

**CAUSES OF PERFORMANCE DISPARITY BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE  
SCHOOLS IN ATHI RIVER DISTRICT, MACHAKOS COUNTY**

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish performance disparity between the public and private schools in Athi River District. The study was done by developing a conceptual framework relating the nature of schools to pupils' academic performance. Using a descriptive cross-sectional survey design, data was collected from 40 teachers and 10 head teachers using questionnaires and interview guide as the main data collection instruments. Also data on PLE results for 300 pupils in the selected primary schools was obtained which was used in comparing pupils' performance in the two categories of schools. Data was analyzed using frequency tables and summary statistics and lastly using t-test in comparing pupils' performance in private and public primary schools in Athi River District, Machakos County.

The study found out that in private primary schools resources are more available and adequate than in public primary schools. The important effects of inadequacy or lack of educational resources are lack of motivation, tiresome teaching and learning, inattention to individual learners, high rate of school dropout, low quality of teaching and learning etc. which cause finally the poor academic performance. Secondly, in testing the degree of the difference between teachers and head teachers' views on the effects of inadequate educational resources on academic performance, the results showed that teachers and head teachers of private primary schools of Athi River are more proud to work in their school environment than their counterparts of public primary schools. They also showed that they are generally satisfied with how their pupils learn and how they are evaluated. However, in public primary schools, there is a big gap between what teachers and head teachers wish to deliver as education to their pupils and what they actually deliver because of very limited educational resources. The study findings established a relationship between teacher quality and pupils' academic achievement in Athi River and this finding relate with a wide range of findings on the relationship between teacher quality in and student outcomes. It was therefore recommended that the resources be increased and made available to the primary schools should and be efficiently utilized and the school environment should be made conducive for learning in order to improve pupils' learning outcome.

The study concluded that the pupils of private primary schools of Athi River District perform better than their counterparts of public primary schools in PLE. This doesn't come randomly, as they are well prepared from the early first classes. Though having the teachers of almost the same qualification, and pupils of almost the same background, private primary schools motivate more their teachers and their pupils than public primary schools do through various ways: good pay to teachers, small classes, good working environment, conducive environment for learning (availability and adequacy of school resources), regular evaluations, good collaboration between school and parents/guardians, guidance and counseling services made operational and excursions. The study also concluded that there is good collaboration between private primary schools and parents/guardians of pupils for their best education while in public primary schools such collaboration is too little.