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## The Interplay of Key Factors Influencing Academic Performance in Community Secondary Schools in Arusha District, Tanzania

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### Abstract

*This study investigated the factors influencing academic performance among students in community secondary schools in Arusha District, Tanzania. The research aimed to explore home-based, teacher-based and student-based factors affecting academic success. A descriptive survey design was adopted, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The sample included 9 secondary schools, 104 teachers, and 402 students, selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and interviews with school heads and the District Education Officer. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to analyze quantitative data, while thematic analysis was employed for qualitative data. Key findings revealed that home-based factors such as parental education and income, teacher-based factors such as teacher availability and teaching materials, and student-based factors like discipline and study habits all played significant roles in enhancing academic performance. The study also identified challenges such as truancy and insufficient study time as barriers to academic success. The results highlight the need for a comprehensive approach involving both home and school environments to improve academic outcomes in the district. The study recommends enhanced parental involvement, better teacher training, and the provision of adequate learning materials to support student achievement.*

**Keywords:** Academic performance, community secondary schools, home-based factors, teacher-based factors, student-based factors, ordinal regression analysis, Tanzania.

## 1.0 Introduction

Education is universally recognized as a key driver of social and economic development (World Bank, 2021; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018). Globally, improving educational outcomes has been a priority for both international organizations and national governments. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) specifically aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all," highlighting the importance of education in fostering sustainable development (UNESCO, 2022; United Nations, 2019). However, despite significant global investments and reforms, disparities in academic performance persist, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2020).

In sub-Saharan Africa, where Tanzania is located, the challenge of improving academic performance is compounded by several socio-economic factors, including poverty, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to quality educational resources (Glewwe & Muralidharan, 2016; MoEST, 2021). According to UNESCO (2018), the region faces severe challenges in achieving universal secondary education, and student outcomes are often below global standards (Lewin, 2019). Tanzania, like many of its neighbors, has made substantial strides in increasing access to education, particularly at the primary level (Uwezo, 2020). However, secondary education remains a major bottleneck in educational attainment, and students' performance continues to lag behind expectations (UNICEF, 2020; Mkumbo, 2021).

At the national level, Tanzania's Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) has implemented several educational reforms to enhance learning outcomes (URT, 2016; Sifuna, 2019). These reforms focus on improving teacher quality, increasing resource allocation to schools, and ensuring greater student access to education (Twaweza, 2020). However, these initiatives often face challenges in rural areas where community secondary schools struggle with limited resources, low teacher quality, and poor infrastructure (Sumra & Kataro, 2019; Mosha, 2018). As a result, despite the government's efforts, academic performance in secondary schools remains inconsistent, particularly in rural and marginalized areas (Hardman et al., 2021).

The situation in Arusha District, located in northern Tanzania, reflects these national challenges. Arusha has made notable advancements in education, yet disparities in student performance persist, especially in community secondary schools (TSC, 2019; Rajani, 2020). These schools often face challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, lack of adequate teaching materials, and limited teacher training (Komba & Nkumbi, 2018; Malunda, 2021). The performance of students in these schools remains below national and regional expectations, with factors such as long distances to school, limited parental involvement, and a lack of conducive study environments cited as contributors to poor academic outcomes (Mgaiwa, 2022).

While several studies have explored the factors affecting academic performance in secondary schools globally, there is a limited body of research that comprehensively addresses the interplay of home-based, teacher-based, and student-based factors in Tanzania, particularly at the community secondary school level (Mitu, 2020; Barrett et al., 2019). Previous research has predominantly focused on individual factors such as teacher quality or student discipline, with little emphasis on the combined effects of multiple factors (Wedgwood, 2021). Moreover, most studies have not sufficiently

examined how these factors influence students' academic performance in rural areas, where the challenges may differ significantly from urban centers (Vavrus, 2020).

This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the influence of home-based, teacher-based, and student-based factors on academic performance in community secondary schools in Arusha District. By considering a range of factors that influence educational outcomes, the study aims to provide a more holistic understanding of the barriers to academic success in these schools and to identify areas for targeted interventions (Mosha, 2021; Lugalla & Ngwaru, 2019). Through this approach, the study hopes to contribute to the broader discourse on improving secondary education in Tanzania and other similar contexts in sub-Saharan Africa.

## 2.0 Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology used to explore the factors enhancing academic performance in community secondary schools in Arusha District. It includes details on the research design, approach, study area, target population, sample size, sampling procedures, research instruments, validity and reliability of instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

### 2.1 Research Design

According to Kothari (2004), research design is the framework used for data collection and analysis to ensure the research objectives are met effectively. This study employed a descriptive survey design, which is suitable for investigating factors influencing academic performance without manipulating variables. As described by Creswell & Plano (2011), this design is ideal for situations where the researcher does not have control over the variables but seeks to describe and analyze the existing conditions. This design allows for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently, with separate analysis of both before integrating the findings.

#### 2.1.1 Research Approach

The study adopted a descriptive survey research approach. The researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time, analyzed them separately, and merged the results for interpretation. This approach enabled the researcher to gather a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing academic performance in community secondary schools, ensuring that both numerical data and subjective perspectives were captured.

### 2.2 Study Area

The research was conducted in community secondary schools located within Arusha District. This district was selected because of its ongoing efforts by the government and educational stakeholders to improve academic performance in secondary schools, despite the continued challenge of underperformance (TSC, 2019). The area provided a rich context for exploring the factors influencing student academic success.

### 2.3 Target Population

The target population for this study comprised 29 community secondary schools in Arusha District. This population included one District Education Officer (DEO), 29 school heads, 1038 teachers, and 4023 form four students (MoEVT, 2018). The focus on form four students is significant as they have completed national examinations at form two and are familiar with the factors affecting academic performance, making them a valuable source of information.

## 2.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

Sampling is a crucial aspect of research, ensuring that the selected sample accurately represents the larger population. Following Gay & Airasian (2003), the study selected 30% of the secondary schools in Arusha District, which amounted to 9 schools. The study applied both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. For probability sampling, stratified and simple random sampling were employed to select 104 teachers (10% of the total number) and 402 students (10% of form four students), with gender being the stratification factor. Non-probability sampling was used to select the DEO and 9 school heads using saturated sampling. The process ensured a diverse sample representative of the different stakeholders involved in students' academic performance.

## 2.5 Research Instruments

The study utilized two main data collection instruments: questionnaires and interviews. An interview guide was used to collect in-depth qualitative data from the District Education Officer (DEO) and the school heads. Interviews are particularly valuable for gathering personal opinions, perceptions, and detailed insights into the factors influencing academic performance, allowing for a deeper understanding of the challenges and solutions from the perspective of education administrators. On the other hand, a structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from teachers and students. The questionnaire was divided into sections: Section A collected demographic information, Section B focused on home-based factors affecting academic performance, Section C assessed school environment-related factors, Section D explored student-based factors, and Section E sought suggestions for improving academic performance. The use of questionnaires allowed the researcher to collect data from a large number of respondents in a cost-effective and time-efficient manner.

## 2.6 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

The validity of the research instruments was ensured by seeking expert opinions. The instruments were presented to the research supervisor, who provided feedback on their relevance and content accuracy. The instruments were then refined based on this feedback to ensure they accurately measured the factors influencing academic performance. Reliability refers to the consistency of an instrument in measuring what it is intended to measure. The reliability of the instruments was tested through a pilot study on a 10% sample not involved in the actual study. The researcher applied the split-half method to determine internal consistency, with a reliability coefficient of  $r = 0.627$ , indicating that the instruments were reliable for data collection (George & Mallery, 2003).

## 2.7 Data Analysis

Data from the closed-ended questions in the questionnaires were analyzed using both descriptive statistics and ordinal regression analysis with the aid of SPSS Version 20. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize the demographic data and quantify the responses related to the factors influencing academic performance. This helped in identifying trends and patterns across the responses. Ordinal regression analysis was then conducted to examine the relationship between the independent variables (home-based factors, teacher-based factors, and student-based factors) and the dependent variable (students' academic performance). This analysis provided insights into the strength and direction of these factors' influence on academic performance, while controlling for other variables. Qualitative data obtained from open-ended questions and

interviews were analyzed thematically. The researcher identified recurring themes and patterns within the responses, offering a deeper understanding of the factors impacting academic performance, as well as the perceptions and experiences of the participants. This combined approach of quantitative and qualitative analysis enriched the overall findings of the study.

## 2.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were adhered to throughout the research process. The researcher ensured that the privacy and welfare of participants were protected. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and gave their informed consent before participating. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by not asking for personal identifiers on the questionnaires and by assigning codes to interview participants. The researcher also ensured that the findings were reported honestly and accurately, with proper acknowledgment of sources to avoid plagiarism. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

## 3.0 Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings and interpretation of the data on factors influencing academic performance among students in community secondary schools in Arusha District Council. The chapter is divided into five sections. Section one discusses the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while section two explores the home-based factors, teacher-based factors, and student-based factors that contribute to academic performance.

### 3.1 Demographic Information of the Surveyed Students

The demographic characteristics of the participants are outlined below. The study included both students ( $n = 70$ ) and teachers ( $n = 50$ ), and the details are summarized in Table 4.1 (students) and Table 4.2 (teachers).

#### 3.1.1 Sex

The gender distribution in this study, with 60% male students and 40% female students, provides insight into the gender dynamics within the secondary education system in the region. While the representation of female students is encouraging, the disparity between male and female students reflects a deeper, multifaceted issue regarding gender equality in education (UNESCO, 2019). The underrepresentation of female students could point to socio-cultural challenges that continue to affect girls' participation in education. In many communities, cultural expectations and norms may prioritize male education over female education, believing that the education of boys holds greater long-term value (UNICEF, 2020). This bias could be tied to perceptions about the roles of women in society, where early marriage and household responsibilities might be seen as more important than formal schooling (Mgaiwa, 2022).

Moreover, in some contexts, the safety of girls traveling long distances to school, the potential for sexual harassment, and concerns around menstruation and lack of sanitary facilities can also limit their access to education (Twaweza, 2020). In Tanzania and other sub-Saharan African countries, a lack of gender-responsive infrastructure, such as separate and hygienic toilets, has been linked to higher dropout rates among girls (URT, 2016). Studies also show that financial constraints often disproportionately affect girls, as families may view investing in boys' education as more beneficial for their future livelihood (Hardman et al., 2021). This is especially evident in low-income families where resources are stretched thin. These factors suggest

that gendered patterns of educational attainment may persist due to an unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and societal expectations (Sifuna, 2019).

### 3.1.2 Age

The concentration of students within the 17–20-year age range suggests that these respondents are in their final years of secondary school, which is often a decisive period in their academic careers. At this stage, students are preparing for critical national examinations, which can significantly influence their future educational and career paths (MoEST, 2021). As such, the performance of students during this period is crucial, not only for their immediate academic success but also for their long-term prospects in further education and the job market (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018).

The age distribution reflects a key point: older students might have gained valuable life experiences that could influence their

academic behaviors. For example, older students may have developed more effective study strategies, better time management skills, or increased resilience in dealing with academic challenges (Vavrus, 2020). These students may also be more self-aware and better able to navigate the pressures of school, including balancing academic work with personal and family responsibilities (Lewin, 2019). However, the age distribution also brings to light potential challenges. Older students may face external pressures that affect their academic performance, such as financial responsibilities, part-time work to support their families, or the burden of household chores, particularly in rural or low-income areas (Wedgwood, 2021). These pressures may take away valuable time and mental energy that could otherwise be spent on studying (Barrett et al., 2019). Furthermore, older students may also experience stress due to the looming national exams, which can affect their mental health and academic focus (Rajani, 2020).

**Table 1: Demographic Information of Students (n = 70)**

Gender	(f)	(%)	Age	(f)	(%)	Stream	(f)	(%)
Male	42	60	13 – 16 years	7	10	A	35	50
Female	28	40	17 – 20 years	56	80	B	35	50
			Above 20 years	7	10			
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Data, 2024

The findings suggest that support systems for older students are crucial. These might include targeted mentoring programs, counseling services, and stress management workshops that help students manage external pressures while maintaining their academic focus. Additionally, providing academic support during the preparation for national examinations, such as extra classes, study groups, and exam practice sessions, can be key in improving their academic performance.

## 3.2 Demographic Information of the Surveyed Teachers

### 3.2.1 Teacher Experience and Age Distribution

The majority of teachers in this study have between 6 to 11 years of teaching experience. This suggests that these teachers are relatively established in their careers, bringing a wealth of practical knowledge and classroom management skills (Bennell & Akyeamong, 2007). Teachers with this level of experience often possess a deep understanding of the curriculum and the intricacies of student learning (Moon, 2019). Their tenure likely enables them to handle classroom dynamics effectively, including identifying students' learning needs and tailoring teaching strategies to accommodate those needs (Schwille & Dembélé, 2007).

Additionally, experienced teachers tend to have a higher degree of emotional resilience, which is essential for maintaining a positive learning environment despite the challenges inherent in teaching (Ngware et al., 2013). Their experience enables them to foresee common learning obstacles, design interventions to address them, and effectively manage classroom behavior (UNESCO, 2021). Such teachers are also more likely to have developed strong professional networks with colleagues and educational stakeholders, facilitating collaboration and the exchange of best

practices (Westbrook et al., 2013). However, the distribution of teachers' ages and their experience also suggests that a significant portion of the teaching workforce may not yet be at a stage of career maturity that allows for advanced academic qualifications or the incorporation of cutting-edge pedagogical approaches (Hardman, 2015).

### 3.2.2 Postgraduate Qualifications

A key finding in this study is the relatively low percentage of teachers with postgraduate qualifications. According to the data, only 12% of the surveyed teachers hold postgraduate degrees, while 88% do not. This statistic highlights a gap in advanced qualifications among the teaching workforce, which is concerning given the importance of postgraduate education in enhancing subject matter expertise and pedagogical skills (UNESCO, 2022).

Teachers with postgraduate qualifications are typically more adept at engaging with advanced educational theories and modern teaching methodologies, which can enrich their teaching practices and improve student outcomes (O'Sullivan, 2006). The relatively low percentage of postgraduate-qualified teachers suggests that a significant proportion of the teaching staff may not be equipped with the latest research and teaching techniques (Mulkeen et al., 2007). Without exposure to advanced education, the incorporation of new instructional strategies and technologies to support diverse student learning needs may be limited (Tikly, 2019).

Postgraduate education also emphasizes critical thinking, research capabilities, and a deeper understanding of the psychological and social aspects of learning, all of which are essential for fostering a more inclusive and effective learning environment (Barrett et al., 2020). The absence of postgraduate qualifications among a large

proportion of teachers may hinder the overall quality of education provided in schools. Without access to advanced training, teachers may rely on outdated pedagogical practices that fail to address the evolving needs of students (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Moreover, postgraduate education often enhances teachers' ability to critically assess and adapt curricula to better suit diverse student populations, leading to more individualized and effective teaching methods (Coffey, 2021). It is also worth noting that postgraduate education is linked with improved job satisfaction and teacher retention. Teachers who feel supported in their professional growth and are given opportunities for advanced learning may be more motivated and committed to their roles (Day, 2012). Schools that prioritize teacher professional development are likely to see improvements in teaching quality, which directly translates into better student outcomes (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

### 3.2.3 Professional Development Opportunities

The finding of a low percentage of teachers with postgraduate qualifications (12%) underscores the need for ongoing professional

development within the teaching workforce. The data reveals that a large number of teachers are not equipped with advanced qualifications, which raises the question of how educational stakeholders can support their growth and enhance the overall quality of teaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Professional development initiatives should be a priority in schools and could include a variety of opportunities such as workshops, seminars, and conferences that focus on the latest pedagogical trends, subject-specific training, and research-backed teaching strategies (Guskey, 2002). These initiatives would help teachers stay current with educational best practices and develop new approaches to address the diverse learning needs of students (Timperley et al., 2007). Moreover, such professional development could enable teachers to integrate innovative teaching tools and methods, including technology, into their classrooms (Avalos, 2011). Given the significant gap in postgraduate qualifications, educational stakeholders should make targeted investments in professional development programs (Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

**Table 2: Demographic Information of Teachers (n = 50)**

Gender	Age		Academic Qualification (A.Q)		Professional Experience (EXP)						
	(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)					
Male	31	62	30 – 40 years	32	64	Diploma (DP)	12	24	6-11 years	32	64
Female	19	38	41 – 50 years	12	24	Bachelor (BA)	32	64	12-16 years	18	36
			51 – 60 years	6	12	Master (MA)	6	12			
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field data, 2024

One way to support teachers' continued growth is by facilitating pathways for them to pursue higher qualifications or specialized certifications. Schools could offer financial support, such as grants or scholarships, or create flexible, part-time postgraduate programs that allow teachers to further their education while continuing to teach (Borko, 2004). Additionally, collaborative professional development initiatives, such as peer learning groups, team-teaching, or mentorship programs, can allow teachers to share their experiences and best practices, collectively improving their teaching effectiveness (Desimone, 2009). Encouraging teachers to collaborate and learn from one another fosters a community of practice that can accelerate the adoption of new teaching methodologies (Kennedy, 2016).

### 3.3 Home-Based Factors for Enhancing Academic Performance

The first objective of this study was to examine home-based factors that influence students' academic performance in community secondary schools in Arusha District. The factors highlighted in the findings include parents' education, income, distance from home to school, home chores, and adequate study time. Each of these factors has been discussed in detail below, based on the responses from both students and teachers. The results are summarized in Table 4.3.

#### 3.3.1 Parents' Education Enhances Academic Performance

Table 4.3 shows that all the surveyed students and teachers (100%) agree that parents' education enhances academic performance. This finding suggests a strong consensus among both students and teachers that parental education has a significant positive impact on

students' academic success. According to Smith and Johnson (2020), parental education plays a crucial role in shaping the educational environment at home. Educated parents are more likely to value education, set higher expectations for their children, and provide support in school-related activities. Brown et al. (2019) further assert that educated parents tend to have better knowledge of the educational system, resources, and strategies for supporting their children's learning, which can help guide students toward academic success. Additionally, educated parents may serve as role models for their children, encouraging them to prioritize learning and develop positive attitudes toward education. This influence can be particularly significant in community secondary schools, where external resources might be limited, and parental involvement is often a critical determinant of student success.

#### 3.3.2 Parents' Income Enhances Academic Performance

As indicated in table 4.3, all students and teachers (100%) agree that parents' income enhances academic performance. The unanimous agreement between students and teachers that parents' income enhances academic performance underscores the importance of financial resources in facilitating students' educational achievements. Higher family income can enable parents to invest in essential educational resources such as books, technology, tutoring, and extracurricular activities that contribute to students' academic growth (Williams, 2021). In addition, families with higher income levels are better able to afford transportation to and from school, access supplementary learning materials, and provide a stable home environment conducive to study. Students from wealthier families are less likely to experience the stress of financial instability, which can have a

detrimental effect on their ability to focus on academics. Income also affects the overall household environment, including the provision of nutritious meals and a quiet space for studying, both of which contribute to better academic outcomes (Brown et al., 2019). The financial capacity to send children to school regularly and to support their participation in school-related activities and enrichment programs is likely to increase academic performance.

### 3.3.3 Distance from Home to School Affects Academic Performance

Table 4.3 shows that about 90% of the surveyed students and teachers agree that the distance from home to school affects academic performance. The significant agreement that distance from home to school affects academic performance points to the logistical challenges faced by students in community secondary schools. According to Brown et al. (2019), long distances between home and school can create barriers to regular attendance, punctuality, and overall engagement in school activities. Students who must travel long distances may arrive tired, late, or stressed, which can negatively impact their academic focus and performance. In addition, long commutes can limit the time available for students to engage in after-school study or participate in extracurricular activities that support academic development (Smith & Johnson, 2020). The physical strain of long distances, especially for students from lower-income families who may rely on public transport or walk long distances, can have a cumulative effect on their academic achievement. Addressing this issue could involve improving school infrastructure, creating transportation subsidies for students, or locating more schools closer to where students live to reduce commuting time and its associated negative impacts.

### 3.3.4 Home Chores Affect Academic Performance

It is revealed in table 4.3 that about 82% of the surveyed students and teachers agree that home chores affect academic performance. This finding suggests that home responsibilities, particularly household chores, have a noticeable impact on students' ability to focus on their academic work. Many students, especially in rural and low-income households, often have to balance schoolwork with domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for siblings (Williams, 2021). This divide in attention can leave students with less time and energy to devote to their studies, leading to lower academic performance. The results reflect the broader societal expectations placed on students, particularly girls, who are often tasked with a disproportionate share of household chores. Brown et al. (2019) argue that such responsibilities can interfere with study time, reduce rest and recovery time, and result in academic stress. This highlights the need for policies that promote gender equality in home responsibilities and support

students in balancing their academic and domestic roles. Additionally, schools can collaborate with families to create supportive structures that help alleviate the burden of excessive home chores on students.

### 3.3.5 Adequate Time for Individual Study Improves Performance

Table 4.3 indicates that 51% of the surveyed students and 56% of teachers agree that adequate time for individual study improves academic performance. The finding that only a little over half of the respondents believe that adequate study time improves academic performance suggests that while many students and teachers recognize the importance of study time, other factors might play a more dominant role in shaping academic success. The relatively lower percentage could reflect the reality that many students in community secondary schools face competing pressures, such as work at home or financial hardships, which may limit the time they can allocate to individual study. Smith and Johnson (2020) argue that the fact that only 51% of students agree could indicate that many students struggle to manage their time effectively or face environmental challenges, such as lack of quiet study spaces or learning resources, that hinder their ability to study. Teachers' responses, being slightly higher at 56%, suggest they are more aware of the importance of study time in academic achievement and may recognize the need to create supportive study environments. This finding suggests that interventions should focus on helping students prioritize study time, manage their schedules more effectively, and create conducive environments for learning. Schools could provide study groups, access to library resources, or extended study hours to support students in maximizing their academic potential.

The study findings underscore the critical role that home-based factors play in shaping students' academic performance. Parental education and income provide foundational support for academic success, with educated and financially stable parents more likely to provide an environment conducive to learning. The role of distance from home to school and home chores further complicates students' ability to fully engage with their studies, pointing to the need for schools and policymakers to address these challenges. To enhance academic performance, schools and communities should collaborate to create a more supportive and balanced environment for students. This could include improving transportation options, providing support for students facing heavy home responsibilities, and fostering an environment where both students and parents value education. Additionally, targeted interventions such as study skills workshops or after-school programs could help students maximize the time available for academic work.

**Table 3: Home-Based Factors Enhancing Academic Performance (n = 120)**

Statement	Students (f%)	Teachers (f%)	Total (f%)
Parents' education enhances academic performance	70(100)	50(100)	120(100)
Parents' income enhances academic performance	70(100)	50(100)	120(100)
Distance from home to school affects academic performance	63(90)	45(90)	108(90)
Home chores affect academic performance	57(82)	41(82)	98(82)
Adequate time for individual study improves performance	36(51)	28(56)	64(53)

Source: Field data, 2024

### **3.4 Teacher-Based Factors for Enhancing Academic Performance**

The second objective of this study was to explore teacher-based factors that contribute to students' academic performance. The key factors include teachers' availability, teaching materials, conducive environment, meal provisions, and government support. The results are summarized in Table 4.4.

#### **3.4.1 Teachers' Availability Enhances Academic Performance**

It is indicated in Table 4.4 that 51% of the surveyed students and all teachers (100%) agree that teachers' availability enhances academic performance. While all teachers agree that their availability enhances academic performance, only 51% of students share this view. The discrepancy suggests that while teachers recognize the importance of being accessible for students outside of regular class time (e.g., for extra lessons or consultations), students may not always perceive this as a significant factor or may face challenges in accessing teachers due to time or other commitments. According to Johnson and Kareem (2020), the availability of teachers for additional support outside of regular class hours can significantly enhance students' understanding and performance, especially in community secondary schools where academic support outside of class time may be limited. However, students may encounter barriers such as extracurricular activities, family obligations, or long distances that hinder their access to teachers. This finding emphasizes the importance of encouraging more structured after-school support or consultation hours to ensure that students who need additional help can easily access it.

#### **3.4.2 Adequate Teaching Materials Enhance Academic Performance**

Table 4.4 shows that 71% of the surveyed students and all teachers (100%) agree that adequate teaching materials enhance academic performance. Both students and teachers agree on the importance of adequate teaching materials, with 71% of students and 100% of teachers recognizing their positive impact. Teaching materials, such as textbooks, reference materials, and technological resources, are vital for facilitating effective learning. Teachers, in particular, understand how these materials can enhance lesson delivery and students' understanding of complex concepts. The agreement among students shows that they value the availability of these materials in enhancing their learning experience. Smith and Patel (2019) highlight that adequate teaching resources are integral to the learning process, ensuring that both teachers and students can maximize the educational opportunities available. This highlights the need for schools to ensure the regular provision of sufficient teaching resources to both teachers and students.

#### **3.4.3 A Conducive Environment Affects Academic Performance**

As indicated in Table 4.4, all students (100%) and 32% of the surveyed teachers have differing views on the impact of a conducive environment on academic performance. While all students agree that a conducive environment is essential for their academic success, only 32% of teachers share this opinion. A conducive environment encompasses factors such as classroom ambiance, physical space, lighting, noise levels, and safety, all of which influence students' ability to focus and engage with their

lessons. The stark difference in perceptions between students and teachers suggests that students may be more aware of their immediate learning environment's impact, possibly due to their direct experience. Teachers, on the other hand, may not fully recognize the extent to which the physical and emotional environment can affect learning outcomes. According to Brown and Kamau (2021), the learning environment plays a crucial role in enhancing student performance, with a positive atmosphere contributing to better concentration and higher motivation. This highlights the need for teacher training and school policy adjustments to ensure that the learning environment supports students' academic needs effectively.

#### **3.4.4 Meals Provision Affects Academic Performance**

Table 4.4 shows that 73% of the surveyed students and 90% of teachers agree that meals provision affects academic performance. The provision of meals, especially in low-income areas, plays an important role in ensuring that students are adequately nourished, which in turn affects their concentration and cognitive abilities. While 73% of students and 90% of teachers agree that meals provision positively influences academic performance, this suggests that some students may not fully realize the importance of having meals provided at school, or they may not experience consistent access to these meals. However, teachers are more aware of the relationship between nutrition and academic success, emphasizing the need for schools to prioritize meal provision for students to support their physical and mental well-being, thereby enhancing their academic outcomes. Williams and Adeyemi (2020) suggest that meal provision can significantly improve students' concentration levels, particularly in resource-poor settings, by ensuring that students have the energy and focus needed to engage with their studies. This reinforces the need for schools to maintain programs that provide adequate and consistent meals to students.

#### **3.4.5 Government Support Improves Academic Performance**

It is revealed in Table 4.4 that all students (100%) and 82% of the surveyed teachers agree that government support improves academic performance. Both students and teachers strongly believe that government support is crucial for enhancing academic performance, with 100% of students and 82% of teachers agreeing on its positive impact. Government support can take various forms, such as funding for infrastructure, provision of teaching materials, and policy initiatives that improve education quality. The high percentage of students supporting this view suggests that they recognize and appreciate the contributions of government programs, such as scholarships, subsidies, and infrastructural improvements, in making education more accessible and effective. However, the lower percentage of teachers (82%) compared to students (100%) may suggest that some teachers feel that government support, while important, is not always adequate or consistently distributed. This points to the need for more targeted, equitable, and sustainable government interventions to ensure that all students have equal access to the resources they need for academic success. Adams and Njoroge (2022) stress that government support plays a pivotal role in bridging the gaps in education, especially in underserved areas, and ensuring that students have the tools and opportunities to succeed.

**Table 4: Teacher-Based Factors Enhancing Academic Performance (n = 120)**

Statement	Students (f%)	Teachers (f%)	Total (f%)
Teachers' availability enhances academic performance	36(51)	50(100)	120(100)
Adequate teaching materials enhance academic performance	50(71)	50(100)	120(100)
A conducive environment affects academic performance	70(100)	16(32)	86(100)
Meals provision affects academic performance	51(73)	45(90)	108(90)
Government support improves academic performance	70(100)	41(82)	98(82)

Source: Field data, 2024

**3.5 Student-Based Factors for Enhancing Academic Performance**

**3.5.1 Students' Entry Behavior**

Table 4.5 shows that 43% of the surveyed students and 42% of the teachers agree that students' entry behavior has an impact on academic performance. Students' entry behavior, which refers to their initial academic preparedness, attitude toward learning, and behavior upon entering the school system, was seen as a factor affecting academic performance, with 43% of both students and teachers acknowledging its importance. Entry behavior often includes factors such as prior educational background, study skills, motivation, and readiness to engage with the academic curriculum. While this is recognized by a relatively small proportion of respondents, it suggests that early educational experiences play a role in shaping how students perform in secondary education (Anderson & Lee, 2019). However, the modest agreement might reflect the challenge of attributing academic success solely to entry behavior, as it is influenced by multiple factors, including ongoing learning experiences and support systems within the school environment.

**3.5.2 Students' Discipline**

Table 4.5 indicates that 81% of the students and 80% of the teachers agree that student discipline is critical for academic performance. Both students and teachers overwhelmingly agree that discipline is essential for academic success, with 81% of students and 80% of teachers recognizing its importance. Discipline encompasses a range of behaviors, including regular

attendance, time management, adherence to rules, and the ability to focus on studies without distraction. The consensus between students and teachers highlights the shared understanding that disciplined students are more likely to engage in productive learning activities, complete assignments on time, and demonstrate responsibility for their academic progress (Brown & Smith, 2018). The high agreement also suggests that schools with clear disciplinary guidelines and supportive structures can foster better academic outcomes.

**3.5.3 Language Mastery**

It is revealed in Table 4.5 that 71% of the students and 32% of the teachers have differing opinions on the significance of language mastery for academic performance. While 71% of students agree that language mastery is an important factor for academic success, only 32% of teachers share this opinion. Language mastery, especially proficiency in the language of instruction, plays a crucial role in students' ability to understand lesson content, communicate effectively, and perform well in assessments. The disparity in views between students and teachers may indicate that teachers are not fully aware of the challenges that students face in mastering the language of instruction, particularly if students speak different local languages at home (Carter & Williams, 2020). Students might perceive language barriers more acutely, which can impact their learning and performance. This finding suggests that addressing language barriers through additional language support programs, remedial classes, or multilingual teaching approaches could improve students' academic outcomes.

**Table 6: Ordinal Regression Results for Home-Based, Teacher-Based, and Student-Based Factors Affecting Academic Performance (n = 120)**

Factor	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	z-Statistic	p-value	Odds Ratio (e <sup>β</sup> )
<b>Home-Based Factors</b>					
Parental Education	0.45	0.10	4.50	0.000	1.57
Parental Income	0.30	0.12	2.50	0.012	1.35
Distance from Home to School	-0.25	0.11	-2.27	0.023	0.78
Home Chores	-0.35	0.10	-3.50	0.000	0.70
Adequate Study Time	0.50	0.09	5.56	0.000	1.65
<b>Teacher-Based Factors</b>					
Teacher Availability	0.60	0.12	5.00	0.000	1.82

Factor	Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	Standard Error	z-Statistic	p-value	Odds Ratio ( $e^{\beta}$ )
Teaching Materials	0.35	0.08	4.38	0.000	1.42
Conducive Environment	0.20	0.10	2.00	0.046	1.22
Meals Provision	0.45	0.11	4.09	0.000	1.57
Government Support	0.30	0.09	3.33	0.001	1.35
<b>Student-Based Factors</b>					
Entry Behavior	-0.20	0.11	-1.82	0.069	0.82
Discipline	0.40	0.11	3.64	0.000	1.49
Language Mastery	0.35	0.10	3.50	0.000	1.42
Truancy	-0.50	0.08	-6.25	0.000	0.61
Study Habits	0.45	0.10	4.50	0.000	1.57

Source: Field data, 2024

### 3.5.4 Students' Truancy

Table 4.5 shows that 81% of the students and 90% of teachers agree that reducing truancy is essential for academic performance. Both students and teachers recognize the negative impact of truancy on academic performance, with 81% of students and 90% of teachers agreeing that frequent absences affect learning outcomes. Truancy, or unexcused absences from school, often leads to missed lessons, which can create gaps in understanding and hinder overall academic progress. The high percentage of agreement among teachers suggests they are keenly aware of the detrimental effects of truancy, likely because it disrupts the continuity of instruction. The relatively lower percentage of students who agree may reflect their limited recognition of truancy as a significant issue, possibly because some students may not perceive absences as affecting their performance until it becomes more apparent in their grades. This finding suggests that schools need to implement stricter measures to track attendance and create supportive interventions to address truancy, such as offering incentives for good attendance or providing counseling to students with chronic absenteeism (Dixon & Harris, 2021).

### 3.5.5 Study Habits

As indicated in 4.5, 69% of students and 82% of the teachers agree that effective study habits improve academic performance. A majority of students (69%) and teachers (82%) agree that good study habits are essential for academic success. Study habits include behaviors such as time management, regular review of material, active learning techniques, and preparation for exams. Effective study habits enable students to consolidate learning, retain information, and perform better on assessments (Green & Thompson, 2017). The slightly higher agreement among teachers indicates that educators recognize the importance of cultivating these habits in students, likely because they directly contribute to students' preparedness for exams and classwork. For students, the recognition of study habits as a factor in academic performance may be shaped by their personal experiences with studying and exam preparation. This finding suggests that schools could implement programs focused on improving study habits, such as study skills workshops or time management training, to further enhance academic outcomes (Stewart & Turner, 2019).

## 4.0 Conclusion

In summary, this study highlights the significant impact of home-based, teacher-based, and student-based factors on academic performance in community secondary schools in Arusha District. Key home-based factors include parental education, income, and adequate study time. Teacher-based factors, such as teacher availability, teaching materials, and the learning environment, also play a crucial role. Student-based factors like discipline, study habits, and truancy are essential for academic success. The findings emphasize the need for a holistic approach that addresses these interconnected factors to improve students' academic outcomes and create a supportive learning environment.

### 4.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that educational stakeholders, including schools, parents, and local governments, implement comprehensive strategies to enhance academic performance. These strategies should focus on improving parental involvement through education and income support programs, ensuring students have adequate study time and a conducive home environment. Teachers should receive ongoing professional development to enhance their effectiveness, while schools should prioritize the provision of teaching materials and a positive learning environment. Furthermore, student discipline, study habits, and attendance should be emphasized through targeted interventions. Collaboration between these stakeholders will be essential in fostering a supportive and empowering educational ecosystem for students.

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