

**INFORMAL COMPARISON STUDY OF FACTORS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE OF KCSE: A CASE OF IMENTI SOUTH AND IMENTI
CENTRAL IN MERU COUNTY**

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ABSTRACT

Education is the best legacy a nation can give to her citizens, especially the youth. This is because the development of any society depends much on the educational standards of the nation. The purpose of the study was to determine factors that lead to dismal performance in KCSE examinations in Imenti Central, as compared to Imenti South Sub County in Meru County. The study established that schools in Imenti South perform better than schools in Imenti Central partly because schools in Imenti South have more teachers, staffrooms, libraries, labs, books for staff and students. It was also established that schools in Imenti South Sub County perform because of high rates of student absenteeism in Imenti Central due to truancy and suspension. Poor parental participation in academic work of their children and lack of communication between parents and students in Imenti Central could explain the differences between students' the two sub-counties.

Key words: KCSE, Imenti South, Imenti Central, Students, Informal Comparison, Academic Performance

1.1 Background of the Study

Education is the process by which people acquire knowledge, skills, habits values or attitudes. One of the goals of education as stipulated in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Handbook for Inspiration of education Institutions, MoEST (2000), is to meet the needs and target of national development. This goal then prepares the young people to transition to adulthood and fully participate in both social and economic development. UNESCO (2005) noted that emphasis on access to education has led to inadequate attention to the quality education. Furthermore, a major report by the Kenya Government, (Republic of Kenya, 2005) emphasized that the Ministry Of Education needs to give more priority to research in the advancement of education for it is evident that this area had not been richly explored by researchers in Kenya.

Worldwide, various studies have been conducted to determine factors influencing performance in examination. As identified by Digobo (1997), inadequacy of resources is one of the determinants of performance, coupled with factors such as teachers experience, professional commitment and rate of transfers. According to Helinger (2002), a school principal is the most influential and important individual in a school since the managerial skills set the pace of every other activity, from the organizational culture and organizational climate for everyone. It is acknowledged that one's performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) determines student's chances of joining institutions of higher learning (Okumbe, 2002), with poor performance reducing a students' opportunities in terms of securing employment thus curtails their role in national development. Education has therefore become results oriented since the prospective candidates and employees are judged by the grades on their certificates.

Five observations have been made and documented in reform agenda for education sector in Kenya by the Elimu Yetu coalition, (2003). They are as follows; a general decline in performance, consistently better performance by boys when compared to girls, a better performance registered by private schools which is a consistent trend in both secondary and primary levels of schools. These observations are crucial for one to be said to have succeeded and thus has made performance in public schools to be a problem requiring serious address and amicable sought.

Kenya aims at achieving literacy rates, by increasing the rate of enrolment to 95%, increase the transition rate to technical institutions and universities from 4.6% to 20% with an emphasize of Science and Technology in order to achieve Vision 2030 (2007). Kenya will not meet the above objective if KCSE examinations are poorly performed, and therefore, secondary schools redouble the efforts for their students to register sterling performance in the national examinations. It is evident that Imenti Central shows low academic performance in KCSE ever since Meru County was subdivided into 8 Sub – Counties thanks to introduction new government structure brought about the Constitution of Kenya (2010). The Sub - County is now the last unit of comparison with other Sub- Counties in the county.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Education is a highly result oriented discipline whereby acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes of the prospective candidates and employees are judged by the grades on their certificate (Okumbe, 2001). It thus follows that good performance is paramount for selection and placement of students both in institutions of higher learning and later on in employment opportunities. As stated by Maranga (2002), general performance in education is wanting.

This statement fits the actual situation for majority of the secondary schools in Imenti Central Sub - County whose KCSE performance in public schools has been dismal in the past years. The tables below shows mean scores of Imenti Central and Imenti South informally compared and positions held since the sub-division of the Meru County.

Year	Imenti Central	Imenti South
2009	3.100	5.0362
2010	3.400	5.2805
2011	4.200	5.5776
2012	4.098	5.7261
2013	4.307	5.5401
2014	4.377	5.5069
2015	4.467	5.7818

From the above data Imenti Central seems to increase its mean score as informally compared to Imenti South Sub- County, which the researcher saw fit to look at to this trend and establish and identify the cause of this big disparity in performance.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- i. To identify school factors responsible for KCSE examination performance in Imenti Central and Imenti South Sub Counties.
- ii. To identify the school physical facilities that influence students' academic performance in Imenti Central and Imenti South Sub- Counties.

- iii. To find out parental intervention factors that influence student's academic performance in Imenti Central and Imenti South Sub- Counties.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 School Physical Facilities

Physical facilities in schools include the classrooms, libraries, workshops, dining hall, dormitories and washrooms. They all make the learners comfortable as they study, since the 8-4-4 system has a high demand for physical facilities. Parents and the larger community should be involved in financing the development projects in the schools, with some financed through fundraisers (harambee's). Therefore there is need for more harmonious relationship between the school management and the community, as it is noted that the head teacher of a school is responsible to the community which the school serves (Okumbe, 2002).

Eshiwani (2002), also indicates that school furniture, in particular chairs, form an important part of learning environment. Pupils need furniture for comfort to allow them study attentively, make notes, and do exercises and assignments. The condition of classrooms and other auxiliary buildings is very important, with features such as lockable doors and windows that can enable teachers leave their teaching aids in class for as long as they want without fear of the damages or theft, and as such, a teacher who has to pull down his teaching aids daily will not be motivated and so use them regularly Eshiwani, (2002). He further states that the available resources should be planned properly and utilized in an effective manner to bring about efficient provision of quality and relevant education. Mworira (2001), in another study, found out that some schools lacked enough classrooms, desks and chairs hence overcrowding of available ones. There were also situations where pupils learned under leaking roofs, in classrooms without lockable doors or windows and were forced to share a seats, making learning uncomfortable.

Ayoo (2002) and Mutua (2002) studied the effects of learning facilities on learning, and they noted that most schools in Mutitu - Adei Division were poorly equipped and thus lack the essential physical structures, which are necessary for learning. They found that the parents were the sole providers of physical facilities to the schools and they lacked to resources to fully acquire necessary resources and tools.

2.1.2 Availability of Teaching and Learning Materials Resources

The MoEST (2000) technical working group recognizes the fact that the availability of education materials has a major influence on educational outcome. It's emphasized the importance of the local communities, parent and sponsors to assist in the provision of adequate materials and relevant books in order to increase school facilities and equipment for proper teaching of subject both in primary and secondary schools. Adequate suppliers of institutional materials were seen as pre-requisite to meet the country's education objectives, and according to the MoEST (2000), books and other educational materials are the basic tools for the educational development. They must be available to the learners in terms of adequacy, quality and quantity, and must also be available at the time they are required at an affordable cost. The report recommended educationally suitable and culturally relevant materials to be prepared as a matter of priority for use in Kenyan schools, while equally noting that some schools like day secondary schools have few textbooks for use, while others rely on the teachers notes (Mworia, 2001). He further states that for a child to meet most of his education needs he should have an early access to facilities like libraries, laboratories and required books. Love and Kruger (2005) explain that a teacher, when teaching, should use resources that are relevant to enhance learning, which means that the teacher should choose resources that will provoke the student curiosity in relation to what is being taught.

In a study conducted by Irvin (2004), he argued that teachers should develop effective classrooms practices in working with student and more so in the area of handling teaching and learning resources. Eshiwani (2002) pointed out that the schools that had the best facilities were among the high achieving schools while those with inadequate facilities performed poorly in KCSE in the former Western Province of Kenya. Its conclusion was that presence or absence of school facilities distinguished schools that were performing highly from those performing poorly. It found that disbursement of resources like textbooks and other equipment was a major factor accounting for the scholastic differences among schools which again differed from one institution to another. It is therefore important to note that learning and teaching resources are very important and those schools without them, produce results that are not appealing to the teachers, community and to the whole nation.

2.1.3 School Administration

Okumbe (2001) argues that school administration is crucial and it plays a vital role both in the maintenance of discipline as well as academic performance. Administration is to plan, organize, supervise and make decisions about the various activities of an organization (Okumbe, 2001). It the basis on getting things done using managerial skills to enable managers direct, plan, monitor, control organize and make decisions in the school. As observed by Helinger and Herk (2002), a principle of a school is the most influential and important individual in any school. His or her managerial skills are used to set direction organizational environment in the school. The Kenya National Union of teachers (KNUT) national chairman by then, Mr. John Katumanga argued that “the lack of effective management has contributed to a decline in education service delivery (Daily Nation, May, 20th 2002 P.17)”. Levačić, Steele and Smees (2003), noted that the quality of head teacher mattered a lot in a school’s performance. Teachers, student, parents are

influenced by the manner in which he or she administers the school and this has a strong bearing on the students' performance. Nzabonimpa (2011) examined the influence of secondary school head teachers' general and instructional supervision of teachers' work performance, and the study indicated a moderate correlation between secondary school head teachers' supervisory practices and teachers' work performance. This implies that head teachers are vital in ensuring that teachers carry out their duties effectively which can ultimately results in better student outcome. Eshiwani (2002) in another study also revealed that schools which showed good performance had efficient and sound leadership. Head teachers of good schools are involved in organizing the learning process for their schools, by being present, taking part in the actual teaching to be familiar with what is happening in the classroom and never left anything to chance. It is therefore evident that a school administration has a lot of influence on the academic performance.

2.1.4 Parental Intervention

Parental involvement means active participation of parents in matters pertaining to education of their children. According to psychologists, one's family background influences the learning and achievements of a child. When a child is from a stable happy family, the child would be balanced psychologically and emotionally (Republic of Kenya 2005). Lack of food, poor health, and lack of personal effects have a direct link to the performance of a child. It is evident that due to poverty and other family constraints most of the parents in rural areas are not actively involved in education of their children. Most of them cannot afford school fees or provide facilities needed to improve the performance of secondary schools, some of the parents do not seem to understand their role in provision for the children while in school (Simmons, 1981).

Those parents who did not go to school are likely not to positively contribute to education of their children, as they only show little involvement in their children's school work. As a result, the child might not be motivated and this leads to poor performance. Parents who are highly educated are likely to provide favorable attitudes towards education. Educated parents encourage their children to do well in school and provide learning facilities like study rooms at home. They become role models to the children, which make the children to have positive attitudes towards education (Marchersi & Martin, 2002). A friendly discussion between adults and children opens the channels for intelligent participation and provide the best possibility that the child will remember what was taught. It is important that parent get involved in the education of their children to give the morale to study and make high achievement in school.

In Kenya, academic performance is measured by standardized test scores and teachers reports of academic performance. Examinations are generally acceptable as valid measures of achievement (Maiyo & Ashioya 2009). The education system of Kenya is dominated by examination oriented teaching, opposed to holistic learning, where passing examinations is the only benchmark for performance. Parents do not glorify failure in national examinations but recent primitive protests against schools and teachers when schools post dismal results. The overall poor performance can be attributed to a number of factors. Few parents, if any, would agree that not only the schools which are to be blamed but also the parents and the community are partly to be blamed for the declining academic standards. After classes most students are engaged in various house chores in the evening, and therefore they do not get enough time to do their homework and revise what was taught in class (Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2005).

3.1 Research Design

The study was conducted through ex-post facto design. Kerlinger (2001), states that ex-post facto is a type of research design that starts with the observation of independent variable in retrospect for their possible relationships to and effects on the dependent variables. The ex-post facto design was suitable for this study because it involved studying conditions or events that had already occurred and could not be changed. The study therefore involved observation of the KCSE performance In Imenti Central and Imenti South Sub-counties.

3.2 Location of the Study

This study was carried out in Imenti Central and Imenti South sub- counties of Meru County. The two Sub- Counties are settled by Meru people. Imenti South borders Imenti Central Sub-County on the northern side. Imenti South borders Tharaka on the Eastern side while Imenti Central borders Tigania East and Tharaka on the Eastern side. The two Sub-Counties are divided by a tarmac road from Meru Town along the Meru-Embu-Nairobi Highway.

3.3 Target Population

Mugenda & Mugenda (1999) define target population as a large population from which a sample is drawn. Therefore for the purpose of this study, Meru Central has 40 secondary schools and Imenti South has 68 secondary schools. The total number is 108 schools were targeted. The target populations were one hundred and eight (108) head teachers, one hundred and twenty eight (128) class teachers, two thousand seven hundred (2,700) form four students and two thousand six hundred and eighty (2,680) form four parents and two (2) Quality Assurance Officers were also targeted both in Imenti Central and Imenti South sub-counties. Therefore the total target population was five thousand six hundred and sixteen (5,616).

3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedures

Simple random sampling was used to obtain the sample size. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) recommend 10 to 30% percent of the population to represent the sample size. Ten percent was considered appropriate for this study. Therefore using these criteria a sample size of 11 schools, 10 head teachers, 12 class teachers were used. Therefore the sampled parents were 335 and the students were 338.

3.5 Research Instruments

To get the required information, questionnaires were administered to head teachers, form four students, and the class teachers. Closed and open ended questions were used by the researcher on the questionnaires. The questionnaires contained section's A, B, C, D and E all aimed at obtaining general information about the respondent and the school. To ensure the research instruments' consistency and validity, the researcher sought the opinion of the experts on the field of the study particularly, the researchers' supervisors and lecturers in the Department of Education of Kenya Methodist University. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) state that pretesting helps in enhancing the reliability of the instrument as being a consistent measure of the concepts being studied. They further propose that a pretest sample could be between 1-10 % of the study sample depending on its size. In this study the researcher used 8% of the sample size for pretest. The reliability of the instrument was established using the test-retest method, where the questionnaire was administered twice to the same group of the study. Time lap between the first and the second was two weeks and the results obtained were the same hence a probe that the questionnaire was reliable.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher obtained authority from the National commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) so as to collect data. Once permit was received, the researcher visited the various schools to collect required research data. All the questionnaires were distributed to the relevant respondents and drop and pick method was used to collect the questionnaires. Arrangements were made to interview the parents during the parent's meetings.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

The collected data was grouped with reference to objectives, and then coded and entered in the computer. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21. Results were presented in tables and bar graphs in form of totals, mean, percentages and frequencies. Mutai (2000) argues that the use of descriptive statistics to analyze the findings is recommended due to their familiarity people have with percentages, frequencies, tables and bar graphs.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

In this study, research ethics were highly upheld. The researcher endeavored to follow the right channels for the data collection and upheld all honesty and courtesy in all the dealings, especially during the data collection. Confidentiality, anonymity and freedom to participate were highly regarded. The information that was obtained was solely used for the sake of the research.

4.1 Research Findings

4.1.1 Teaching Experience of Respondents (Teachers and Principals)

	Imenti Central		Imenti South	
Years	11-15 Years (%)	Above 15 years (%)	11-15 Years (%)	Above 15 years (%)
Principals	50	50	50	50
Years	4-6 Years (%)	7-10 Years (%)	4-6 Years (%)	7-10 Years (%)
Teachers	33.3	66.7	16.7	83.3

The results show that all the principals from the two sub-counties had teaching experience of more than ten years. On the other hand, the results indicate that the sampled teachers had a teaching experience of 7-10 years in both sub-counties.

4.1.2 Adequacy of School Facilities

The results below show that 40 percent of principals from Imenti Central and 60 percent of principals from Imenti South indicated that they had adequate staffrooms. Another 40 percent of principals in both Imenti South and Imenti Central had satisfactory staffroom. This is an indication that schools in both Imenti Central and Imenti South had enough staffroom facilities. This view was supported by 33.3 percent of teachers and 66.7 percent of teachers from Imenti Central And Imenti South respectively who indicated that their schools had adequate staffroom. It should however be noted that 20 percent of principals and 16.7 percent of teachers from Imenti Central indicated that their schools had inadequate staffroom. This could be impacting negatively on the working conditions of teachers that might be reflected in the national examination results.

Thus, inadequacy of staffroom in some schools in Imenti Central could partly explain the poor results posited by schools from this particular Sub-County. This assertion is supported by Mwaniki and Mwangi (2011), who pointed out that lack of resources in schools, affects the performance of those schools. The information in Table below also shows that majority (80%) of principals from both sub-counties indicated that they adequate classrooms. This was supported by all (100%) of teachers and students from both Sub-Counties. This implies that schools in both sub-counties are well equipped in terms of classrooms. Thus, it is unlikely that adequacy of classrooms is responsible for the discrepancies in performance in national examination. In terms of availability of library facilities, 40 percent of the principals from Imenti South indicated that their schools have adequate libraries while 20 percent from both Sub-Counties indicated that their libraries are satisfactory.

From the results it is apparent that more (60%) of principals from Imenti Central indicated that they have inadequate libraries in their schools. This observation was also reported by 50% of the teachers from Imenti Central Sub-county who indicated that their schools have no library. This could be one of the reasons why schools in the Sub-County have a lower mean grade in comparison to that obtained in Imenti south in the KCSE examinations. This findings support another one by Mukwa and Too (2002), who argued that availability of adequate number of laboratories and library facilities in schools is ranked among factors that influence performance in national exams. The results further indicated that the schools in both Sub-Counties had inadequate or unavailable teachers' houses, though the availability of teachers houses cannot be the reason behind higher scores in Imenti South in comparison to Imenti Central. Thus, it can be asserted that that availability of teacher's houses in schools has no influence on students' KCSE performance.

Results regarding availability of dining hall and electricity indicated that school from both sub-counties had adequate dining hall and electricity. This is an indication that differences in performance in the two Sub-Counties cannot be explained by the availability of electricity or a dining hall since the availability of these facilities seems to be the same in the two sub-counties. The results further show that 40 percent of principals indicated that schools from Imenti South had adequate laboratories and 40 percent of them had satisfactory laboratory. This was supported by 50 percent of teachers who indicated that their schools had adequate laboratories. However, 60 percent of principals from schools in Imenti central indicated that their schools had inadequate laboratories. This view was supported by 66.7% of teachers from schools in Imenti Central. This difference in availability in the laboratory could explain the differences in performances among the two districts. Thus, the inadequacy of laboratories in Imenti Central sub-county could be partly to blame for the dismal performance of schools in KCSE in comparison to school from Imenti South Sub-county. This result also supports Mukwa and Too (2002) who assert that laboratories are essential for better students' performance in national examinations.

School Facilities	Respondent	A				S				I				NA			
		IC		IS		IC		IS		IC		IS		IC		IS	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Staffroom	Principals	2	40	3	60	2	40	2	40	1	20	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Teachers	2	33.3	4	66.7	3	50	2	33.3	1	16.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Students	35	70	40	80	15	30	10	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Classrooms	Principals	4	80	4	80	1	20	1	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Teachers	6	100	6	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Students	50	100	50	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Library	Principals	-	-	2	40	1	20	1	20	3	60	1	20	1	20	-	-
	Teachers	-	-	1	16.7	2	33.3	2	33.3	1	16.7	3	50	3	50	-	-
	Students	-	-	-	-	20	40	23	46	18	36	27	54	12	24	-	-
Teachers houses	Principals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	60	3	60	2	40	2	40
	Teachers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	83.3	4	66.7	1	16.7	2	33.3
	Students	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50	100	50	100	-	-	-	-
Playing fields	Principals	-	-	-	-	3	60	3	60	2	40	2	40	-	-	-	-
	Teachers	-	-	-	-	5	83.3	4	66.7	1	16.7	2	33.3	-	-	-	-
	Students	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50	100	50	100	-	-	-	-
School dining hall	Principals	4	80	4	80	1	20	1	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Teachers	6	100	6	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Students	50	100	50	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Electricity	Principals	4	80	4	80	1	20	1	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Teachers	6	100	6	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Students	50	100	50	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Laboratory	Principals	-	-	2	40	-	-	2	40	3	60	-	-	2	40	1	20
	Teachers	-	-	3	50	-	-	2	33.3	4	66.7	-	-	2	33.3	1	16.7
	Students	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	35	70	40	80	15	30

4.1.3 Adequacy of Teaching/Learning Resources

The results indicated that 40 percent of the principals from Imenti Central and 60 percent from Imenti South reported that their schools had adequate teacher's reference books and guides. This view was augmented by 33.3 percent of teachers from Imenti central and 66.7 percent of teachers from Imenti South. A critical look at this indicates that schools in Imenti South are better equipped with reference books as compared to schools from Imenti Central. This could also provide some explanation to the differences in KCSE examinations in the two Sub-Counties. The respondents indicated that schools from both the districts had adequate students' textbooks. This could be attributed to the government's efforts to cater for tuition fees for secondary education which enable schools to buy textbooks. Given that the schools from both sub-counties reported adequacy of student textbooks, it can be asserted that availability of students' textbooks does not provide succinct explanation for the differences in students' performance in KCSE in the two sub-counties.

The results indicated that 40 percent of principals from Imenti south reported that their schools had adequate wall maps and charts in comparison to 20 percent of the principals from Imenti central who reported the same. In addition, 60 percent of the principals reported that their schools had satisfactory wall maps and charts in comparison to 20 percent of principals from Imenti central who reported the same. These differences in availability of wall maps and charts could be one of the reasons behind the discrepancies in KCSE performance between the two sub counties. These results augment Mwaniki and Mwangi (2011) who argues that availability of teaching aids/resources in schools is ranked among factors that influence performance in national examination. Majority (60%) of principals from both sub-counties and most of teachers from both sub-counties (83.3% from Imenti central and 66.7% from Imenti South) indicated that the schools had chalkboards and chalk.

However, all (100%) of students from both sub-counties indicated that their schools had inadequate chalkboards and chalks. This is an indication that availability of chalkboards and chalks cannot explain the differences in performance in KCSE between the schools from the two sub-counties. The results further that 60 percent of principals from both sub-counties indicated that library books in their schools were inadequate while 40 percent of them indicated that the schools had no library books. This indicates that there were no differences in terms of library books availability between the two sub-counties. This assertion is supported by 83.3 percent of teachers from Imenti Central and 66.7 Percent of teachers from Imenti south who indicated that their schools had inadequate library books. This is an indication that availability of library books cannot explain the differences in performance in KCSE between the schools from the two sub-counties. The respondents reported that their schools had adequate stationary and time allocated for syllabus coverage. This is an indication that there were no differences in terms of availability of stationary and time allocated to complete syllabus. Thus, the differences in KCSE performance between the two sub-counties cannot be attributed to availability of stationary or to availability of time allocated for syllabus completion.

Teaching / Learning Resources	Respondent	A				S				I				NA			
		IC		IS		IC		IS		IC		IS		IC		IS	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Teachers reference books and guides	Principals	2	40	3	60	2	40	2	40	1	20	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Teachers	2	33.3	4	66.7	3	50	2	33.3	1	16.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Students	35	70	40	80	15	30	10	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Students textbooks	Principals	4	80	4	80	1	20	1	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Teachers	6	100	6	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Students	50	100	50	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wall maps and charts	Principals	1	20	2	40	1	20	3	60	1	20	1	20	-	-	-	-
	Teachers	-	-	1	16.7	2	33.3	2	33.3	1	16.7	3	50	3	50	-	-
	Students	-	-	-	-	20	40	23	46	18	36	27	54	12	24	-	-
Library books	Principals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	60	3	60	2	40	2	40
	Teachers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	83.3	4	66.7	1	16.7	2	33.3
	Students	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50	100	50	100	-	-	-	-
Chalkboards and chalk	Principals	-	-	-	-	3	60	3	60	2	40	2	40	-	-	-	-
	Teachers	-	-	-	-	5	83.3	4	66.7	1	16.7	2	33.3	-	-	-	-
	Students	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50	100	50	100	-	-	-	-
Other stationery	Principals	4	80	4	80	1	20	1	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Teachers	6	100	6	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Students	50	100	50	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Time allocated for syllabus coverage.	Principals	4	80	4	80	1	20	1	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Teachers	6	100	6	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Students	50	100	50	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

4.1.4 Parents' Intervention Factors That Influence Students' Academic Performance

The results indicated that 80 percent of the principals from both Imenti Central and Imenti South reported that students in their schools are rarely absent due to sickness. This view was supported by 33.3 percent of teachers from Imenti central and 66.7 percent of teachers from Imenti South and Imenti Central. The results also indicate that 52% of the students from Imenti Central and 58 percent of students from Imenti South sub-county. This implies absenteeism due to sickness cannot be used to justify the differences in student performance in KCSE examinations in the two sub-counties. Compared to 40 percent of the principals who indicated that students in Imenti Central are frequently absent due to sneaking/truancy, only 20 percent of the principals from Imenti south shared this sentiments. In addition, 66.7 percent of teachers from Imenti Central also indicated that students are frequently absent due to sneaking/truancy against 33.3 percent of teachers from Imenti South who had the same indications. This implies that Imenti Central records a higher frequency of students who are absent due to truancy in comparison to students from Imenti South. Thus, the differences in student absenteeism attributed to sneaking/truancy could explain why students from Imenti South Sub-county records better results in KCSE than those from Imenti Central. This supports Maina and Wanga (2012) whose study indicated that student absenteeism affected academic performance and that the level of student absenteeism mattered in academic performance.

In terms of absenteeism due to strikes, majority (80%) of principals from both Imenti South and Imenti Central indicated that students are rarely absent due to strikes. This view was augmented by results from 66.7 percent of teachers from Imenti Central and 83.3 percent of teachers Imenti South. Majority of students from both sub-Counties (80% from Imenti Central and 88% from Imenti South) also shared the same observation.

This implies that strikes are rarely responsible for student absenteeism in both sub-counties and hence they cannot explain the differences in KCSE performance. Concerning fee problems, 60 percent of principals from both sub-counties indicated that students are sometimes absent from schools due to school fees problems. However, 66.7 percent of the teachers from Imenti Central and 50 percent of teachers from Imenti south indicated that students from their schools were frequently absent from school due to school fees problems. This near similarity of fee problem concerns in both sub-counties indicates that disparities in KCSE performance between the two sub-counties cannot be attributed to fee related issues. The results further indicated that 60 percent of principals from Imenti Central and 40 percent from Imenti south indicated that students are sometimes absent from schools due to suspension. This view was shared by 50 percent of teachers from both sub-counties. Moreover, 60 percent of students from Imenti Central and 44 percent from Imenti south also indicated that students are sometimes absent from schools due to suspension. A critical analysis of this finding points out that there might be higher rates of students who are absent due to suspension from Schools in Imenti central than those from Imenti South. Thus, the differences in student performance in KCSE could be attributed to the rates of suspension of students from schools. Finally, the information in the table shows that 40 percent of principals from Imenti Central and 20 percent from Imenti south indicated that students indicated that students are frequently absent due to punishments. However, 60 percent of principals from Imenti Central and 80 percent of principals from Imenti South indicated that students are rarely absent from their schools due to punishments. This view was shared by 50 percent of teachers from both sub-counties and 76 percent of students from Imenti Central and 82 percent of students from Imenti South. Again this finding points out that there might be differences in terms of students who are absent from school due to punishment in the two sub-counties with Imenti central recording slightly higher rates.

Cause of absenteeism	Respondent	Frequent				Sometimes				Rarely			
		IC		SI		IC		SI		IC		SI	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Absence due to sickness	Principals	-	-	-	-	1	20	1	20	4	80	4	80
	Teachers	1	16.6	1	16.7	1	16.6	1	16.7	4	66.7	4	66.7
	Students	8	16	7	14	16	32	14	28	26	52	29	58
Absence due to sneaking/truancy	Principals	2	40	1	20	1	20	2	40	2	40	2	40
	Teachers	3	50	2	33.3	2	33.3	3	50	1	16.7	1	16.7
	Students					23	46	20	40	27	54	30	60
School strikes	Principals					1	20	1	20	4	80	4	80
	Teachers					2	33.3	1	16.7	4	66.7	5	83.3
	Students					10	20	6	12	40	80	44	88
Absence due to fee problems	Principals	2	40	2	40	3	60	3	60				
	Teachers	4	66.7	3	50	2	33.3	3	50				
	Students	24	48	20	40	10	20	10	20	16	32	20	40
Absence due to suspension	Principals	1	20	1	20	3	60	2	40	2	40	1	20
	Teachers	1	16.7	1	16.7	3	50	3	50	2	33.3	2	33.3
	Students	15	30	14	28	30	60	22	44	15	30	14	28
Absence due to punishment	Principals					2	40	1	20	3	60	4	80
	Teachers	1	16.7	1	16.7	2	33.3	2	33.3	3	50	3	50
	Students	2	4	4	8	10	20	5	10	38	76	41	82

5.1 Conclusions

This study sought to make an informal comparison on factors influencing KCSE performance in Imenti Central and Imenti South Sub-counties. Based on the findings it can be concluded that schools in Imenti South perform better than schools in Imenti Central sub-county partly because schools in Imenti South have adequate physical facilities and learning resources such as staffrooms, libraries, laboratories, reference books, and charts, teaching staff and other learning resources than schools in Imenti Central sub-county. The study also concludes that based on the findings, it can be concluded that in Imenti South perform better than schools in Imenti Central sub-county partly because high rates of student absenteeism in Imenti Central due to truancy, suspension and suspension. It can also be concluded that poor parental participation in academic work of their children and lack of communication between parents and students among parents of students in Imenti Central could partly explain the differences between students' performance in KCSE in the two Sub-Counties.

5.2 Recommendations

The researcher recommends that stakeholders in education sector in Imenti Central Sub-County should improve physical and teaching/learning resources in schools to help in improving students' performance in KCSE. It is also recommended that parents in Imenti Central Sub-County should be sensitized on the importance of participation in academic work of their children and positive communication with their children in fostering performance in KCSE.

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