

**Influence Of Teacher Related Factors On Learner's Academic Performance In Public Primary Schools In Murang'a South Sub County, Murang'a County, Kenya**

By

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**Abstract**

This study aimed at investigating influence of teacher related factors on learner's academic performance in public primary schools in Murang'a south sub county Murang'a County, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to examine the influence of teacher pupil relationship on their academic performance and influence of teacher motivation on academic performance of the pupils. The target population of the study was 24 headteachers, 261 teachers and 1944 pupils. Sampling was done and using simple random sampling, 5 headteachers were selected. Furthermore, 72 teachers and 20 parents were chosen using purposive sampling and 200 pupils were sampled using simple random sampling. The study adopted cross sectional research design and used structural functional theory by Durkheim (1917). The results of the study revealed that there was a significant influence of teacher-pupil relationship on academic performance of the pupils. Furthermore, the findings revealed that there was a significant influence of teacher motivation on academic performance of the primary school pupils. The results implied that the better the teacher-pupil relationship the better the academic performance of primary school pupils. From the qualitative results, the study concludes that the relationship between the teachers and the pupils was cordial and that the teachers were aware that by having good relationship with the pupils, they can motivate them to work harder for better results to be realized. It was further established that the more the teacher motivation the better the academic performance of primary school pupils. From the qualitative data, the study concluded that most of the teachers in the sub county were well-motivated and the head teachers together with the teachers were aware that motivation had a potential to influence academic performance among the pupils. The study recommends that teacher pupil relationship and teacher motivation should be promoted so as to impact the performance of students. Further, the study recommends that the head teachers should work with other stakeholders to allocate more resources on performance incentives for teachers in order to enhance their motivation for better academic performance of the pupils. Further studies should be done to establish the impact of other teacher related factors associated with performance of the pupils from other counties in rural settings and urban settings.

**Key Words:** Kenya, Murang'a, Teacher pupil relationship; teacher motivation; academic performance

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**1. Background to the Study**

In the modern society, education is associated with positive outcomes that are valued not only by individuals but also by the society. It is only through education that any society can provide knowledge and skills to help its members improve their personal lives and the society at large (McCowan, 2021). According to Firsova et al. (2021) quality education is fundamental for the competitiveness of an individual in the labor market and as a result people all over the world are focusing on the kind of education that would guarantee success in professional areas, career growth and high wages. In this regard, quality education is a key pillar in the provision of education services. Most governments, throughout the world are heavily investing in education to improve the quality of education provided to all their citizens at all levels of learning (Jamal et al., 2021). According to Berger et al. (2020), effective implementation of the curriculum is necessary for the achievement of educational goals. Gapsalamov et al. (2020) argues that academic performance is the only true gauge for quality of education received and the extent of implementation of education curriculum in learning institutions.

Efforts have been made to improve academic performance in public primary schools in Kenya. However, low academic achievement still remains an issue of concern. According to Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) (2019) report, a significant number of the primary school pupils in Muranga County who sat for KCPE examinations in the year 2018 scored below average marks (250 marks and below). Despite the efforts that have been made to improve academic performance in the area, this problem has continued to persist. Little has been done in Murang'a County in terms of research regarding the cause of poor performance in public primary schools. However, Bonface (2017) in a study of chronic absenteeism and academic performance of learners in preschools in Murang'a County revealed that a considerable number of children were chronically out of school due to various reasons such as poverty, nutritional problems, health, drugs abuse and differing community attitudes towards education. The absenteeism contributed to the children poor academic performance. The current study focused on teacher pupil relationship and teacher motivation in an effort to address the below average academic performance in Muranga South Sub County.

Teachers-pupil relationship is a wide term that covers all the influence of teachers on their pupils' immediate behavior, intellectual and social development (Flores, 2019). Adedigba and Sulaiman (2020) in a study on the influence of teacher classroom management styles on pupil's motivation for learning in Kwara State, Nigeria revealed that teacher-pupil relationship determines the pupils' motivation to learn and achieve success in academics. In another study, Tohazali et al. (2020) reported that teachers-students feedback conception was associated with increased pupils aspirations and vice-versa. Additionally, Maelan et al. (2020) study in Norway indicated that pupil perception of their teachers support in academic and mental well-being

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improved their performance. Nevertheless, the findings were not conclusive because the samples used were drawn from contexts that differ in many aspects from Muranga County. Therefore, similar research was needed in this area to bridge the gap.

Teachers' motivation involve two key aspects; desire to teach and interpersonal style, that is the intensity of individuals' teachers intrinsic drive to choose to teach and sustaining teaching that is manifested through effort expended on teaching (Osman & Warner, 2020). Reyes and Von Antony (2020) examined the relationship between teacher's and learner's rapport and learning program schools in Quezon City. The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant direct correlation between teachers-learners rapport and learners' autonomy. Mabunda and Mulovhedzi (2020) also conducted a qualitative study that investigated the influence of teachers-learners relationship and academic performance of pupils at Soutpansberg West Circuit primary school in Vhembe District, South Africa. The findings established that teachers-pupils relationship played a significant role in enhancing pupils' academic performance.

Keller et al. (2017) observed that teachers' motivation often predicts students' interest in learning engagement and performance in physics among secondary school students. In Kenya not much has been done in this area as it has received little attention from researchers in the education field. Considering that Kenyans' education system is rapidly evolving with the increasing number of educated professionals in the market, more research need to be done to improve the foundation of education at the very beginning (primary education) to improved performance in advanced stages of education. Ngunjiri (2020) investigated the influence of teacher-students' interaction on motivation to learning mathematics. The findings of the study indicated that teacher-students interaction had a significant positive relationship to learners' motivation to learn mathematics. Awtseana (2019) also reported that school principals ought to invest more in helping teachers to facilitate students' learning through continuous supervision and solving teachers' main challenges that lower their motivation in work performance.

So far, most of the research work conducted on the association between social economic factors and academic performance focused on secondary school learners (Adedigba & Sulaiman, 2020; Assari, 2019; Maelan et al. 2020). In Muranga County, there is a scarcity of literature on the factors associated with below average academic performance in public primary schools. Furthermore, considering the consistent below average performance in primary schools in Murang'a County the current study intended to fill this gap by investigating the teacher factors influencing academic performance in order to provide findings that may be used to conclusively address this problem.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

For the past three years (2019-2020), Muranga County examination report indicates that majority of the primary school pupils in this sub county who sat for KCPE examinations scored below average marks (250 marks and below). The persistent poor performance among pupils has led to low transition to secondary schools which has further affected social and economic development. The affected learners may lose out on opportunities to continue with their studies to secondary schools and institutions of higher learning. Additionally, the affected students may not have adequate problem-solving skills to achieve their full potential in life. This skewed

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performance is an issue of concern that required scientific investigation to identify the contributing factors and give recommendations that may be used to address this problem.

Related studies have been conducted in Kenya to investigate the factors associated with below average performance in selected primary schools. Njoroge (2011) reported that socio-cultural factors contributed to poor academic performance in some primary schools in Muranga County. The best legacy a country can give to its citizens is education (UNESCO, 2005), however, there has been consistent below average performance in KCPE among majority of the primary school pupils in Muranga South Sub County witnessed in the last five years. Despite the efforts that have been made for example scholarship programs for bright pupils, in some areas academic performance still remains an issue of concern from all the stakeholders in the education sector in the area regarding the dwindling quality of education.

Poor academic performance has far-reaching consequences on the affected pupils and the society at large. It lowers the pupil's chances of proceeding to higher levels of learning and acquire skills that are required to optimally contribute to social and economic development in the country. To the society and the country at large, poor academic performance leads to wastage of human and financial resources that have been invested in education. This negatively affects social and economic development and the efforts that have been made to realize the big four agenda and vision 2030. Investigation to establish whether teacher factors could be the reason behind this poor performance despite the concerns from different stakeholders including quality assurance and standards office of Ministry of Education who regularly visit the sub county. The declining performance in this region prompted the need for this study.

### **3. Research Questions**

- i. How does teacher-pupil relationship influence academic performance of primary school pupils in Muranga South Sub County Murang'a County, Kenya?
- ii. To what extent does teacher motivation influence academic performance of primary school pupils in Muranga South Sub County in Murang'a County?

### **4. Theoretical Framework**

#### **Structural Functional Theory by Durkheim (1917)**

Structural Functional theory by Emile Durkheim (1917) is widely employed in education research due to its exclusive orientation that focuses on social structures, patterning of roles, form of institutions, and the overall articulation of institutions in society and contributions to the stability and sustenance of education processes (Sinha, 2017). The theory conceptualizes that social structure, institutions, and the overall patterning of societies remain central to the discipline and stability of education system in any society.

The structural-functional approach employed by the theorist is the perspective of sociology that views society as a complex system, whose different components work together to maintain equilibrium. The theorist suggests that social institutions, morality and values of people in a society are significantly influenced by social structures, which are relatively stable and different from one society to another. Social structures give shape to the lives of people, families and religious groups. All social structure in every society has social functions and consequences

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for their operations in the society as a whole. For instance, education has several vital functions in a society, such as instilling moral values, socialization, and learning.

There are a number of key assumptions suggested by Emile Durkheim in structural functionalist theory. One of these is that societies strive toward equilibrium. Another assumption is that institutions are distinct and should be studied individually as they make different impacts in the society as a whole. However, the theory also considers the network of relationships from a society on institution performance. For instance, the theorist argues that there are a number of social factors that affect learning and overall school achievement. Such factors include; teacher-learner relationship, drug abuse, strikes and unrest, HIV/AIDS pandemic, literacy versus illiteracy in society, social stratification and traditional practices like: initiation, early marriages and forced marriages.

According to Tandi (2019) schools are social systems whose smooth learning and learners outcome depend on the stability and cooperation of different structures. For overall academic achievement, equilibrium should always exist to create a conducive learning environment and avoid disruptions. However, there is no mention of economic factors changes which are inevitable and this often throws this equilibrium out of balance creating different impacts on academic performance. In light of this, then this theory was appropriate in explaining how teacher motivation and teacher-pupil relationship influence academic performance in primary schools in Muranga South Sub County.

## **5. Literature Review**

### **a. Influence of Teachers-Pupil Relationship on Pupil Academic Performance**

Teachers play a key role in learners' perception, attitude and engagement behaviors that drive them towards success or failure in academics. Reyes and Von Antony (2020) examined the relationship between teachers and learners rapport and learners autonomy in Visayan Institute Foundation Dynamic Learning Program in Philippines. The study employed correlation research design. Stratified sampling technique was employed in the selection of 174 learners from secondary schools in Quezon City, Philippine. Data were collected using Likert scales instruments, which were intended to measure their rapport with teachers and academic autonomy in learning. Data was coded using IBM Statistical Packages of Social Sciences (SPSS 25) and analysis was done using variance (ANOVA) and Pearson correlation factor. The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant direct correlation between teachers-learners rapport and learners' autonomy. The study was done in a developed country among secondary school learners hence the findings might not have been useful among primary school pupils in a developing country like Kenya. To fill this gap, the current study was carried out in Kenya to fill the gap.

Mabunda and Mulovhedzi (2020) conducted a qualitative study that investigated the influence of teachers-learners relationship and academic performance of pupils at Soutpansberg West Circuit primary school in Vhembe District, South Africa. This was a case study involving intermediate phase, which employed purposive sampling methods in the selection of the study participants. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and observational schedules from 3 teachers and 3 students in the intermediate phase. Data analysis was done through thematic analysis, and the findings established that teacher-pupil relationship played a significant

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role in enhancing pupils' academic performance. Nonetheless, the study employed only qualitative approaches and a small sample size, which limits the study findings generalization to the wider population. The current study employed mixed method approaches (quantitative and qualitative) and a large sample to enhance data reliability and generalization.

In Kenya not much has been done in this area as it has received little attention from researchers in the education field. Considering that Kenyans' education system is rapidly evolving with the increasing demand for educated professionals in the market, more research need to be done to improve the quality of education in early years of schooling for better performance in advanced stages of education. Ngunjiri (2020) investigated the influence of teacher-students' interaction on motivation to learning mathematics. Simple random sampling was employed in sampling 392 mathematic students from 133 public high schools in Laikipia County. Descriptive research design was employed and data collection was done through self-administered questionnaires. Data analysis was done using linear regression analysis. The findings of the study indicated that teacher-student interaction had a significant positive relationship with learners' motivation to learn mathematics. However, the study did not link directly teacher-student interaction to learning outcomes, a gap this study intended to bridge.

### **b. Influence of Teachers Motivation on Pupils Academic Performance**

Students' performance is a top priority for educators all over the world. Teacher's motivation has been found to be vital in enhancing students' performance. Researchers in academic field have done considerable work in examining how teachers' motivation influence learner's academic performance. Research studies conducted in this area informed the current research study. Bal-Tastan et al. (2018) investigated the impact of teachers' self-efficacy and motivation on students' academic performance among Iranian and Russian students in secondary and high schools. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design. The respondents of the study consisted of senior secondary schools students and teachers from four cities in Iran and Russia. Purposive sampling was used in selecting 15 schools from the two countries. Random sampling was used in the selection of 350 high school students and 440 secondary school students from the schools from the schools. Data analysis was done using inferential statistics in which correlation, regression and t-test analysis were performed to provide the results. The results of the study revealed that there was a significant impact of teachers' self-efficacy and motivation and learners' outcomes in science education. The research was conducted in a developed country where learning resources are adequate hence the need for the replication of the study in a developing country to compare the findings and create more knowledge in this area.

In another research, Mola and Kelkay (2020) assessed the status of teachers' motivation and quality education in primary schools in Ethiopia. Descriptive survey was employed in the research. In the selection of study participants, simple random sampling technique was used in the selection of 12 government schools, stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting 119 teachers and purposive sampling was used in selecting 12 principals. Data collection was done using questionnaires and interview schedules. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and correlation analysis. The findings of the study established that as teachers' motivation increased their process of quality of education also increased. The study

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recommended motivation of teachers through attractive salaries, institution awards and provision of accommodation to strengthen their intrinsic motivation and enhance delivery of quality education. Nevertheless, the study findings did not provide information on the relationship between teachers' motivation and academic performance, an area the proposed study covered in details to provide comprehensive findings.

Keiyo (2017) sought to explore teachers' motivation influence on students' performance. The study was conducted among public secondary schools in Marigat Sub-County, Kenya. The study employed descriptive research design. Purposive sampling was used in the selection of 12 schools that had presented candidates for Kenya national examinations for at least five years consecutively. Census was employed in the selection of 12 principals and 63 teachers. Data collection instruments used in the collection of data, were questionnaires and interview schedules. Data analysis was done using scientific packages of social sciences (SPSS, version 21) and presented using descriptive statistics. The findings established that the sub-county did not provide enough incentives to teachers in secondary schools which might have contributed to low motivation among teachers that compromised academic performance in both regional and national examinations. In addition to the study being conducted among secondary school teachers, the study did not provide comprehensive information on the influence of teachers' motivation on students' academic performance a gap the current study aimed to fill.

## **6. Research Design and Methodology**

### **P: Research Design**

According to Bloomfield and Fishers (2019), research design is the overall strategy employed by the researcher in choosing different research techniques in collection of data, administration of instrument and in analysis of the collected data. Tobi et al. (2018) assert that research design refers to a plan for selecting subject, research sites and data collection procedures to answer questions. The study employed cross-sectional research design to systematically investigate and describe the phenomenon of the study in answering the research questions. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected to answer the research questions. This design was also appropriate as it allowed the researcher to use a wide variety of research methods to investigate the study variables.

This design was also appropriate because it seeks to answer questions on the relationship between two or more variables, an area the current study was dealing with. Abutebenjeb and Jaradat (2018) put more weight on the importance of a research design by stating that they enhance clarity in the selection of research techniques and obtaining information concerning the study phenomenon. Mixed method research approach was used. Quantitative data were collected alongside qualitative data and the results were used to explain how teacher pupil relationship and motivation affect academic performance in primary schools in the area of study.

### **b. Target Population**

Dahabreh and Hernan (2019) defined a target population as an entire group of individuals, objects or things sharing a common attribute. These are all the members to be involved in the study and the researcher used the data collected to make a generalization. Target population refers to the entire group of people, events or things of interest that the researcher

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wishes to investigate (Goransson, 2020). The target population for this study was 24 head teachers, 261 teachers and 1944 pupils of public primary schools in Muranga South Sub County.

### **c. Sampling Procedures and Sample Size**

A sample is a group of individuals, objects, items or cases already selected from an accessible population (Burgette et al., 2019). A sample would be appropriate as it is a cumbersome task to survey the entire population mostly because of its size and cost involved would be high. Therefore, sampling is the process involved in selecting a group of units, items or subjects from the population to be included in the study so as to represent the total population. According to McConnell et al. (2019), a sample size of 10% or more of the accessible population is enough for a descriptive study. Table 1 presents the target population and the sample size.

**Table 1: Sampling Frame**

<b>Category Respondents</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Sampling Technique</b>
Head teachers	24	5	21	Simple
Teachers	261	72	28	Purposive
Parents	-	20	-	Purposive
Pupils	1944	200	10	Simple
<b>Total</b>	<b>2109</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>13?</b>	

Source: Muranga Sub County Education Office (2021)

### **d. Description of Data Analysis Procedures**

After an in-depth data collection, the results were analyzed on the basis of the study questions. In the study, data were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods. According to Dos Santos et al. (2017) the use of quantitative and qualitative methods allows a researcher to obtain more comprehensive data and compensate for limitations with use of a single approach. The quantitative data were analyzed using frequencies, mean, and standard deviation using the SPSS (Statistical package for social sciences) program for windows Version 23. Qualitative data obtained from focused interview guide were analyzed inductively. Data were organized, coded, categorized and developed into themes which resulted to a narrative structure. The researcher looked for phrases that described teacher motivation and teacher-pupil relationship. The phrases were organized into themes that were used to answer research questions.

## **7.Data Analysis, Presentation and Discussion of the Findings**

### **Demographic Information of the Participants**

#### **a. Gender of the Respondents**

The head teachers, teachers, and pupils were classified based on their gender as either male or female. The results are presented in Tables 2.

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**Table 2: Gender of Head Teachers**

<b>Head Teachers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	3	60.00
Female	2	40.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field data (2023)

Table 2 reveals that out of the 5 head teachers, 3 (60%) were male while 2(40%) were females. The results show that majority of the head teachers were male. The results implies that majority of the schools are headed by male teachers.

**Table 3: Gender of Teachers**

<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	45	62.50
Female	27	37.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 3 reveals that the total number of teachers involved were 72 where 45 (62.50%) were male and 27 (37.50%) were female. Therefore majority of the respondents among teachers were male.

Table 4 shows the gender of the pupils interviewed.

**Table 4: Gender of Pupils**

<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	112	56.00
Female	88	44.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Field Data (2023)*

Table 4 shows the total number of pupils interviewed were 200 and 112 (56%) were males while 88 (44%) were females. The results indicate that the number of male students was slightly higher than that of female students.

## **7. Influence of Teacher-Pupil Relationship on Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils**

The study's second research question was to investigate the influence of teacher-pupil relationship on academic performance of primary school pupils in Muranga South Sub County, Muranga County, Kenya. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview schedule. This question was answered by conducting the following analyses.

The five head teachers involved in this study were asked to state the extent to which teacher-pupil relationship affect curriculum implementation and by extension academic

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performance in their schools. The respondents filled a questionnaire and Table 5 presents the results.

**Table 5: Extent to which Teacher-Pupil Relationship Affect Curriculum Implementation and by Extension Academic Performance in Your School**

<b>Extent</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Small extent	2	40.00
Moderate	3	60.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Data (2023)

The results in Table 5 indicate that out of the 5 head teachers, 2 of them indicated that the teacher-pupil relationship affect curriculum implementation and by extension academic performance in their schools by a small extent while the other 3 were of the opinion that it affects to a moderate extent. The results were in line with the findings of Mabunda and Mulovhedzi (2020) who found that teacher-pupil relationship played a significant role in enhancing pupils' academic performance.

### **Hypothesis Testing**

In line with the first research question, the study sought to investigate the influence of teacher-pupil relationship on academic performance of primary school pupils in Muranga South Sub County, Muranga County, Kenya. The following null hypothesis was tested:

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant influence of teacher-pupil relationship on academic performance of standard 6 and 8 primary school pupils.

The correlation results are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6 : Correlation Teacher-Pupil Relationship and Academic Performance**

		<b>Academic performance</b>
Teacher-pupil relationship affect curriculum.	Pearson Correlation	.82**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00
	N	72

Source: Field data (2023)

From Table 6, the results indicate the existence of a positive and significant influence of teacher-pupil relationship on academic performance of primary school pupils ( $r(72) = .82, p < .05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there exists no significant influence of teacher-pupil relationship on academic performance of primary school pupils was rejected. The results imply that the better the teacher-pupil relationship the better the academic performance of primary school pupils. The results supported the findings of Mabunda and Mulovhedzi (2020) who found that teacher-pupil relationship played a significant role in enhancing pupils' academic performance.

The qualitative data provided supportive evidence for the quantitative establishment. The qualitative data was collected from the teachers who were involved in this study. When they

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were asked through interviews to indicate the kind of relationship that they had with the pupils, all of them indicated that the relationship was cordial and that they were doing whatever was possible to improve the current situation that was not good at all. The teachers were aware that by having good relationship with the pupils, they can motivate them to work harder for better results to be realized. One of the teachers interviewed stated,

The parents have neglected the pupils, they don't support them, they don't provide the basic needs and necessities to their children because of alcoholism and low level of education. If we were to ignore them, the results will be pathetic, so whatever they are getting now is out of the good relationship between them and the pupils (TR22, July 17<sup>th</sup> 2023).

Having realized that the parents were not supportive enough to the pupils, the teachers have devised ways of building good relationship with the pupils. They have been forced to take up parental responsibilities for the sake of the future of the pupils. One of the teachers interviewed stated,

Personally I have identified students who need closer attention because of their irresponsible parents and I always encourage them to work hard to change their families. I have also gone a step further to ensure that such pupils get peer support because they may understand each other better. This has worked and the fruits are there (TR49, July 17<sup>th</sup> 2023).

Other strategies adopted by the teachers included working beyond the normal working hours where they get time to talk one on one with the pupils, give them a chance to answer questions, looking for motivational speakers and spiritual leaders, and bringing on board alumni with success stories to encourage them. This has greatly helped them to work even harder and achieve beyond what was expected from them. Furthermore, such strategies have made the pupils to understand that their teachers care for them and want the best out of them.

The study's second research question was to find out how teacher-pupil relationship influenced academic performance of primary school pupils in Muranga South Sub County, Muranga County, Kenya. It was established that there exists a positive and significant influence of teacher-pupil relationship on academic performance of primary school pupils. The results imply that the better the teacher-pupil relationship the better the academic performance of primary school pupils. These outcomes were supported by Classical Scientific Theory by Fredrick Taylor (1856 – 1912). The theory argues that by having the right leadership in school, the chances of succeeding academically are high. The head teachers with good leadership skills will be able to nurture positive teacher-pupil relationship. This relationship is crucial in boosting academic performance because of the free interaction that comes with it where teachers freely interact with their pupils, responds to questions asked and help those who may require closer attention. Therefore, a positive teacher-pupil relationship will result in better academic performance.

The findings that the teacher-pupil relationship has an influence on academic performance among primary school pupils supports the findings reported in previous similar

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studies. Reyes and Von Antony (2020) established that there was a significant direct correlation between teachers-learners rapport and learners' autonomy. These outcomes relate with those of the present study. Zhou et al. (2023) reported that a negative teacher-learner relationship can negatively impact learners' academic performance both directly and indirectly. This shows that by encouraging a positive teacher-learner relationship, the pupils' academic achievement can be enhanced. Afzal et al. (2023) established that a strong teacher-student relationship enhanced academic performance for the students. By encouraging such a strong bond, the students will get motivated to learn because they stand a chance to succeed in academics.

Coristine et al. (2022) reported that a strong teacher-learner relationship motivates the students to learn and thus increasing their academic performance, results that are consistent with those of the present study. Mabunda and Mulovhedzi (2020) established that teacher-pupil relationship played a significant role in enhancing pupils' academic performance. The results infers that the better the teacher-pupil relationship the better the pupils' academic performance, findings that agree with those of the present study. In Kenya, Ngunjiri (2020) determined that teacher-student interaction had a significant positive relationship with learners' motivation to learn mathematics. Thus, the more the teacher-student interaction on matters academic the more they get motivated to study mathematics which may positively influence the performance of the subject.

### **8. Influence of Teacher Motivation on Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils**

The study's second research question was to find out how teacher motivation influenced academic performance of primary school pupils in Muranga South Sub County, Muranga County, Kenya. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview schedule. This question was answered by conducting analyses as follows. The seventy-two (72) teachers who were involved in this study were asked to state the extent to which teacher motivation affect curriculum implementation and by extension academic performance in their schools. The results are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7 : Extent to which Teacher Motivation Affect Curriculum Implementation and by Extension Academic Performance in Your School**

<b>Extent</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Small extent	20	27.80
Moderate	39	54.20
Large extent	13	18.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Data (2023)

From Table 7, the results reveal that 54.20% of the teachers opined that teacher motivation affect curriculum implementation and by extension academic performance in their schools to a moderate extent, 27.80% indicated that it affects to a small extent and 18.10% indicated that it affects to a large extent. This is indicative that teacher motivation has an influence on curriculum implementation which has a net effect on academic performance of the pupils.

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### **Hypothesis Testing**

In line with the second research question, the study sought to investigate the influence of teacher motivation on academic performance of standard 6 and 8 primary school pupils in Muranga South Sub County, Muranga County, Kenya. The following null hypothesis was tested:

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant influence of teacher motivation on academic performance of primary school pupils

The correlation results are shown in Table 8.

**Table 8 : Correlation between Teacher Motivation Academic Performance**

		Academic performance
Teacher motivation	Pearson Correlation	.37**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00
	N	72

Source: Field Data (2023)

The results in Table 8 indicate the existence of a positive and significant influence of teacher motivation on academic performance of primary school pupils ( $r(72) = .37, p < .05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there exists no significant influence of teacher motivation on academic performance of primary school pupils was rejected. The results imply that the higher the teacher motivation the better the academic performance of primary school pupils. Nkirote and Thinguri (2020) posted similar results as those of the present study where they established that motivated teacher can deliver their best to the pupils and thus improving on their performance in KCPE examinations.

The qualitative data was collected from the head teachers and the teachers through focused group discussions. The analysis of the data collected substantiated the quantitative data analysis. At the centre of vision 2030 lies the education agenda where according to UNESCO (2021), realization of this vision requires equipping teachers with right skills, regular refresher courses to address upcoming issues, fairly good payment package, and adequate motivation. This will help in yielding the right academic results (UNESCO, 2021). From the interviews done, one of the head teachers when asked interventions for teacher morale said, "There is a need to hold regular meetings to be able to know the challenges teachers are facing and trying to solve them" (HT1, July 14<sup>th</sup> 2023). Understanding the challenges faced by the teachers is the first step towards knowing how to motivate them. When asked how does teacher motivation influence the performance, the head teacher stated, "A motivated teacher is happy and will be able to deliver in the classroom thus increasing the learners' performance" (HT1, July 14<sup>th</sup> 2023). This indicates the need to ensure that the teachers enjoy doing their work while in school and must feel loved and taken care of by the administration.

When the study sought to find out if the teachers in Murang'a South Sub County were motivated, mixed reactions were obtained with majority indicating the teachers were not well motivated. For instance, one of those who provided a positive response stated, "Yes, there is minimal absenteeism and the teachers work whole heartedly" (HT2, July 14<sup>th</sup> 2023). This is an indication that some teachers are motivated to work. When the same head teacher was asked how

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the motivation affects pupils' performance, he stated that the teachers will teach with passion and attend to the pupils needs at individual level where possible.

Another head teacher when asked whether the teachers were motivated replied, "Not well motivated, geographical location of school demotivate long walking and no means of transport... no external motivation such as incentives" (HT4, July 17<sup>th</sup> 2023). On the influence of teacher motivation on performance, the same head teacher stated, "Poor motivation discourages internal and external self-commitment to working while good motivation encourages continuous working as a result, positive and improved performance" (HT4, July 17<sup>th</sup> 2023). This shows that the head teachers were aware of the benefits of motivation of the teachers for the betterment of academic performance of the pupils.

Another head teacher noted that it is worth noting the teachers are not well motivated due to negative influences from the outside community. On whether teacher motivation affects performance, the head teacher agreed that it contributes towards improved performance because the teachers will be more than ever committed to deliver their best and help the pupils achieve their academic goals. From this response, the school environment seemed to contribute to the poor KCPE performance. Alcoholism has negative effects among the pupils and teachers due to noise related effects and even consumption of the same before coming to school.

The teacher representatives were also interviewed through focused group discussions. All the teachers interviewed indicated that they were not motivated. One of the teachers said, "They are not motivated ...there are no tokens of appreciation offered even after good results" (TR25, July 13<sup>th</sup> 2023). Another teacher responded, "No, they are really not motivated because school has no funds" (TR70, July 17<sup>th</sup> 2023). This is suggestive that the head teachers might be having intentions to motivate the teachers but are limited by shortage of resources.

Another teacher noted that the community has developed negative attitude towards the teachers, an indication of a poor school-community relationship that has to be mended so that the community can support the efforts put in place by the schools to improve their performance. The poor school-community relationship was echoed by one of the head teachers. This shows an urgent need for all education stakeholders to mediate resolve issues that have pushed the communities away from school activities.

The study established that there exists a positive and significant influence of teacher motivation on academic performance of primary school pupils. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there exists no significant influence of teacher motivation on academic performance of primary school pupils was rejected. The results imply that the more the teacher motivation the better the academic performance of primary school pupils. The findings of the present study are supported by Classical Scientific Theory by Fredrick Taylor (1856 – 1912) which puts more emphasis on the right leadership in a learning institution for good academic performance to be realized.

Such a leadership will ensure that the parents provide full backing to the school activities and programmes and thus facilitates good behaviour among their children who will be ready to learn, a key motivator to the teachers. On the other hand, good leadership in the school will ensure that the needs of the teachers are equally addressed and those passing through challenges are taken care of where they will fill their importance to the institution. The head teachers with good leadership skills will utilize the little available resources to motivate their teachers and

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recognize those with outstanding performance. All these will contribute to teacher motivation, which will result in improved academic performance.

The findings that teacher motivation influences academic performance among the pupils agree with the findings of previous similar studies. For instance, Bal-Tastan et al. (2018) established that there was a significant impact of teachers' self-efficacy and motivation and learners' outcomes in science education. These findings imply that motivation of teachers play a key role in improving performance of science subjects. Mora and Kelkay (2020) reported that by offering teachers attractive salaries, institution awards base on their performance and provision of accommodation to strengthen their intrinsic motivation enhances delivery of quality education. This is an indication of what teacher motivation can do in enhancing quality education which is a key factor in academic performance of the pupils. In their study, Omari and Kiwonde (2022) established that demotivated teachers cannot produce any tangible academic performance and may even demotivate the pupils in working hard, indicating the importance of motivating teachers because of its relationship with academic performance of the pupils.

Nkirete and Thinguri (2020) posted similar results as those of the present study where they established that motivated teacher can deliver their best to the pupils and thus improving on their performance in KCPE examinations. The results as established by Nyakundi et al. (2019) agree with those of the present study where they found that pupils in class eight can benefit more through incentives and rewards given to their teachers who in turn sacrifice their private time to help the pupils achieve their academic goals. This shows that teacher motivation influences academic performance among the pupils. Keiyo (2017) established that Marigat Sub-County in Kenya did not provide enough incentives to teachers in secondary schools which might have contributed to low motivation among teachers that compromised academic performance in both regional and national examinations. These outcomes are consistent with those of the present study.

## **8. Conclusions**

The study's first research question was to find out how teacher-pupil relationship influenced academic performance of primary school pupils in Muranga South Sub County, Muranga County, Kenya. The study concludes that there exists a positive and significant influence of teacher-pupil relationship on academic performance of primary school pupils. The results implied that the better the teacher-pupil relationship the better the academic performance of primary school pupils. From the qualitative results, the study concludes that the relationship between the teachers and the pupils was cordial and that the teachers were aware that by having good relationship with the pupils, they can motivate them to work harder for better results to be realized.

The study's second research question was to find out how teacher motivation influenced academic performance of primary school pupils Muranga South Sub County, Muranga County, Kenya. The study concludes that there exists a significant influence of teacher motivation on academic performance of primary school pupils. The results imply that the more the teacher motivation the better the academic performance of primary school pupils. From the qualitative data, the study concludes that most of the teachers in the sub county were not well motivated and the head teachers together with the teachers were aware that motivation had a potential to influence academic performance among the pupils.

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### **9. Policy Recommendations**

There are many policy recommendations. First, there is need to enhance policies and strategies on positive teacher-pupil relationship with clear follow-up mechanisms to facilitate learning process for better academic performance in primary schools. Second, there is need to mobilize all stakeholders in the education sector and allocate more resources to enhance motivation of the teachers through recognition of outstanding performance at the county and national level. Third, the head teachers should enhance initiatives that recognize and reward teachers who perform well in their roles based on teacher pupil relationships in order improve academic performance of the pupils. Fourth, the head teachers should work with other stakeholders to allocate more resources on performance incentives for teachers in order to enhance their motivation for better academic performance of the pupils.

### **10. Recommendations for Further Research**

Further studies should be done to establish the impact of other socio-economic factors associated with performance of the pupils from other counties in rural settings and urban settings.

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