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Effects of Orphanhood on Secondary School Students' Academic Performance:

A Case of Hamisi District, Kenya

By

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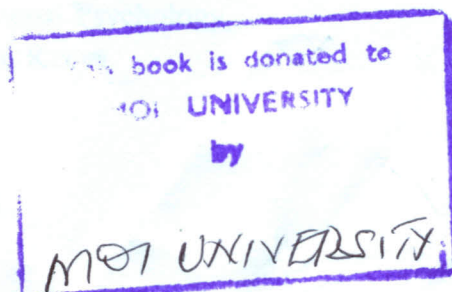
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ABSTRACT

Academic performance has become a measure of success in any institution of learning. It is supposed to measure how and where one will be placed in the larger society. Burn (1979) reveals that until the late 1950's even educationists had tended to restrict their investigations into factors influencing academic performance to IQ, social class, parental interest among others. These variables provide only a partial explanation of academic performance. More variables have emerged in the recent past. Orphanhood with its psychological, sociological and physiological aspects is one such variable that requires investigation to find out how it affects academic performance. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of orphanhood on the academic performance of students in secondary schools in Hamisi District. Out of the 36 secondary schools in Hamisi District, 13 were selected using stratified random sampling procedure which ensured that all the categories of schools namely girls-boarding, boys-boarding, mixed-day and mixed-day and boarding were selected. Purposive sampling was used to select orphans only. Only form 3 and 4 participated in the study as this is the group which had stayed in school long enough to provide the information about effects of orphanhood on academic performance. The variables studied were orphanhood which was the independent variable and academic performance which was the dependent variable. The research design used in this study was ex post facto because this kind of design is used when the independent variable has already occurred, then the researcher examines the effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable. In this kind of design also the variables are not manipulated experimentally but through sampling procedures. The study was based on Maslow's hierarchy of Needs Theory. The theory lays emphasis on fulfillment of needs of lower levels before needs of higher levels such like academic achievements are fulfilled. Data was collected using the questionnaires and document analysis. The questionnaires were administered to head teachers, teacher counsellors, class teachers, and students. Data was analyzed using the descriptive and inferential statistics. The study findings spelled out the unique physiological, sociological and psychological problems that orphans go through and their effects on the academic performance. The secondary school administrators, teachers and other educators were urged to understand these problems and assist the orphans to adjust and cope up in order to perform well in their academic work.