

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR
PERFORMANCE IN PHYSICS AMONG
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MBOONI
EAST DISTRICT, MAKUENI COUNTY

BY

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Abstract

Since the inception of Mbooni East District four years ago, there has been a markedly poor performance in Science Subjects as compared to other subjects at the KCSE. This is a very worrying trend in view of our country's VISION 2030. The purpose of this study was to identify the underlying causes for this trend, with a particular bias in Physics. The intention was to find out the causes of the low enrolment as well as the poor performance in Physics. The main focus was on causes of poor performance in Physics. The study was carried out in public secondary schools in Mbooni East District of Makueni County. The objectives of this study were to determine the effect of shortage of qualified teaching force for physics, learners' negative attitudes towards Physics and also the contribution of the lack of teaching resources to the poor performance in physics at K.C.S.E. The sample population included the DQASO, four Head Teachers, four Physics teachers and two hundred and forty (240) students from Form Two to Form Four. A descriptive research design was adopted. Stratified random sampling techniques was used to select the respondents. The research instruments included interview schedules for the DQASO and Head Teachers, questionnaires for the Physics teachers and students, and Observation Schedules for the Researcher. The instruments were piloted in another secondary school to establish their reliability. Besides this, the instruments were examined to establish their validity. Data was analysed using statistical techniques and reported using frequency counts and percentages and presented in form of tables, bar charts and pie-charts. The study shows that the poor performance in Physics is caused by lack of trained Physics teachers, poor learners' attitudes and poor teaching methods among other factors.

The researcher recommends that:

1. The government employs more Physics teachers to secondary schools
2. Guidance and counseling by all stakeholders be done with a view to changing the negative attitudes of the learners towards Physics
3. School administrations and parents increase the teaching/learning resources in schools for the teaching of Physics
4. More time be allocated for the teaching of Physics on the school timetables
5. Physics teachers use learner centered methods of instruction which would make Physics more interesting to learn.

The study also recommends further research into this area in order to improve on the teaching of Physics for improved performance.