

**INFLUENCE OF SELECTED FACTORS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF KISWAHILI
LANGUAGE AT KCSE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NJORO SUB-COUNTY,
NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA**

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Abstract

Kiswahili is the national language of communication in Kenya. It is also one of the core subjects taught in secondary schools' curriculum in Kenya. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of selected factors on students' performance in Kiswahili language at KCSE level in public secondary schools in Njoro Sub-county. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study used a sample of 55 Kiswahili teachers and 330 students from 19 secondary schools in Njoro Sub-county. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the sampled respondents. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. The study found that there was a positive relationship between the teachers' workload and students' performance in Kiswahili language but not statistically significant one at the .05 level, ($r = .053, p > .05$) The relationship between Kiswahili instructional materials ($r = .317, p < .05$), teachers' attitudes towards Kiswahili ($r = .497, p < .05$), students' attitudes towards Kiswahili ($r = 0.147, p < 0.05$) and their performance in the subject was positive and statistically significant at the .05 level. The study recommends the government, school board of management and parents-teachers association to provide adequate Kiswahili instructional materials to students and reward best performing teachers and students in order to motivate them to improve student performance in Kiswahili language.

Key words: Learning Materials, Workload, Teachers' Attitude, Students' Attitude, Kiswahili Performance

1.1 Background of the Study

Kiswahili is one of the languages used in many parts of the world (Mulokozi 2002). In Kenya, Kiswahili is the official national language as well as a compulsory subject of study at primary, secondary schools and teacher training colleges. It is also taught in many universities in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, the Middle East, Europe, Japan, China and USA among others. Kiswahili is also used as one of the broadcasting languages in Kenya, Africa and many world broadcasting corporations at large. Kiswahili is also one of the four national languages used in Congo Kinshasa and is extensively used in Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, Mozambique and Somalia. The Kiswahili language has made its presence felt in the world of art, music, theatre, movies and television programmes. Good performance in Kiswahili is so critical that its poor performance threatens the social-economic fabric in Kenya, not to mention the whole of East African region since is used at all its social-economic levels (Kimemia, 2001).

The promotion of Kiswahili language is not only in its use, but deliberate efforts are also being made throughout the world to include it in the curricula of higher institutions of learning (Akaka, 2011). Learners who acquire a good mastery of the subject are able to express themselves in Kiswahili and can even pursue it for further studies. According to the Ministry of Education secondary school syllabus, all students are expected to have acquired a good command of the Kiswahili language at the end of their four year secondary school education. This should be both in spoken and written forms to enable them communicate fluently, study Kiswahili text books and read for pleasure (K.I.E., 2002). Despite Kiswahili being a national and official language in Kenya, it lacks proper teaching methods and is affected by sheng', shortage of Kiswahili teachers and inadequate teaching and learning resources which may impact on its teaching and performance in schools (Mose, 2007).

In spite of the benefits of a good mastery of the Kiswahili language, which include providing opportunities for further studies, an entry point in the job market, enabling students to express themselves using the language among others, its performance at KCSE level has been poor for many years in Kenya, in Njoro sub-county in particular. Candidates in a number of schools have been scoring a mean score of C- and below. Table 1 shows the mean scores of the KCSE results for the year 2011 to 2015 in Njoro Sub- county.

Table 1: KCSE Kiswahili performance in Njoro Sub- county 2011-2015

Year	Mean scores	Maximum Score	Mean grade	Maximum Grade
2011	5.42	12.00	C-	A
2012	5.02	12.00	C-	A
2013	5.05	12.00	C-	A
2014	5.64	12.00	C	A
2015	5.24	12.00	C-	A

Source: MOEST Njoro Sub-county KCSE results for the year 2011-2015

From Table 1, it can be seen that the performance of Kiswahili in Njoro sub-county is poor in the period of the five years. Most schools scored C-. out of a maximum of A which is equivalent to a score of 12. If the this problem poor performance among students is addressed collectively by all education stakeholders, students' ambition to advance academically may become foreclosed. Many secondary students may not pass in their national examinations and this in the long run will make it difficult for the country to have people who are well versed in Kiswahili language. This study

investigated the influence of selected factors on the performance of Kiswahili language at KCSE in secondary schools in Njoro Sub-County.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the teachers' perceptions on the influence of selected factors on the performance of Kiswahili in secondary schools in Njoro sub-county.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following specific: To investigate the influence of teachers' workload, availability of Kiswahili language instructional materials, teachers' and students' attitude towards Kiswahili language on the performance in the subject at KCSE in Njoro Sub-county.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was adapted from the Functional Theory of education as illustrated by Blackledy and Hunt (1985). They state that the essential functions of education are socialization where individual persons are trained to perform adult roles in the society, as well as being transformed from an asocial beings into a social ones. The theory postulates that the functions of the school is the development of individuals' commitment and capacity to perform allocated roles within the society. Thus the process of education is the sharing of common values by the family and the school which are the two agencies involved.

In secondary school, students are gradually differentiated into high achievers and low achievers and are further classified according to their academic and social successes, which are the values of achievement shared by the family, school and the community. It can therefore be noted that those students who miss out on education, stand to lose the gains of schooling which include socialization and selection process at higher levels of education and also at universities. Although the fruits of education are quite many, the school-based factors that include overcrowding in classes, lack of enough teachers and inadequate text books makes the problem of poor performance in Kiswahili language worse. These factors make the school to deny the students the socialization and selection process which are acquired through schooling.

1.5 Empirical Review

1.5.1 Teachers Workload

A report by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) on the Affordable Secondary Education (ASE) in Kenya observed that teachers were overloaded with too many lessons and this reduced their ability to teach various language skills adequately. UNESCO (2005) recommended that the teaching load for Kiswahili language teachers should be minimized so that they can handle the subject well. This may improve Kiswahili learners motivation to learn the subject. They also argued that a reduced workload for teachers will help them to concentrate on teaching and their own development and therefore boosting students' performance.

Many secondary schools are understaffed with Kiswahili teachers and therefore many Board of Management (BOMs) are forced to employ teachers who may not be well trained. This makes the performance of the Kiswahili language as well as other subjects low. According to Akaka, (2011), teacher to student ratio was 1:62 against the recommended ratio of 1:30. According to Akaka (2011), the education policies in Kenya seem to favour English language teachers. The English teachers teach English and literature only in their schools but Kiswahili teachers teach Kiswahili in addition

to other subjects like Geography, History, Christian Religious Education (CRE). Therefore Kiswahili teachers have more work and even lack adequate time to prepare for the lessons or even to concentrate fully on the teaching of Kiswahili. No study previously conducted that links workload of Kiswahili language teachers with students' performance in the subject. This study endeavoured to close this research gap by establishing a link between the two variables.

1.5.2 Availability of Instructional

Another factor that may influence the performance in Kiswahili language is lack of instructional materials. Scheerens (2003) concluded after a study that availability of teaching/learning resources enhances the effectiveness of schools as they are basic things that can bring about good academic performance. Ndwiga (2006) in his study on factors influencing the performance of Kiswahili at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Embu district noted a serious shortage of Kiswahili textbooks and other teaching resources. He argued that inadequate teaching resources inhibit good performance in Kiswahili at KCSE. Further, Mutua (2007) in his study on factors influencing the performance of Kiswahili at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination level in Moyale sub-county confirmed that majority of schools have inadequate teaching learning resources to the extent that learners lacked language course books. Some schools did not even have libraries, a situation that is similar to what is happening in Njoro Sub-county schools.

Gekombe (2015) who noted that teaching and learning resources were inadequate in most schools especially those that fell in the sub-county school category. The Ministry of Education recommendation is that every Kiswahili text book should be shared by two students (KIE, 2002). However, according to Njoro Sub-county Education Office (2015), the ratio of textbook in many schools is 1:3 or more against 1:2 recommendation by MOE. Elliott and Corrie (2015) and Fredriksen, Brar and Trucano (2015) recommended getting textbooks to every student in Sub-Saharan Africa and also gave strategies for addressing the high cost and low availability problem. It was found that shortage of teaching and learning resources negatively affected students' performance in this study (Gekombe, 2015). Since the above studies were carried outside the area of study of this research, it was therefore necessary to find out whether availability of Kiswahili instructional materials influences student performance in Kiswahili in Njoro Sub-County.

1.5.3 Teachers' Attitude towards Kiswahili Language.

Brown (2007) argues that the judgment and attitude of teachers in a school system provide the most valuable information about the problem to be faced than any other source. Topper (2009) maintains that teachers' attitudes and beliefs shape the sense they make of any educational innovation, and play a crucial role in how they behave in the classroom situation. Savington (2004) in relation to the importance of teachers' attitude and beliefs argues that in the quest for the improvement of language teaching, the language teacher has been overlooked. Further, he postulates that exploration of teachers' perceptions of what they do and why they do it, holds promise for understanding the frequently observed discrepancies between theoretical understanding of second language acquisition and classroom practice.

Busienei and Suter (2013) did a study on the attitude of teachers and students in the teaching and learning of Kiswahili in Marakwet District. They established that Kiswahili teachers do not have a favourable attitude towards the teaching and learning of Kiswahili. They however did not show its impact on performance of students at KCSE level. There is limited literature of teachers attitude to Kiswahili both globally and on Kenyan soil that warrants this current study. Again, the available

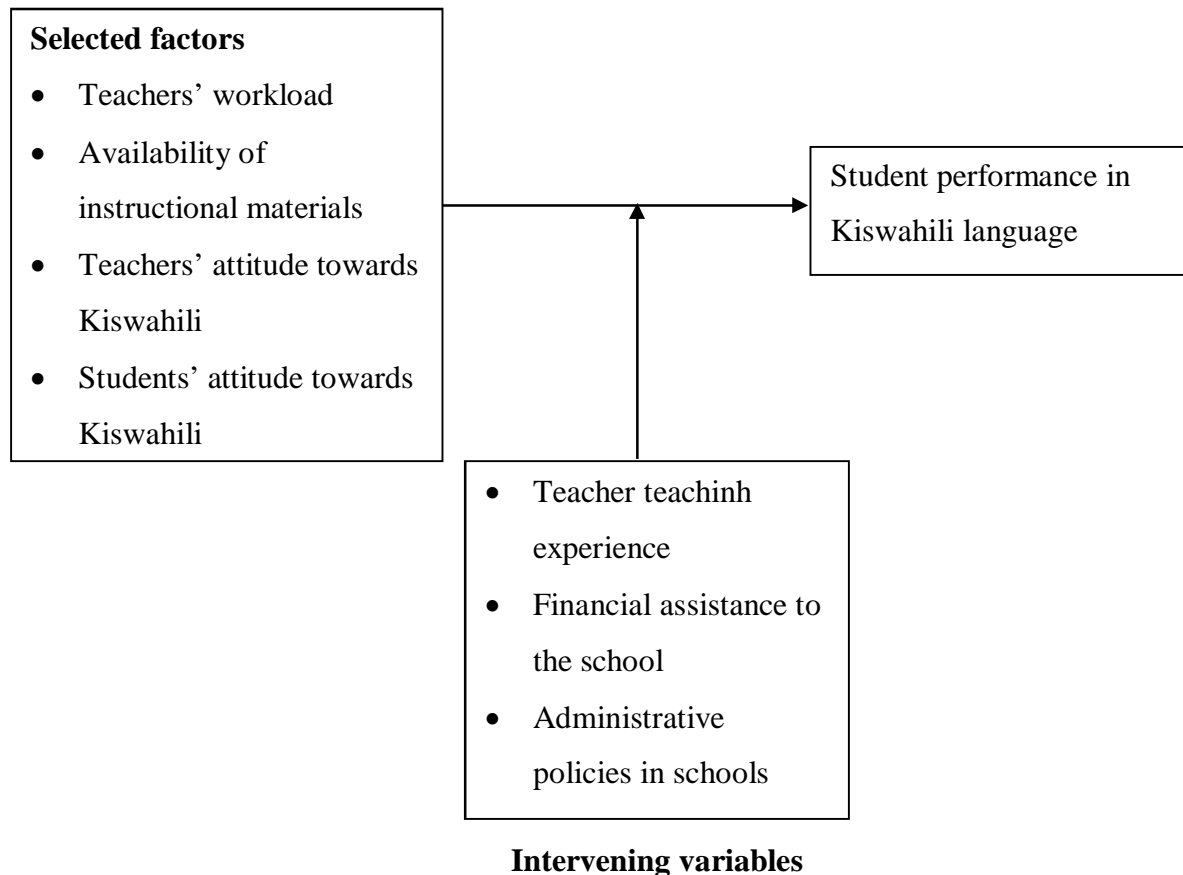
literature does not establish the level of teachers' influence on student performance, an element that this study considered.

1.5.4 Students' Attitude towards Learning Kiswahili

Chamber (1999) argues that students attitude is an integral part of learning and that its consideration should therefore become an essential component of second language learning. Chang (2010) agrees that an individual's perceptions of the class teacher, peer group, syllabus and their awareness of their future needs affect their attitude towards learning a language. In his study Munialo (2009) supports this by arguing that: negative attitude by learners inhibits good performance in Kiswahili at KCSE. Akey (2006) carried a longitudinal study among high school students of grade 9-11 indicated that a perceived academic competence (attitude) had a positive influence on reading achievement among high school students. Of the reviewed studies, none was conducted in the area of study of this research and since students' attitude is a function of learning environment, there was a need to make inquiry on students' attitude towards Kiswahili Language in Njoro Sub-County. This current study aimed at establishing the relationship between student's attitude and Performance of Kiswahili.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

The teachers' workload, availability of instructional materials, students' and teachers' attitudes were the independent variables while teaching experience, financial assistance to the school, and the school administrative policies were the intervening variables of this study. Figure 1 is a summary of the conceptual framework of variables influencing the performance of Kiswahili language in secondary schools in Njoro sub-county.

Independent variables**Dependent variable****Figure 1: Conceptual Framework****1.7 Methodology**

This study used descriptive survey design. The target population comprised of 2340 students and 55 Kiswahili teachers from 19 public secondary schools in Njoro Sub-county. Nineteen (19) public secondary schools and 55 Kiswahili language teachers were purposively selected for this study. Probabilistic sampling formula by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) was used to select a sample size of 330 students. The study used questionnaires to obtain data from teachers and students. Data on students' performance in Kiswahili in KCSE for the years 2011-2015 was obtained from Njoro Sub-county Education Office.

To ensure face and content validity, the researcher consulted research supervisors, professionals and experts in the field of research. Reliability is the degree to which a test consistently gives similar results when administered on the same subjects repeatedly (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). To test for reliability of the research instruments, the researcher used Cronbach's Alpha whereby a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82 from teachers' questionnaires and 0.81 from students' questionnaires confirmed reliability of the research instruments. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 22 was used to analyze the data

1.8 Findings of the Study

The influence of the teachers' workload on students' performance in Kiswahili language in KCSE for the years 2011-2015 was determined using the Pearson Correlation.

Table 2: Correlations between teachers' Workload and Performance in Kiswahili

Scale		Performance in Kiswahili
Teachers' workload	Pearson Correlation	.053
	p-value	.698
	N	55

The results on Table 2 show that the relationship between the teachers' workload and students' performance in Kiswahili language was positive but not significant at the .05 level, $r(53) = .053$, $p > .05$. Therefore teachers' workload did not influence students' performance in the subject. This finding agreed with Ajayi (2001) study which revealed that no significant influence existed between teachers' workload and students' academic performance while Kolawole (2002) found that a negative relationship existed between the academic performance of students and teachers' workload. However, these results are inconsistent with those of Nwanekezi, (2006) who found that teachers' workload was one of the factors that inhibits students' academic achievement. These findings also significantly differ with those of Gekombe (2015) who found that Kiswahili teachers had a big workload which affected the performance of students negatively.

The relationship between availability of instructional materials and students' performance in Kiswahili language was determined using the Pearson correlation.

Table 3: Correlations between Instructional materials and Performance

Scale		Performance in Kiswahili
Teaching-Learning material	Pearson Correlation (r)	0.317*
	p-value	0.018
	N	55

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 3 show that the relationship between instructional materials and students' performance in Kiswahili language was positive and significant at the .05 level, $r(53) = .317$, $p < .05$. It implies that instructional materials influenced students' performance in Kiswahili language. These results are in line with those of Elliott and Corrie (2015) who found that, the availability of textbooks had a significant and positive impact on learning outcomes. Likoko, Mutsotso and Nasongo's (2013) established that lack of facilities like libraries and inadequate instructional materials have a negative influence on pupils achievement. The results also support the findings of a study conducted by Okoth (2012) who found out that use of instructional materials provides appropriate introduction to learning of new and complex concepts.

Pearson correlation was used to correlate the teachers' attitudes towards Kiswahili language and students' performance.

Table 4: Teachers' Attitude towards Kiswahili Language and Students Performance in Kiswahili Language

Scale		Performance in Kiswahili language
Teachers attitude towards Kiswahili language	Pearson Correlation	.497*
	p-value	.000
	N	55

*Significant at the .05

The results in Table 4 reveal that the relationship between teachers' attitudes towards Kiswahili and students performance in the subject was positive and significant at the .05 level, $r(53) = .497$, $p < .05$. This is an indication that teachers' attitudes towards Kiswahili influence performance of students in the subject. These findings concur with those by Ashiono (2016) that revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between teacher characteristics such a teacher attitude and student performance in Kiswahili in KCSE examinations. Similarly Akinsolu (2010) observed that teachers' attitude is a vital pre-requisite for students' attainment of educational goals and objectives. Wasiche (2009) concurs with these results who found out that those teachers who were less motivated and less interested in teaching, their students performed poorly as compared to the students taught by highly motivated teachers.

The study further established the relationship between the students' attitude towards Kiswahili language and students' performance in the subject using the Pearson correlation.

Table 5: Students' Attitudes towards Kiswahili Language and their Performance in Subject

Scale		Kiswahili achievement
Teachers attitude towards Kiswahili language	Pearson Correlation	.147*
	p-value	.008
	N	330

*Significant at the .05

The results on Table 5 show that the relationship between students' attitudes towards Kiswahili and their performance in the subject was positive and statistically significant at the .05 level, $r = 0.147$, $p < 0.05$. This is an indication that students' attitudes towards Kiswahili language influenced their performance in the subject. These results are consistent to the findings by Akey (2006) in his study which showed that students' performance is related positively to the attitudes they have towards learning a particular subject. The results are also in agreement with the findings of Munialo (2009) whereby he found that students' performance in Kiswahili was strongly influenced by their attitude towards the subject.

1.9 Conclusions

This study concluded that the availability of instructional materials, teachers' and students attitude towards Kiswahili language significantly influenced the students' performance in the subject. Teachers' workload did not significantly influence the students' performance in Kiswahili language.

2.0 Recommendations

The study recommends to the Boards of Management of schools (BOM), Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and principals to work together to provide adequate instructional materials to Kiswahili teachers. This study also recommends in-service training, recognition for best performing teachers in Kiswahili, visits to Kiswahili broadcasting stations and Kiswahili workshops as a motivation strategy to Kiswahili teachers towards teaching the subject. This study proposes that students to be exposed more to the exciting career opportunities available in Kiswahili language, be more engaged in inter schools Kiswahili debates, visits to the broadcasting stations and being provided with Kiswahili newspapers and magazines.

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