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## Teacher Characteristics and Academic Performance of Pupils in Public Primary Schools in Kenya

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### **Abstract:**

*The purpose of this study was to establish teachers' perceptions on the influence of selected teacher factors on academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County. The objectives of the study were to establish the influence of teacher educational qualification and personality on pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County. The study was conducted in public primary schools in Keiyo South Sub County, Kenya. A descriptive research design was used for the study. The target respondents for the study involved head teachers and teachers. Respondents for the study involved 86 head teachers and 278 teachers from the three divisions. The head teachers and teachers were selected using proportionate stratified random sampling technique based on the education division that they came from. The instruments for data collection involved questionnaires and interview schedules. The research instruments were tested for validity and reliability. Study results showed that 76.8% of teachers perceived that teacher academic qualifications influenced academic performance of pupils'. Teacher personality was found to have significant influence pupils' academic performance. Most (83.0%) of respondents perceived that teachers with positive attitude would result to learners performing excellent in their studies in school. The study recommends that teachers should increase their educational level and participate more in-service training and workshops and teachers need to change their personality towards pupils in schools. The study findings may be useful to the government in policy formulation. Schools may also benefit from the study findings on the ways of improving pupils' academic performance.*

**Keywords:** Teacher, qualifications, personality, academic performance

### **1. Introduction**

The relationship between teacher academic qualifications and learners' academic performance has been conducted everywhere across the world. Darling-Hammond (2001) reports that in United States, measures of teacher qualifications were by far the strongest correlates of pupils' academic achievement in reading and in mathematics, both before and after controlling for learners' poverty and language status. In South America, Guimaraes and Carnoy (2012) established that there were measures of association between teacher qualifications and pupils' academic performance in mathematics in Brazil. In contrast, Rivkin *et al.*, (2005) found out that education qualifications of teachers did not predict students' outcomes. Learning assessments across Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia revealed that large numbers of pupils leave primary school without acquiring even the most basic competencies in reading and mathematics (Pratham, 2005; Uwezo, 2010; Brookings Institution, 2011; UNESCO, 2011). It is not clear why the learners leave and therefore, the study ascertained whether teacher qualifications influenced pupils' academic achievement in Keiyo South Sub-County, Kenya.

Teacher personality has been investigated and the results show that learners exhibit different results based on their teachers' personal attributes. Teachers who are better able to communicate with their students' are more effective; teachers' verbal skills predict students' academic gains (Darling-Hammond, 2001; Wayne & Youngs, 2003). For example, mathematics teachers who have completed mathematics specific post-secondary coursework were more effective than peer teachers without such advanced training (Fehrler, Michaelowa, & Wechtler, 2008). Etsy (2005) in a study in Ghana found that teacher factors that significantly contributed to low academic achievement were incidences of lateness to school, incidences of absenteeism, and inability to complete the syllabi. Richardson and Arker (2010) suggest that teachers need to be recognised and identified to improve learners' performance in schools. This study sought teachers' perceptions on the influence of teacher personality characteristics on pupils' academic performance.

Despite notable improvements in enrolment since the onset of Free Primary Education (FPE), Keiyo South Sub-County still reflect inconsistent results at the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) for the last seven years, from 2008 to 2014. Table 1 illustrate the concern for performance in KCPE examinations in Keiyo South Sub-County..

Year	Keiyo South Mean scores out of 500			Average performance for 3 divisions	
	Chepkorio	Metkei	Soy	Mean score	% score
2008	260.63	250.93	260.02	257.19	52.82
2009	272.91	269.07	272.74	271.57	54.91
2010	278.45	269.37	278.33	275.38	54.46
2011	268.55	258.06	269.35	265.32	53.12
2012	267.81	264.56	277.74	270.04	54.71
2013	265.37	263.14	270.59	266.37	53.27
2014	261.05	258.65	268.93	262.88	52.57

Table 1: Performance in KCPE in Keiyo South Sub-County for the Period of 2008 – 2014

Source: Republic of Kenya (2014)

Table 1 displays an overall picture of performance in Keiyo South Sub-County from 2008 to 2014. The performance seems to be on average with a minimal increase and a significant decrease in the mean scores. Table 1 indicates that the bulk of candidates have a score of 270 marks and below as indicated by the percentages. Among the three divisions, schools from Soy performed better compared to those from Chepkorio and Metkei coming last. This shows that there existed disparities in divisional KCPE performance over the years. Although the performance could be impressive, the mean score is still lower than Keiyo North (271), Marakwet East (277) and Marakwet West (278) Sub-Counties that had an average mean score of 275.33 for those years (Sub-County Director of Education, 2014). A report from the Sub-County Director of Education showed that 119,000 of pupils who completed standard eight in 2013 in Kenya (Keiyo south Sub-county included) missed form one slots. The study investigated teachers' perceptions on the extent to which selected teacher factors: qualification, experience, commitment and personality influenced pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County, Elgeyo Marakwet County.

### 1.1. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish influence of teacher characteristics on pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County, Elgeyo Marakwet County.

### 1.2. Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To determine teachers' perceptions on the influence of teacher qualifications on pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County.
2. To find out teachers' perceptions on the influence of teacher personality on pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County..

## 2. Review of Literature

### 2.1. Influence of Teacher Qualifications on Pupils' Academic Performance

Darling-Hammond (1998) cited in Kosgei, Kirwa, Odera and Ayugi (2013) defines a well qualified teacher as one who was fully certified and held the equivalent of a major in the field being taught. According to UNESCO (2006), the teacher qualification indicator most often collected is the proportion of trained teachers, or those who have received the minimum organized teacher training (pre-service or in-service) required by a given country. For instance, the minimum standard for primary teaching is an upper secondary qualification, typically a specialized programme for training teachers (A-Level) which is not designed to lead to university studies.

For a minority of countries, the standard teacher qualification is equivalent to a lower secondary education (O-level), which is approximately four years of basic secondary education while in other countries they consider those who have certificates and diplomas (UNESCO, 2006) to qualify to teach in primary schools. In many countries, teacher qualifications that are considered to be related to pupils learning have become targets of education reforms. Murnane and Steele (2007) argue that teachers with low qualifications and weak academic credentials instruct disproportionate shares of low income and at-risk students. These poorly prepared teachers have difficulties in the classroom and often leave the teaching profession or transfer to less arduous duties in sub-urban schools (Darling-Hammond, 2001). Goldhaber and Brewer's (2002) analysis of teachers' post secondary degrees and students' mathematics performance in America found a positive relationship between teacher's degrees and students' performance in mathematics, they also found that students whose teachers were certified in mathematics but did not hold a post secondary degree in mathematics did not perform as well as students whose teachers held a post-secondary degree in mathematics. In addition, Darling-Hammond (2001) longitudinal data results showed that teacher certificate and subject matter knowledge correlated with students test results. The study determined the extent to which credentials (diploma, degrees) possessed by teachers influence pupils' academic performance. This study determined the degree to which teacher qualifications determined pupils' academic performance in public primary schools not in mathematics and science only but in all subjects.

In Israel, Zuzovsky (n.d) informs that teacher qualifications have become the target of several reforms, such as those announced by different teacher unions (2004), the National Task Force for the Advancement of Education in Israel (Dovrat Committee, 2005), and the Committee of the Commission for Higher Education (Ariav, Olshtain, Alon, Back, Grienfeld, & Libman, 2006). The reforms

suggested in Israel are more in line with the advocacy to professionalize teacher preparation. In Brazil, Guimaraes and Carnoy (2012) longitudinal survey found out that high level of teacher qualification increases the pace of learning in Mathematics. Guimaraes and Carnoy (2012) results showed that the parameters are positive but not statistically significant for Portuguese, suggesting that teacher qualifications do not influence the rate of learning gains for this subject. However, their final sample was relatively small compared to the initial population of study, and this limited the generalizability of their results. Education Sector Analysis study (2005) on selected secondary school teachers in Nigeria by qualifications and gender revealed that the unqualified teachers' proportion affected the quality of learning delivery in the sampled schools. This study determined the extent to which teachers' qualification influenced pupils' academic performance.

Fehrler, Michaelowa and Wetchler (2008) conducted a cross-country analysis of 21 countries in sub-Saharan Africa using Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality [SACMEQ] 11, collected in 2002/2 and Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Éducatifs de la CONFEMEN [PASEC] data collected between 19996 and 2000. They found that the 5-point categorical variable indicating academic qualifications from primary to tertiary, is not significant in the PASEC data, but has an effect on learners test scores of between 0.018 and 0.041 standard deviations in SACMEQ 11. Furthermore, they found that teacher subject competency tests have an impact between 0.21 and 0.32 standard deviation in SACMEQ countries, but not significant in PASEC countries. The study sought to establish teacher perceptions on how their level of education affected pupils' academic performance in Keiyo South Sub-County. In Kenya Wabuke, Chelagat and Jepkorir (2013) asserted that teachers are important resources in the teaching learning process and their training requires critical consideration. They said that a teacher's level of education (qualification) was a very important determinant in effective teaching and learning. Similarly, majority of teachers agreed that teacher level of education influenced performance in Biology (Kosgei, *et al.*, 2013) This was because trained teachers had the know-how in the subject thus they taught effectively and confidently as they were equipped with the right skills and knowledge. Moreover, Maundu (1986) cited in Kosgei, *et al.*, (2013) informed that there was significant correlation between teacher qualification and pupils' performance in Kenya. Kosgei *et al.*, (2013) looked at secondary school biology teachers but this study looked at how primary school teacher qualification determined pupils' academic performance. Yara and Wanjohi (2011) found that teachers' professional qualifications were the prime predictors of students' academic achievement; teachers' experience in teaching was not statistically significant in explaining students' academic achievement. However, the findings failed to indicate whether teacher additional professional qualifications lead to improved competence of teaching at secondary school level. This study sought teachers' perceptions on how their qualifications influenced pupils' academic performance in Keiyo South Sub-County.

## 2.2. Influence of Teacher Personality on Pupils' Academic Performance

Richardson and Arker (2010) argue that personality styles need to be recognized to meet individual students' needs. Understanding personality profiles allows teachers to be proactive in determining a better fit for each student (Richardson & Arker, 2010). Richardson and Arker (2010) also suggested that overall productivity could be enhanced by bringing together individuals with similarities. Teacher personality is not the same as any other job related areas (Taylor, 2011). It requires religious values, moral and teaching ethics that are bound by the mission and vision of the education philosophy (Wayne & Young, 2003). Teachers in school are supposed to display certain personality traits such as conscientiousness, emotional stability, openness to experience, extraverted, approachable, enthusiastic, outgoing, sense of humour, thinker, supportiveness, warm, kind, friendly, just, cheerful, communicative, able to relate to uninterested students and tolerate usage of mother-tongue (Richardson & Arker, 2010). Despite this, a concern facing education is the variety of personality styles that could either negatively or positively affect academic excellence in secondary learners (Garcia, Kupczynski & Holland, 2011). This study determined the influence of teacher personality traits on pupils' academic performance in Keiyo South primary schools.

Studies (Davis, 2006; McCombs & Miller, 2006) show that teacher personal attributes could be related to pupils' academic success. Davis (2006) and McCombs and Miller (2006) emphasized that good relationships between pupils and teachers often lead to increased student performance. Cooper and Benis (1967) study cited in Garcia, Kupczynski and Holland (2011) showed that a teacher who exhibited negative personality, their learners in their classes performed below average. In addition, Levin's (2006) result of the study showed marginally statistical significance between teacher personality and pupils' academic performance in schools. However, the focus of that study (Levin, 2006) was on the leadership component and its effects on student learning and this study dwelt on teacher personality and its effect on performance of pupils in class. Haberman (1995) study found out that star teachers (successful ones) do not punish pupils, but instead use logical consequences to direct students to learn appropriate behaviours; star teachers believe that discipline problems are best handled by making learning interesting, meaningful, and engrossing; star teachers were persistent. Haberman (1995) saw these teachers dealing with the organization of the school in a uniquely productive way. They did not attempt to undermine the school's administration, nor did they ignore the directives of officials; neither, did they use bureaucratic directives as excuses to keep them from achieving their objectives in the classroom. Haberman's work is methodologically weak because it lacked the description of the group of teachers interviewed and there was no explanation on the criteria that was used to select successful teachers. Haberman findings may be right but the research method used was not clear.

Moscoso and Slagado (2004) study showed that there were seven types of personality styles that negatively affected job performance, shyness, suspiciousness, sadness, pessimism, suffering, eccentricity, and riskiness. However, Moscoso and Slagado (2004) did not study the effects of a person's personality on another person's job performance; the study assessed different personality styles and their contribution to pupils' academic performance. Teacher's personality style plays a part in pupils' success (Levin, 2006). This is because teaching involves multiple, simultaneous decisions related to content pedagogy, student relationships, praise and discipline, materials of instruction, and interactions with colleagues. Teaching requires not only the ability to teach lessons, but also an

understanding of the rules and routines of the school culture, the ability to collaborate with other education professionals, and an awareness of the communities in which one teaches (Decker & Rim-Kaufman, n.d). People are highly inconsistent in the degree to which they can meet these multi-level demands. Personality characteristics are likely to be important predictors of this ability. Smith (1997) reported that there is a close connection between the academic discipline in the public life of psychology and psychology in relation to the study of differences among people. Smith (1997) referred to the psychology of an individual as that person's personality style. Cooper and Benis (1967) cited in Garcia, Kupczynski and Holland, (2011) said that if certain patterns of teacher classroom behaviour could be demonstrated to relate to pupil achievement (or the reverse) then we would be in a position to guide the development of that teacher's behaviour which leads to pupils' learning. This study connected teachers' personalities and behaviours as factors for pupils' learning. The scale that was used to assess a teacher's personality was through use of Likert scale questions. Garcia, Kupczynski and Holland, (2011) results indicated that there was a statistical difference in teachers' personality and the success rate of the tenth and the eleventh grade students based on their academic scores. In a study of Turkish pre-service teachers, Celep (2000) found out that older teachers had greater self-confidence in ability to motivate learners and held more positive views of learners' willingness to learn than younger teachers hold. However, there is lack of studies that examine a person's individual personality style and how it may have affected another person's success (Levin, 2006; Richardson & Arker, 2010; Garcia, Kupczynski & Holland, 2011). Literature has shown that there have been a limited number of studies done in the area of teachers' personality and its effects on pupils' success in primary schools, a core theme of this study.

From the above review of studies, a conceptual framework was design as shown in Figure 1

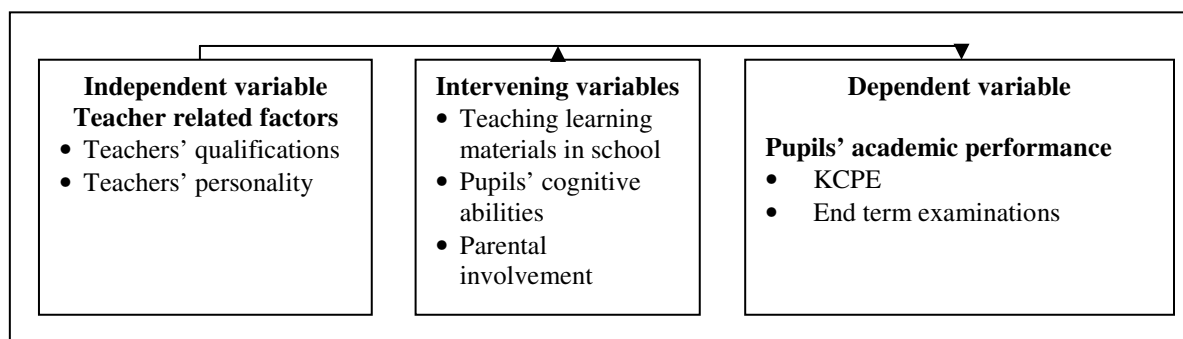


Figure 1: Influence of teachers selected factors on pupil's academic performance

The first independent variable is represented by teacher qualifications. This could be reflected through determining how teacher academic and professional qualification levels (certificate, diploma, degree and post graduate) influence their teaching effectiveness hence affecting the performance of pupils in schools. Personality of a teacher refers to behaviours, characters and traits that teachers posses or exhibit while in school which could influence their approach to the teaching and learning processes. The personality traits include; teacher being free to interact with pupils, one who allows to be asked variety of questions by pupils, those who create pleasant atmosphere for learning and those who are conscious in their dressing and their look.

### 3. Materials and Methods

Descriptive survey research design was appropriate for this study because the researcher investigated the influence of teacher characteristics and pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County. The study location was Keiyo South Sub-County in Elgeyo-Marakwet County, Kenya. The researcher chose the area because it is one of the few Sub-County in Elgeyo Marakwet County whose mean scores for the KCPE results have been inconsistent. The target population consisted of 114 head teachers and 1046 teachers where a sample of 86 head teachers and 278 teachers were selected to participate in the study. The respondents were selected through proportionate stratified random sampling method. The study used questionnaires to collect information from teachers. The interview schedule was used to get information from head headteachers on the performance of their pupils in their schools. The study utilised content validation measure to determine the validity of the research instruments. The study obtained an average reliability coefficient of 0.756 for the two objectives of the study. Data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics for quantitative data and generation of themes for qualitative data.

### 4. Results

#### 4.1. Influence of Teacher Qualifications on Pupils' Academic Performance

The first objective of the study was to find out head teachers' and teachers' perceptions on the influence of teacher qualifications on pupils' academic performance of public primary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County. A teacher qualification is one of the most important factors determining the quality of learning in schools. In school, a pupil may be exposed to teachers of different academic qualifications. At first, the teachers were asked to indicate their level of education. The findings are given in Table 2.

Level	Frequency	Percent
Certificate	106	44.7
Diploma	87	36.7
Degree	41	17.3
Masters	3	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 2: Teachers' level of education

From the responses, 106 (44.7%) were certificate holders, 87 (36.7%) were diploma holders, 41 (17.3%) had a degree while 3 (1.3%) had masters level of education. This shows that all teachers in Keiyo South Sub-County are professionally trained. Another observation from the results above shows that despite being in primary schools, teachers are advancing in their education as 71 (30.0%) reported that they were enrolled in different academic programmes like Diploma in ECD, degree in education and master's degree level. Furthermore, the teachers were asked to rate the extent to which they applied various teaching and learning methodologies in their classes and its influence on academic performance of pupils. The results are presented in Table 3.

Activity	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
i) Giving pupils feedback on issues concerning them enhances academic performance	208	87.8	25	10.5	4	1.7	0	0
ii) Academic performance is improved when children are helped to use multiple senses in learning	119	50.2	79	33.3	38	16.0	1	0.4
iii) Self exploration by learners enables acquisition of information which boosts learning	116	48.9	86	36.3	31	13.1	4	1.7
iv) Children working on their own encourages self-reliance leading to better results	145	61.2	52	21.9	33	13.9	7	2.9
v) Keeping children preoccupied during leisure time avoid mischief and assists them do better in exams	144	60.8	63	26.6	27	11.4	3	1.3
vi) In-depth learning is acquired by covering all activity areas under one theme hence better outcomes	87	36.7	76	32.1	56	23.6	18	7.6
vii) Preparation of schemes of work, lesson plans, and timetables regularly direct learners to success	174	73.4	43	18.1	17	7.2	3	1.3
viii) Clear effective communication in class is a key determinant of academic achievement	197	83.1	31	13.1	9	3.8	0	0
<b>Average statistics on influence of teacher qualification characteristics</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>62.8</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1.9</b>

Table 3: Teachers' perceptions on the influence of their qualifications on academic performance of pupils'

Results from Table 3 shows that 208 (87.8%) of teachers strongly agreed that giving pupils feedback on issues concerning them enhances their academic achievement, 25 (10.5%) agreed and 4 (1.7%) were undecided. This shows that teachers who regularly give feedback to pupils in their classrooms lead to the improvement in learner's academic performance. This clearly shows that majority of teachers usually respond to queries raised by learners in the classroom. Murnane and Steele (2007) support this finding by indicating that teachers who are qualified tend to communicate and assist their students regularly to improve on their performance. When asked as to whether academic performance is improved when children are helped to use multiple senses in learning, half 119 (50.2%) of teachers strongly agreed, 79 (33.3%) agreed, 38 (16.0%) were undecided while 1 (0.4%) disagreed. This shows that teachers tend to have positive perceptions on their role in encouraging learners to use their multiple senses hence learning in classrooms. The findings concur with Darling-Hammond (2001) who found out that teachers who regularly interacted with students on how to go about class work activities improved on their academic performance in schools.

Results on whether self-exploration by learners enabled acquisition of information which boosts learning, 116 (48.95) strongly agreed, 86 (36.3%) agreed, 31 (13.1%) were neutral while 4 (1.7%) disagreed. This shows that when teachers ensure that learners do self-exploration in their classrooms, pupils' academic performance increases significantly. Zuzovsky (nd) support this result in that teachers who are qualified tend to use social learning methods that involve exploration to improve classroom teaching and learning. According to Zuzovsky, when teachers use exploration approach in lesson instruction, their students' understanding improves hence improved academic outcomes. Moreover, findings also showed that majority 145 (61.25) of teachers perceived that children working on their own encourages self-reliance leading to better results, 52 (21.9%) agreed, 33 (13.9%) were undecided while 7 (2.9%) disagreed. This is a positive confirmation that teachers assist learners to learn on their own rather than waiting upon teachers so that they can read and write. This one aspect shows that teachers are implementing what was taught in college. This later translates to better academic outcomes in school. Wabuke *et al.*, (2013) also support the finding by stating that effective teaching in the classroom is dependent on teachers' level of qualification. Therefore, for learning to be effective, teachers need to use their knowledge gained from college to improve classroom learning environments hence improving performance (Yara & Wanjohi, 2011).

The findings of the study on whether keeping children preoccupied during leisure time avoids mischief and assist them to do better in exams, 144 (60.8%) strongly supported the statement, 63 (26.6%) agreed, 27 (11.4%) were undecided while only 3 (1.3%) disagreed with the statement. The findings disagree with Michaelowa and Wetchler (2008) who found out that majority of teachers in 11 sub-Saharan African countries rarely kept learners pre-occupied in the classroom leading to their low academic performance. This implies that when teachers give pupils extra work and assignment during their free time, their commitment to learning improves leading to improved performance in examinations. Results of the study further revealed that 87 (36.7%) of teachers strongly agreed, 76 (32.1%)

agreed, 56 (23.6%) remained neutral and 18 (7.6%) were undecided on the statement that in-depth learning is acquired by covering all activity areas under one theme hence better academic outcomes. This shows that teachers have positive view on this statement. This shows that teachers regularly combine and merge activities that are related to cover one singular theme while teaching and this raises the academic performance of pupils in primary schools. The findings are in agreement with Guimaraes and Carnoy (2012) who established that teaching strategies used by qualified teachers in Brazilian schools improved learners pace in understanding mathematics subject. The study findings further revealed that most 174 (73.4%) of teachers strongly agreed that preparation of schemes of work, lesson plans and timetables regularly directed learners to academic success, 43 (18.1%) agreed, 17 (7.2%) were undecided while 3 (1.3%) disagreed. These professional documents preparation are critical in ensuring successful implementation of curriculum in the classroom by teachers (Kosgei *et al.*, 2013). Early preparation of them tends to be associated with improved academic outcomes by pupils as teachers perceived (Yara & Wanjohi, 2011). The results implied that internal curriculum supervisors are doing their best in ensuring that teachers prepared professional documents that guide their teaching. This one aspect shows that teachers are qualified in their areas of teaching and this would in one-way dictate the academic achievement of pupils in schools. Lastly, 197 (83.1%) of teachers strongly agreed that clear and effective communication in class is a key determinant of academic achievement, 31 (13.1%) agreed and 9 (3.85) were undecided. This shows that teachers understand the importance of clear and effective communication to improve teaching and learning processes in their classrooms. The findings are supported by Murnane and Steele (2007) and Goldhaber and Brewer (2002) who found out that regular communication, interaction and consultation between teachers and learners in the classroom improved academic outcomes. Computed average statistics shows that majority 149 (62.8%) of teachers strongly agreed that conduction of lessons professionally increases pupil's academic performance, 57 (24.0%) agreed, 27 (11.3%) were undecided while 5 (1.9%) disagreed with the statements. This shows that teachers tend to have positive perceptions on the influence of qualification characteristics on academic performance of pupils in schools. The findings concur with Kosgei (2013) who found also that more than 50% of teachers had positive perceptions on their influence of teacher qualifications on student academic achievement. Moreover, the respondents were asked to indicate whether the level of education of a teacher determine the academic performance of pupils in schools. The results are presented in Table 4.

Level of agreement	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	18	7.6
Disagree	24	10.1
Undecided	13	5.5
Agree	96	40.5
Strongly agree	86	36.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4: Whether level of education influence academic performance of pupils

The findings reveal that 86 (36.6%) strongly agreed and 96 (40.5%) agreed that the level of education and qualification of a teacher determines pupil's academic performance in school. However, 24 (10.1%) disagreed and 18 (7.65) strongly disagreed with the statement. Combined statistics shows that 76.8% agreed while 17.7 disagreed and 13 (5.5%) remained undecided on the statement. Therefore, according to the teachers, their qualifications and education level affects academic performance of pupils. Kosgei *et al.*, (2013) results showed that as the level of teacher education increased, learners' performance in Biology increased in Nandi South Sub-County secondary schools. This finding was supported by head teachers interviewed who admitted that teacher academic qualification plays a significant role in academic achievement of schools. One head teacher from Metkei division asserted that teachers who have higher academic qualifications have had better results.' For instance, another head teacher noted that the performance of teachers who hold diploma is better than the certificate. However, one head teacher from one school who said that those with diploma have not really mastered the subject matter completely like those who have certificates. He explained further by stating that:

- ...there is a great difference because specialising in a few subjects needs also specialisation in the classroom. Moreover, in a primary school, a teacher teaches all the subjects regardless of language barriers in lower primary. A certificate-trained teacher if given the necessary learning facilities will perform better than a diploma teacher.

The key of the matter here is that head teachers see that those who hold diploma are trained in teaching specific subjects unlike those who have certificate level of education (PI and PII). However, some head teachers from Soy Division argued that all teachers are equally the same despite holding different academic education levels. This implies that low education should not be interpreted as an indication of a low impact of increased subject matter knowledge, but rather as an indication of the low quality of the education, the teachers themselves received when they attended college. The above information from teachers and head teachers support the notion that teacher qualification is an important factor predicting pupils' academic performance in primary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County. The information is consistent with past studies (Darling Hammond, 2001, Michaelowa & Wetchler, 2008; Yara & Wanjohi, 2011) who found out that teacher qualification is an important factor towards learners' academic performance.

#### 4.2. Influence of Teacher Personality on Pupils' Academic Performance

The third objective of the research was to find out head teachers and teachers' perceptions on the influence of teacher personality on pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County. Therefore, through a Likert scale of five; strongly disagree coded as 1 to strongly agree coded as 5, the teachers were asked to give their perceptions on how their personality in school influenced pupils' academic performance. The findings are given in Table 5.

Personality characteristics and academic performance	SA		A		UN		D		SD	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
i) Free interaction with pupils by a teacher in class creates a positive attitude required in passing exams	99	41.8	111	46.8	4	1.7	5	2.1	18	7.6
ii) Teacher who allows pupils to consult them in class & other times creates a bond which leads to success	82	34.6	96	40.5	14	5.9	15	6.3	30	12.7
iii) When teachers allow pupils to take notes as lesson progresses encourages freedom in learning	49	20.7	87	36.7	16	6.8	41	17.3	44	18.6
iv) Giving pupils a variety of questions after every lesson promotes their interest and understanding	111	46.8	95	40.1	10	4.2	9	3.8	12	5.1
v) Teachers who praises pupils when they answer questions activates learning interest	152	64.1	60	25.3	1	.4	6	2.5	18	7.6
vi) Teacher who creates a pleasant atmosphere in teaching by making pupils cheerful & happy raises academic performance	132	55.7	77	32.5	8	3.4	2	.8	18	7.6
vii) Teachers who are conscious on their dressing & how they look motivates children interest in them & the learning process	123	51.9	77	32.5	14	5.9	6	2.5	17	7.2
viii) Teachers who encourage pupils' ideas when there are discussions in class results to success	132	55.7	81	34.2	6	2.5	4	1.7	14	5.9
<b>Average teacher personality perception</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>46.4</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>36.1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9.0</b>

Table 5: Teachers' perceptions on how personality influenced pupils' academic performance

Results from Table 5 reveal that 99 (41.8%) of teachers strongly agreed that free interaction with pupils by teachers in class creates a positive attitude required in passing exams, 111 (46.8%) agreed, 4 (1.7%) were undecided, 5 (2.1%) disagreed while 18 (7.6%) strongly disagreed. This implies that teachers have developed the tendency of interacting freely with their pupils and this helps in removing fear factor among children in schools as teachers appear to be friendly rather than harsh. The findings were supported by one head teacher who said that learners learn through teacher/pupil interaction and therefore if a teacher has no idea about the subjects or topics being taught, the learner will not achieve anything. The results are similar to Decker and Rimm-Kaufman (n.d.) who found out that teacher who endorsed proactive approaches to discipline, created a sense of community and argued that it was important to support meta-cognitive growth in the classrooms. However, Etsey (2005) study showed that teachers in the Ghana Shama sub-metro schools showed less concern about the children understanding of the lessons when compared with the teachers of the high-achieving schools. Understanding of the lesson is linked with output and outcome. The greater the understanding of the lesson, the higher the output of the pupils from exercises, assignments and tests.

Secondly, 82 (34.6%) strongly agreed and 96 (40.5%) agreed that teachers who allow pupils to consult them in class & other times create a bond which lead to success. However, 45 (19%) disagreed with the statement that they only allow consultation by pupils during class lessons and not any other time. From these results, it is evident that teachers somehow appear to be consulted by pupils in classrooms but not outside of which it could have been better if he/she was free to be consulted at any place within the school environment. The findings are supported by Richardson and Arker (2010) who found out that regular learner consultation with teachers would improve their academic performance. Thirdly, 87 (36.7%) agreed and 49 (20.7%) of teachers strongly agreed with the statement that when teachers allow pupils to take notes as lesson progresses, this encourages freedom in learning; 44 (18.6) strongly disagreed, 41 (17.33%) disagreed and 16 (6.8%) were undecided. The variation in the response made by teachers could be because of the short-time allocated to each lesson and the content of the unit to be covered, it will take long if the teacher dictated while teaching, and therefore some schools provide learners with textbooks to which teachers assign them to write notes from those books rather than dictation. However, some head teachers reported that their schools did not have adequate instructional materials, forcing teachers to ask pupils take note while teaching and this resulted to delay in curriculum implementation. This situation according to Kimani *et al.*, (2013) results in lack of syllabus completion rate and therefore affects academic performance of pupils.

As to whether giving pupils a variety of questions after every lesson promotes their interest and understanding, 111 (46.8%) strongly agreed and 95 (40.1%) agreed that by giving pupils a variety of questions would promote their interest and understanding in classroom. However, 21 (8.9%) disagreed. This shows that majority of teachers ensured that they had given their pupils a variety of questions to enhance their interest and understanding which later culminated to good academic performance. The findings concur with Levin (2006) who found out that teacher personality and behaviour of pupils by giving regular quizzes improved their understanding of curriculum content. When asked as to whether the reinforcement of pupils by praising them when they answered questions activates learning interest, 152 (64.1%) of teachers strongly agreed, 60 (25.3%) agreed, 1 (0.4) were neutral, 6 (2.5%) disagreed while 18 (7.6%) strongly disagreed. This implies that when learners make good efforts in answering questions, teachers on their part acknowledge by praising them to continue doing better and this creates confidence in learners and result to improved academic outcomes. The findings are consistent with Garcia *et al.*, (2011) whose results indicated that learners' who were praised by their teachers for their academic efforts, grew in self-confidence and thereby improved their grades in examinations.

The findings further revealed that 132 (55.7%) and 77 (32.5%) of teachers agreed that teachers who create pleasant atmospheres in teaching by making pupils cheerful & happy raise academic performance. Only, 20 (8.4%) of teachers said that they disagreed with the statement. It is observed that for learning to be effective, the teacher must ensure that a favourable environment is created so that learners would participate actively in answering and asking questions. This will later lead to improved performance in examinations as

Wayne and Young (2003) found out that teachers who create positive environments in their classrooms, their learners excelled in examinations. When asked as to whether teachers who are conscious on their dressing and how they looked motivated children interest in them and the learning process; at least 123 (51.9%) strongly agreed, 77 (32.5%) agreed, 14 (5.9%) were undecided, 6 (2.5%) disagreed while 17 (7.2%) strongly disagreed with the statement. This implies that teachers are very careful on their mode of dressing and how they appear while in school considering that children are looking up to them as future role models to be emulated. The findings correspond with Kosgei *et al.*, (2013) who found out those teachers who observed on their dressing code, acted as role models to learners in schools. Moreover, one head teacher added that the dressing of a teacher and personal grooming could determine pupils' academic performance.

Lastly, when asked as to whether teachers who encourage pupil's ideas when there were discussions in class resulted to success, 213 (89.9%) agreed, 6 (2.5%) were undecided while 18 (7.6%) disagreed. This implies that majority of teachers value the significance of classroom discussions whereby pupils are categorized in various groups through which they discuss certain questions and come up with a common solution as a group. The utilization of this method during teaching and learning process has been proven good in improving positive academic outcomes in schools as established by Taylor (2011). On average, it appears that 196 (82.5%) of teachers had positive personality characteristics in primary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County. This finding is supported by head teachers interviewed where one said that

- Those who are jovial and easy to interact with are better achievers.

Another one remarked that:

- Children learn through imitation and if the teacher is just a person who does not care about his/her personality, like dressing and how to interact with pupils among others then the learner will imitate exactly what the teacher does. If the teacher criticises others, the learners will do the same. The child will grow to learn and achieve what they are expected through the teacher.

Therefore, teacher personality before the learners plays a lot in their academic achievement. It is also evident that pupils learn and concentrate more depending on teachers' personality. Richardson and Arker (2010) support this statement by stating that the personality traits that teachers exhibit in schools are critical for the effective learning of learners. Most teachers in the study believed that their personality was critical to the academic outcomes of their pupils.

## 5. Conclusion

Most respondents perceived that teachers' qualification influenced pupils' academic performance in examinations in public primary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County. The study observed that majority of teachers were undertaking diploma, degree and masters educational programmes (school based) to improve their skills and competencies. This implied that an increase in teacher qualification was perceived to influence pupils' academic performance in school. It was also revealed that majority of teachers perceived their personality traits to be positive. The study observed that teachers are role models to pupils and their personality matters a lot in teaching and learning which ultimately determine how pupils perform in examinations. Study findings showed that majority of teachers perceived that their personality influenced academic performance of pupils' in primary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County.

## 6. Recommendations

1. There is need for teachers to further their education in disciplines that are related to their area of teaching. When teachers increase their academic qualification level, there is high probability of improving their pupils' academic performance as revealed by the study findings.
2. Teachers need to change their personality towards pupils while in school. They need to create an open environment where learners can ask questions without fear. A well-knit bond needs to be enhanced between teachers and pupils in schools. This will help to create a cordial relationship between them and pupils thereby leading to positive academic outcomes.

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