipped with the energy to succeed academically.

Another major factor affecting performance was the inadequacy in the availability of learning resources. The limitation in accessing textbooks, teaching, and learning aids among both students and teachers makes it difficult not only for the students to understand and develop interest in learning the curriculum but also for teaching effectively. Insufficient resources further propagate these inequities, particularly in schools consisting of students from low-income families. This study emphasizes the need for increased investment in educational resources to improve learning standards and allow students to rise above the poverty barrier.

5.4 Recommendations for policy

In addressing the issue of lack of school fees, it is recommended that schools and government agencies do more by putting in place comprehensive financial support systems, such as scholarships, bursaries, and fee waivers, to help students from low-income families. Schools should liaise with local communities and non-governmental organizations in creating funds that can assist students facing financial hardships and ensure that no student is sent home due to inability to pay fees. In addition, educational policies should focus on free or subsidized education, as this would greatly minimize the burden among families and ensure that students stay in school regularly without threats of exclusion for non-payment of school fees.

In light of the inadequacy in food and learning materials, schools should focus their initiatives in providing nutritious meals to the students, especially in regions suffering from food insecurity. School feeding programs can help make students physically and mentally prepared for learning. In addition, increasing the availability of learning resources such as textbooks, computers, and other teaching materials is also urgently needed. Governments and other educational stakeholders should invest in developing resources to ensure that schools are well equipped to cater to the needs of students. With schools improving access to food and learning

resources, the environment for learning could be more conducive; it will improve students' academic achievements and their overall well-being.

5.5 Recommendations for further research

More research should be carried out to investigate any other factors that lead to poor academic performance in Tharaka Nithi county at large.

Research should also be carried out to analyze how learning process of the students can be improved. Apart from poverty, there are many other areas that can be improved on to ensure that students have the best learning experiences.

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APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Mbabu Mahron Mwiti, a student at Grets University conducting a research on students' academic performance in secondary schools. Therefore, I kindly ask you to assist me with this research by filling this questionnaire. Information provided will be confidential. Please don't write your name on the questionnaire to enhance confidentiality.

Questionnaire for Students: The Impact of Poverty on Academic Performance

Section 1: Demographic Information

Please provide the following information by ticking the appropriate box.

1. **Age:**

- 14 to 16
- 16 to 20

2. **Gender:**

- Male
- Female

3. **Academic Performance:**

How would you rate your overall academic performance?

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor

Section 2: The Impact of Learning Resources

4. Do you believe that the lack of learning resources (books, computers, materials) affects your academic performance?
- Yes
 - No

Section 3: The Impact of Lack of Food on Academic Performance

5. Do you think the lack of food affects your ability to concentrate and perform well in your studies?
- Yes
 - No
6. How often do you experience a lack of food at school?
- Always
 - Sometimes
 - Never

Section 4: The Impact of Lack of School Fees

7. Have you ever been sent home due to unpaid school fees?
- Yes
 - No
8. Do you believe that being sent home due to lack of school fees negatively affects your academic performance?
- Yes
 - No

Section 5: General Perceptions on the Effects of Poverty

9. Do you think poverty is one of the main factors affecting your academic performance?
- Yes
 - No
10. In your opinion, what are the most significant challenges related to poverty that affect your education?
(Select all that apply)
- Lack of food
 - Insufficient learning resources

- Lack of school fees
- Absenteeism
- Health issues
- Others (Please specify) _____

Questionnaire for Teachers: The Impact of Poverty on Academic Performance

Section 1: Demographic Information

Please provide the following information by ticking the appropriate box.

1. Age:

- 25 to 37
- Above 37

2. Gender:

- Male
- Female

Section 2: The Impact of Learning Resources

3. Do you believe that the lack of learning resources (books, computers, materials) affects your students' academic performance?
- Yes
 - No
4. In your opinion, how significantly does the lack of resources affect the students' performance?
- Very significantly
 - Somewhat significantly
 - Slightly
 - Not significantly

Section 3: The Impact of Lack of Food on Academic Performance

5. Do you think that lack of food impacts students' ability to perform academically?
- Yes
 - No
6. How often do you observe students struggling with hunger at school?
- Frequently
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Never

Section 4: The Impact of Lack of School Fees

7. Do you believe that students being sent home due to unpaid fees affects their academic performance?
- Yes
 - No
8. How does the lack of school fees affect the students' ability to concentrate and perform well in class?
- Significantly
 - Moderately
 - Slightly
 - Not at all

Section 5: General Perceptions on the Effects of Poverty

9. Do you think poverty is one of the main factors affecting students' academic performance in your school?
- Yes
 - No
10. In your opinion, what are the most significant challenges related to poverty that affect students' education?
(Select all that apply)

- Lack of food
- Insufficient learning resources
- Lack of school fees
- Absenteeism
- Health issues
- Others (Please specify) _____