Influence of Learner Capitation Grants on Academic Performance of Pupils in Kenya: A Study Across Public Primary Schools in Suba West and Mbita Sub-Counties

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ABSTRACT

Countries all over the world have invested heavily in Education. The Kenyan government through its commitment to education introduced Free Primary Education in the year 2003 to help provide quality, relevant, accessible and inclusive education for all children of school going age with an aim of improving retention rates, completion rates and pupil academic performance in schools. Despite the heavy investment, completion rates, retention rates and pupil's academic performance in schools was still a challenge. The average academic performance in Suba West and Mbita Sub counties in the last six years from 2018 to 2023 was below average. The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of learner capitation grants on learner academic performance in Suba West and Mbita Sub Counties. The study was guided by the Resource Dependency Theory (RDT), by Salancik (1978) which postulate that human organizations are not self-sufficient and must acquire essential resources from external bodies to achieve the set objectives. In this case, the resource is learner capitation grant; and liberal Classical theory of equal opportunity by Rousseau which postulates that the natural statesmen are born equal and personal qualities should not jeopardize social equality so long as society rewards people according to their status. The study established that learner capitation grants had high influence on learner performance with a mean rating of 3.93. This means that learner capitation grants contributed highly to pupil performance. The study recommended that learner capitation grant should be reviewed upwards and be disbursed to schools on time in order to enhance learners' academic performance. The Findings of this study are useful to stakeholders in education for policy formulation with regard to learner capitation grants.

Keywords: Influence, Learner Capitation Grants, Academic Performance, Pupils, Kenya: Public Primary Schools, Suba West and Mbita Sub-Counties

INTRODUCTION

The Kenyan government is working hard through governments Capitation Grant to provide children who are of school going ages with adequate free, high-quality education that can help solve the problem of low retention rates, low completion rates and low academic performance of learners in schools (Mbalaka, & Cheloti, 2021) especially those pupils from vulnerable groups who in many cases are targets of social evils like rape due to the kind of environment they live in as was witnessed during the current study. Further, Kenya has in place various policy frameworks that seek to enhance education retention, completion and making education readily available and affordable for all the children irrespective of their political, geographical, socio-cultural and economic backgrounds. These policy frameworks include: Education and Training sector policy for learners and trainees with disabilities (2018) which assist to ensure they remain in school in an inclusive environment, Education and training sector gender policy (2015) which ensures all gender in the system of education are given equal opportunity in education. The national Adolescents Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy (2015) which caters for their health and reproductive requirements, Kenya's fast track plan to end HIV and Aids among adolescents and young people (2015) which assist those already infected and affected to be retained to completion in schools among others (Bruneforth, 2015).Despite of all these efforts made by the government, ability to retain learners in schools to completion still remains a big challenge. This is the reason behind this current study.

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have also created a checklist of social approaches to regulation that could serve children's best interests to ensure they are retained to completion and for better academic performance in schools (ILO, 2010). Expanding educational opportunities workplace, offering support services for parents and their children, and working to create social norms against being out of school for the school going age especially in Suba West and Mbita Sub-Counties where this study was conducted.(Boateng, & Dako-Gyeke, 2022).The Teachers Service Commission Of Kenya has put in place several measures to help teachers attend to their duties by training them and through Teacher Mentorship programmes aimed at ensuring they remain in schools to assist the learners through the government support. Despite the best efforts by the government, retention, completion and quality academic performance remains a challenge. Many learners leave school without acquiring the most basic skills. Failure to complete a basic education cycle not only limits future opportunities for learners but also represents a significant drain on the limited resources that the government has put in place for provision of basic education (Ministry of Education, 2020). The Kenyan Government Capitation Grant (GCG) is an additional measure to enhance educational quality by relieving parents of the financial burden of paying school fees (Republic of Kenya, 2022).

Learner Capitation Grants are intended to provide schools with the necessary teaching and learning resources to enhance teaching and learning and to support learners in their basic educational needs. There are five basic obstacles that learners must overcome in order to obtain formal quality education According to Cooper, & Pugh (2020) high cost of education, poor learning conditions, and undervalued status of learners in society, conflict, and social exclusion are some of the obstacles which must be checked constantly to help educational institutions grow. While not all-inclusive, these difficulties are common in Kenya and many other nations. In essence, a well-coordinated education with proper funding can improve retention rates, completion rates and pupil academic performance in schools (Sawamura, 2020). Governments, the International Community, and other development organizations have so far concerted their efforts to concentrate on methods that would increase retention, completion and better academic performance in formal educational sectors. Such efforts should be keenly monitored and adequate job evaluation done to the assigned staff to ensure prudent resource utilization for optimal results. The current study noted some laps on the part of the government officials especially the audit section, which can result in resource wastage.

The heavy spending on operation and tuition in schools by different nations has concentrated on the provision of teaching and learning materials for learners with an aim of improving retention rates, completion rates and pupil academic performance in schools. This therefore justified the need as to why it was necessary to investigate the influence of learner capitation grant on completion rates, retention rates and academic performance in public primary schools especially in Suba West and Mbita Sub-Counties where this research was conducted. The study area is mainly composed of separate islands with different educational challenges, ranging from poor communication network, poor road network, difficult water transportation, inadequate data on completion rates and retention rates, poor topography, among others. The study realized that such harsh conditions also influence learner retention rates, completion rates and the eventual academic performance in schools. The study realized that poor network in most parts of the study area affect timely response to data required by relevant educational offices hence funding to the affected schools. This finally affects the smooth learning in schools.

Ndolo (2016) did a study on impact of free secondary education policy on primary to secondary education access, transition and academic performance where he found out that there was a positive strong relationship between free secondary education policy and transition rate. However, the study did not look at academic performance in public primary schools, which the current study addressed as a major gap in educational attainment of learners. This study addressed all the gaps and gave adequate recommendations. Most learners from around the fishing regions join other adults to engage in fishing activities for economic and social support (Monarcoda, 2012). Others also resort to commercial sex especially the young girls to obtain money to meet their individual daily needs despite the funding (Banks, Kuper, & Polack, 2017).This means retention and completion rates are still very low. Many schools in this study area have very low population of learners and according to the study. Majority of learners in this area do not complete their education due to factors ranging from socio-economic to health related challenges. This therefore calls for the need to find out the influence of government capitation on retention rates, completion rates and pupil academic performance to help avoid wastage of scarce government

resources in public primary schools in Suba West and Mbita sub counties, Homa bay county, Kenya. A gap the current study has adequately addressed.

Table 1: Kenya Certificate of Primary Education Performance in Suba South, Suba-West and Mbita Sub-Counties (2018 -2023)

Sub-County	2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Entry	Average Mark	Entry	Average Mark	Entry	Average Mark	Entry	Average Mark	Entry	Average Mark	Entry	Average Mark
Suba South	600	230	700	220	450	215	300	218	400	239	370	228
Suba West	679	248	714	247	674	248	742	253	643	252	700	251
Mbita	490	225	385	221	443	218	298	229	312	244	400	235
Overall Average Mark	**234**		**229**		**227**		**233**		**245**		**238**	

Source: Ministry of Education Sub-County Office, Mbita

From Table 1 it can be observed that learner academic performance was consistently below average for the last six years, despite government and society investment in education. Many factors do affect academic performance and the key one is financial resources. The government's initiative and society are always aimed at improving the academic performance. This justified the need to investigate the influence of learner capitation grants on academic performance using Suba West and Mbita Sub-Counties as the site for the study.

Synthesis of Literature on Influence of Learner Capitation Grant on Academic Performance of Pupils in Public Primary Schools

According to World Bank (2005) the provision of quality education is a critical tool in generating opportunities and benefits of social and economic development. Quality of education has over the year been measured by cognitive achievement in the form of exams results (Amphiah et al., 2023). Improving quality of education is a top priority of Kenya's education training sector as is indicated in the policy documents guiding the implementation of the education sectors strategic focus aimed at meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)in education. Currently the quality of performance in education system (CBE) is measured in terms of performance levels of learners in schools both through summative and formative assessments.

At the global level, Learner capitation grants play a critical role in shaping academic performance across different education systems. In Germany, per-pupil allocations provided by the Länder ensure that schools can maintain adequate teacher staffing levels and invest in professional development, particularly for language support programs targeting migrant students. This has been shown to improve literacy and integration outcomes (OECD, 2017). Capitation also supports sanitation and facility upkeep, reducing absenteeism due to illness, while subsidized meal programs in some municipalities enhance concentration and attendance (OECD, 2023). In the Netherlands, the weighted learner funding system allocates more resources to schools serving disadvantaged pupils. This enables smaller class sizes and additional instructional staff, which directly improves literacy and numeracy outcomes (OECD, 2017). Moreover, the policy of free textbooks funded through capitation reduces reliance on parental levies, ensuring equitable access to learning materials. While voluntary contributions exist, transparency rules prevent exclusion, thereby limiting inequities (OECD, 2023).Japan demonstrates the importance of capitation in sustaining universal access to high-quality teaching and learning materials. National and prefectural funding formulas guarantee standardized textbooks and equipment, which support mastery of the national curriculum (OECD, 2023). Capitation also underpins the universal school lunch program (kyūshoku), which has been linked to improved health, attention, and social cohesion among pupils (OECD, 2017). By minimizing reliance on extra levies, Japan ensures that core educational quality is not contingent on parental contributions.

In the United States, school finance reforms have shown that sustained increases in per pupil spending significantly improve test scores, graduation rates, and long-term earnings, especially for disadvantaged students

(Jackson et al., 2016). Title I funding, a form of weighted capitation, supports tutoring and intervention programs, while federal allocations for school meals improve attendance and behavior (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2019). However, reliance on local levies in some districts can exacerbate inequities, highlighting the importance of equalizing formulas to ensure fairness (OECD, 2017).Singapore employs a hybrid model where capitation grants are supplemented by the Edusave scheme, which provides every student with an account for enrichment and learning materials. This system ensures equitable access to ICT resources and extracurricular programs, strengthening overall academic performance (Ministry of Education Singapore, 2023). Targeted subsidies for meals under the Financial Assistance Scheme further support concentration and readiness to learn. Because core funding is strong, reliance on extra levies is minimized, preserving equity. According to UNESCO (2011), low levels of learning achievement in schools exist in school systems both in developing and developed countries. In California, teaching and learning materials were critical ingredients in good academic achievement. Textbooks and instructional materials were fundamental and essential because they were primary tools that schools used to provide learners with knowledge and skills they were expected to gain; hence, they contributed to better learner's academic achievement in schools. However, majority of schools fall short of providing for learning needs of their learners leading to poor academic performance in schools. Finally, in the United Kingdom, per pupil funding combined with the Pupil Premium grant provides schools with resources to support disadvantaged pupils. Evidence shows that when schools use these funds for evidence based interventions such as tutoring and teaching assistants, academic outcomes improve significantly (Education Endowment Foundation, 2021). Universal infant free school meals and means tested programs further enhance attendance and readiness to learn. While voluntary parental contributions exist, regulations prevent exclusion, ensuring that capitation remains the primary driver of educational quality (UK Department for Education, 2020). Across these systems, the influence of capitation grants is most evident in their ability to stabilize teacher staffing, provide equitable access to learning materials, reduce reliance on levies, and support whole child interventions such as sanitation and feeding programs. Where capitation is predictable, weighted for need, and paired with accountability, it consistently improves academic performance, particularly among disadvantaged pupils.

Continentally, Learner capitation grants are central to improving academic performance by ensuring schools can cover essential costs. In Australia, needs based per student funding formulas have allowed schools to stabilize teacher staffing and provide targeted literacy interventions, which improve foundational outcomes (OECD, 2017; OECD, 2023). Predictable grants also reduce reliance on voluntary levies, while operational budgets maintain sanitation and hygiene, lowering illness related absences (OECD, 2023). In Ghana, the capitation grant introduced in 2005/06 eliminated many school fees, increased enrollment, and provided resources for teaching materials and minor facility needs, which boosted attendance and classroom engagement (Awonong, 2018; Global Scientific Journal, 2020). Studies show that when funds are disbursed on time, schools can invest in remedial programs and teacher support, improving pupil performance (GH Educate, 2024). However, delays often force schools to impose extra levies, undermining equity (Awonong, 2018). In Malawi, capitation grants have helped schools purchase basic materials and reduce dependence on parental fees, which previously discouraged attendance. When combined with teacher deployment reforms and donor supported feeding programs, these grants improve early grade literacy and numeracy outcomes (UNESCO, 2020). School feeding programs, in particular, have been linked to higher attendance and concentration (OECD, 2017).

In Ethiopia, decentralized per pupil funding enables schools to buy learning materials, maintain sanitation, and support remedial programs, which reduce absenteeism and improve continuity of learning (UNESCO, 2020). Weighted allocations for disadvantaged groups allow schools to hire paraprofessionals and provide tutoring, strengthening learner performance outcomes (OECD, 2017). In Morocco, per learner funding supports textbook provision, teaching aids, and school rehabilitation, improving learning conditions and teacher effectiveness (UNESCO, 2020). Sanitation upgrades funded through capitation reduce illness related absences, while school feeding programs in rural areas increase participation and readiness to learn (OECD, 2017). In Togo, capitation grants finance basic materials and minor infrastructure, enabling teachers to maintain regular instruction and reduce classroom interruptions. Hygiene investments reduce absenteeism, while targeted meal programs improve concentration and attendance (UNESCO, 2020). Guardrails on levies are critical to prevent exclusion and ensure equity (OECD, 2017). In the Republic of the Congo, predictable per pupil funding allows schools to procure essential learning materials and maintain facilities, stabilizing instructional time and supporting teacher

effectiveness (UNESCO, 2020). Feeding programs, often supported by external partners, complement capitation by improving readiness to learn and reducing hunger related barriers (OECD, 2017).

Basic education report (2010) indicate that in South Africa learners academic performance improved by 7.2% in 2010 as compared to 2009.This was due to the introduction of free education in 2007. To address the challenges of universal basic education, the Ghanaian government launched two pilot; Primary Education Policy Initiatives in the 2004/05 academic year: The Capitation Grant Scheme (CG) and the School Feeding Program (SFP) (2019). These initiatives aimed to assist low-income parents in meeting the costs of primary education and to improve the nutrition of children, particularly low-income children, in order to facilitate academic achievement of learners in schools (Darling-Hammond, and Cook-Harvey, 2018). Across these systems, evidence shows that adequate, predictable, and needs-weighted capitation strengthens teaching quality, ensures materials, reduces harmful reliance on levies, and supports sanitation and feeding programs. These conditions increase attendance, instructional time, and engagement, translating into improved academic performance, especially for disadvantaged pupils (Jackson et al., 2016; OECD, 2017; OECD, 2023).Study conducted at the regional level indicates that Learner capitation grants cover teaching materials, minor repairs, learner assessments, and essential non-instructional inputs-shaping pupil performance by stabilizing classroom resources, reducing household cost barriers, and enabling targeted supports. Across Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya, recent evidence converges on four mechanisms: strengthening teacher effectiveness through materials and remedial programs, improving attendance via sanitation and feeding, lowering exclusion by curbing school levies, and protecting instructional time through better school climate and basic security. However, the current study noticed that schools still impose extra levies on learners affecting general school attendance and eventual learner academic outcome.

In Rwanda, capitation school grants were tied to enrollment and been used to purchase textbooks, basic ICT, and assessment materials, supporting the competency based curriculum and early grade literacy initiatives (World Bank, 2021; Ministry of Education Rwanda, 2022). Where grants are complemented by school based learning recovery and language support, teachers report smoother lesson delivery and higher pupil engagement, with associated improvements in foundational skills (Ministry of Education Rwanda, 2022). Expansion of home-grown school feeding programs—linking local procurement to school meals—has improved attendance and concentration in targeted districts, especially among vulnerable pupils (WFP, 2023). Sanitation upgrades and hygiene supplies funded through school operational budgets have reduced illness related absenteeism, increasing continuity of learning and better academic performance of pupils (UNESCO, 2020).Burundi's abolition of primary school fees and provision of per student operating funds have reduced financial barriers and helped schools secure core teaching materials, which in turn stabilize instructional routines and lesson pacing (UNICEF, 2021; UNESCO, 2020). In rural areas, the combination of basic grants with donor supported feeding and WASH improvements correlates with higher attendance and lower grade repetition, particularly for girls (UNICEF, 2021; WFP, 2023). Where capitation disbursements are delayed or insufficient, schools lean on small levies or PTA contributions, introducing inequities that can dampen performance gains; timely, predictable releases are central to impact as is the case in Kenyan schools according to the current study (UNESCO, 2020).

According to studies conducted in Uganda about Uganda's Universal Primary Education (UPE), capitation grants finance textbooks, exam costs, and minor repairs, and have been repeatedly associated with improved access and reduced household expenditures (Auditor General Uganda, 2023; UNESCO, 2020). Current audits indicate that while allocations are significant, late disbursement and price pressures can erode purchasing power, prompting some schools to seek extra contributions; stronger transparency and procurement support increase the proportion of funds spent on teaching and learning materials (Auditor General Uganda, 2023). When UPE grants are aligned with remedial programs and attendance monitoring, schools report better early grade academic performance in schools. School feeding in food insecure regions, supported by government and partners, improves attendance and classroom engagement hence good pupil academic performance (WFP, 2023).

In Tanzania, capitation grants introduced with fee abolition have financed purchase of textbooks, Teaching /learning materials, examinations, and minor maintenance, increasing material availability and reducing the need for parental levies (Twaweza, 2021; UNESCO, 2020). Recent school level evidence shows that adequate per pupil releases, combined with head-teacher management strategies, sustain lesson continuity, reduce interruptions due to shortages, and support catch-up programs for foundational skills (Ngalioma & Kumburu,

2024). Where grants are predictable, schools invest in WASH and simple security measures supervision, attendance tracking, and behavior supports—that protect instructional time. School feeding in priority areas further boosts attendance and concentration (WFP, 2023).Studies conducted by Nanda (2014) in India revealed that 37% of the total population across the world are illiterate. Despite the heavy spending in education the government of India has not succeeded in improving academic performance in schools. Nanda's study was on exploratory study. The current study was done by obtaining primary data through questionnaires, observation guide, documentary analysis which were very convenient to the researcher in obtaining crucial information for the study.

Kenya's Free Primary Education and Free Day Secondary Education capitation (disbursed via NEMIS) fund core inputs—textbooks, lab consumables, exams, utilities, and minor repairs—lowering household costs and curbing exclusion (Ministry of Education Kenya, 2023; World Bank, 2020). Studies and monitoring reports link timely, adequate disbursements to increased textbook-to-pupil ratios, improved lesson coverage, and better performance in foundational subjects; delays force schools to seek smaller levies, risking inequity especially in low income households. (World Bank, 2020; Ministry of Education Kenya, 2023). School feeding programs (national and county supported) are associated with higher attendance and concentration, especially in arid and semi-arid counties, while WASH investments reduce illness related absences (WFP, 2023; UNESCO, 2020). Under the competency based curriculum, capitation directed to TLMs and continuous assessment materials has supported teacher implementation and formative feedback loops (Ministry of Education Kenya, 2023).

Across the five systems, the pattern is clear: when capitation grants are adequate, needs weighted, and released on time, schools can prioritize teaching/learning materials, remedial supports, WASH, and feeding—inputs that raise attendance, time on-task, and engagement, translating into measurable gains in general academic performance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils (UNESCO, 2020; WFP, 2023; World Bank, 2021). Conversely, shortfalls or unpredictability push schools toward levies and fundraising, widening gaps; strengthening accountability, procurement, and evidence based spending maximizes the academic impact of capitation (Auditor General Uganda, 2023; Ngalioma & Kumburu, 2024). Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 noted that in order to meet the demands of the 21st century, education and training programmes must be of high quality to compete favorably with international standards (Republic of Kenya, 2005).This is a gap in education which has never been achieved. Sessional paper number 14 of 2012 seeks to reform education in line with vision 2030 ensure quality across all levels of basic education (Ministry of Education.2012).

According to vision 2030, education sector has to provide skills that will be required to steer Kenyans to the economic and social goals by improving quality at primary level of higher quality to compete favorably with international standards (Republic of Kenya, 2005). According to Vision 2030, education sector has to provide skills that will be required to steer Kenyans to the economic and social goals by improving quality performance at primary school levels. Good pupils academic performance means the learners will seek to contribute to the promotion of EFA goal number 6 on improving quality of education according to EFA global Monitoring team (2004). Studies conducted in the Lake Victoria regions of Kenya indicate that learner capitation grant is central to sustaining free primary and day secondary education. By providing schools with per pupil operational funds, the government reduces reliance on household contributions and ensures that essential costs—such as textbooks, examinations, utilities, and minor repairs—are covered. In Kisumu County, timely disbursement of capitation has been linked to improved textbook-to-pupil ratios and better exam performance. When funds arrive late, however, schools often resort to levies for exams or remedial programs, which can exclude vulnerable learners and undermine equity. Teachers report that when grants are directed toward early-grade readers and assessment materials, lesson delivery becomes smoother and pupils demonstrate stronger literacy and numeracy outcomes (Awange, 2022).

In Siaya County, capitation has reduced the burden of parental levies, allowing schools to focus resources on teaching and learning materials. Evidence shows that predictable funding enables schools to maintain exam readiness and remedial clubs, which improve performance in different primary grades. Where disbursements are delayed, schools sometimes impose voluntary contributions, but transparency and accountability mechanisms help safeguard equity (Ouma, 2025). In Migori County, capitation grants have lowered household costs for exams and textbooks, boosting attendance and syllabus coverage. Schools that use funds for remedial instruction and continuous assessment materials report stronger literacy and numeracy outcomes. Feeding programs in

semi-arid wards supported by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and different religious groups further enhance attendance and engagement, while sanitation investments funded through grants reduce absenteeism (UNESCO, 2020).Study in Homa Bay County, particularly in Mbita and Suba sub counties, faces unique challenges due to its islands—Rusinga, Mfangano, Takawiri, Remba, and Ngodhe. Transport costs for textbooks, exams, and maintenance are higher, and schools often struggle with logistics. Flexible use of capitation funds allows head teachers to pool orders and schedule deliveries with lake transport, reducing shortages and ensuring continuity of instruction. Feeding programs supported by capitation and external partners have been especially impactful in fishing communities, where food insecurity and child labor pressures affect attendance. These programs improve concentration and readiness to learn, while sanitation investments reduce illness related absences which influence academic outcome in schools (Wario & Aduda, 2022). Across these counties and islands, the evidence is consistent: when capitation grants are adequate, timely, and needs sensitive, they strengthen teacher effectiveness, ensure equitable access to learning materials, and reduce reliance on levies. Feeding and sanitation programs funded through capitation improve attendance and concentration, while flexible budgeting in island schools offsets logistical challenges. Conversely, delays or shortfalls in disbursement push schools toward levies and fundraising, widening inequities and undermining performance. Thus, the effectiveness of capitation in the Lake Victoria region depends not only on the amount allocated but also on the timeliness of release, accountability in spending, and integration with complementary programs such as school feeding and WASH.

Studies conducted by Ndolo 2016 found out that Free Secondary Education influenced students' academic performance in Mbita and Suba Sub-Counties. Free Secondary Education accounted for 31.2 and of variation in students' academic performance. The researcher noted that an increase in free secondary funding resulted to an increase in students' academic performance. Student academic performance varied in different regions and different categories of schools. The study revealed that influence was bigger in big schools (established schools) since they had superior infrastructure and were able to employ additional teachers on board of management terms to cushion against teacher shortages. This attracted bright students who were academically focused hence better academic performance in schools. Though this study majorly covered secondary schools. The current study was conducted in public primary schools and looked at the influence of learner capitation grant on pupil's academic performance.

Ndolo, Simatwa and Ayodo (2016) studied the impact of free secondary education policy on access to secondary school education in Kenya. A case study of Mbita and Suba Sub-Counties. This seemed not to be the case in Mbita and Suba sub counties, where Gross Enrolment Rates were low at 4948 (33%) and 3546 (25%) respectively for the 2014 against national Gross Enrolment rate of 47.8%. The transition rates from 2010 to 2014 were 39.4%, 41.2%, 40.4%, 54.5%, 59.2% for Mbita Sub county; 56.2%, 54.4%, 61.1% and 59.2% for Suba Sub county which were lower than the national transition rates of 68.9%, 69.4%, 68.4%, 76.8% and 80.4% for the same period while academic performance mean scores in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education for 2011 and 2014 were low at 5.0 and 5.1 respectively. The study involved the cohorts of students from the year 2008 to 2014, that is, the 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 cohorts. Analysis of the impact of Free Secondary Education policy on access to secondary school education showed that free secondary education policy was inextricably connected with access to secondary school education. It is clear that on average, one unit increase in Free Secondary Education funds increased access to secondary school education by 947.489 units in Mbita and Suba Sub counties, Kenya. The current study was done in public primary schools in Suba West and Mbita Sub-Counties which is the foundation for learning in secondary schools.

Late learner capitation and low funding significantly hinder academic performance by disrupting school operations, limiting access to essential resources, and demotivating both teachers and students. In Kenya, for instance, delays in the disbursement of capitation funds have led to schools struggling to pay non-teaching staff, procure learning materials, and maintain infrastructure. This financial instability forces school heads to send students home for fees or operate under constrained conditions, which directly affects learning outcomes (Nation, 2023). Moreover, low funding limits the ability of schools to invest in quality teaching aids, adequate classrooms, and co-curricular activities, all of which are crucial for holistic education. According to a study by the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA), underfunded schools often experience overcrowded

classrooms, high pupil-to-teacher ratios, and poor sanitation facilities, which negatively impact student concentration and health, thereby reducing academic achievement (KIPPRA, 2022).

The situation is particularly dire in marginalized areas, where delayed capitation exacerbates existing inequalities. A report by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) noted that in arid and semi-arid regions, schools with consistent and timely funding performed better in national examinations compared to those with erratic financial support (TSC, 2023). Late capitation and insufficient funding create systemic barriers that compromise the quality of education, widen inequality, and ultimately lower academic performance among learners.

The implementation of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003 and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) in 2008 marked a pivotal shift in Kenya's educational landscape. Central to these policies is the Learner Capitation Grant (LCG), a funding model where the government allocates financial resources based on student enrollment numbers. Whereas the grant was designed to increase access and equity, recent scholarship suggests its impact on academic performance varies significantly across different sub-counties due to unique geographic and socioeconomic challenges. The scenario is evident in Mbita, Mfangano and Rusinga Islands within the lake region where efficacy of these funds is often compromised by disbursement delays and high costs of living.

Nationally, the capitation grant has been credited with boosting enrollment rates, yet its direct correlation with academic performance remains complex. The funds are intended to cover tuition, instructional materials, and operational costs, theoretically creating a conducive learning environment. While access has improved, the quality of education has stagnated in many sub-counties because the grant amount has not kept pace with inflation (Orodho, et al., 2021). Furthermore, the timing of the funds is critical; when disbursements are delayed, school heads are often forced to accrue debt or limit the purchase of essential learning resources, which directly negatively impacts student assessment outcomes (Muthoni &Mbugua, 2022). For instance, In Mbita Sub-County, the influence of the capitation grant is heavily moderated by the region's socioeconomic context. Research indicates that while capitation has reduced the direct cost burden on parents, it has not fully leveled the playing field regarding academic performance. A study by Okoth and Nyerere (2023) highlights that schools in Mbita frequently struggle with high student-teacher ratios. Although the capitation grant covers tuition, it does not adequately provide for the employment of Board of Management (BoM) teachers needed to bridge the staffing gap. Consequently, Achieng and Oduor (2021) posit that despite the availability of funds for textbooks, the shortage of instructional guidance leads to average academic performance in national examinations. Moreover, delayed disbursements in Mbita often coincide with critical examination preparation periods, forcing administrators to operate on deficits that disrupt practical science lessons and internal assessments.

Odhiambo (2022) noted that the cost of transporting educational materials to Mfangano and Rusinga is significantly higher than on the mainland. As a result, the standard capitation allocated per child has a lower purchasing power in the islands. In most cases, administrators divert funds meant for quality assurance and basic logistical costs, hence reducing the resources available for direct academic improvement. On the same note, Rusinga Island has witnessed a disparity in infrastructure development compared to mainland schools. While the capitation grant includes a component for repair and maintenance, the corrosive effect of the lake environment on buildings means that schools in Rusinga spend a disproportionate amount of their funds on facility maintenance rather than academic resources (Ouma & Simatwa, 2020). This diversion of funds has been noted to contribute to a less conducive learning environment that is often less conducive to high academic achievement compared to schools in the interior of Mbita sub-county. Moreover, socio-cultural factors in these fishing communities often lead to absenteeism, and while capitation ensures a seat in class, it cannot buy student presence; thus, the funds are sometimes underutilized in terms of actual contact hours (Wanyama & Juma, 2023). In a nut shell, The correlation between capitation and performance is also contingent on managerial efficiency. Therefore, in a comparative analysis of sub-counties in the Nyanza region, Omolo and K'Okul (2023) found that schools in Mbita that adhered to strict procurement guidelines and had active Boards of Management utilized capitation funds more effectively to purchase revision materials, resulting into better mean grades. In conclusion, while the Learner Capitation Grant remains a fundamental pillar of education in Kenya, its influence on academic performance in Mbita, and Suba West sub counties is uneven. The standard capitation model does not sufficiently account for the geographical and logistical premiums associated with the island environments in Suba West (Takawiri, Mfangano, Remba) and Ngothe, Rusinga Islands in Mbita sub counties. Therefore, policy adjustments

such as a "hardship top-up" or differential unit cost allocation are necessary to prevent the dilution of grant purchasing power. This will hinder resource constraints thereby facilitating academic outcomes. In summary, there is inadequate information on influence of learner capitation grant on academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Suba West and Mbita Sub-Counties, a literature gap which the present study sought to fill.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was based on two theories namely; Resource Dependency Theory (RDT), by Salancik (1978) which postulate that human organizations are not self-sufficient and must acquire essential resources from external bodies to achieve the set objectives. In this case, the resource is learner capitation grant; and liberal Classical theory of equal opportunity by Rousseau (1712-1778) which postulates that the natural statesmen are born equal and personal qualities should not jeopardize social equality so long as society rewards people according to their status.

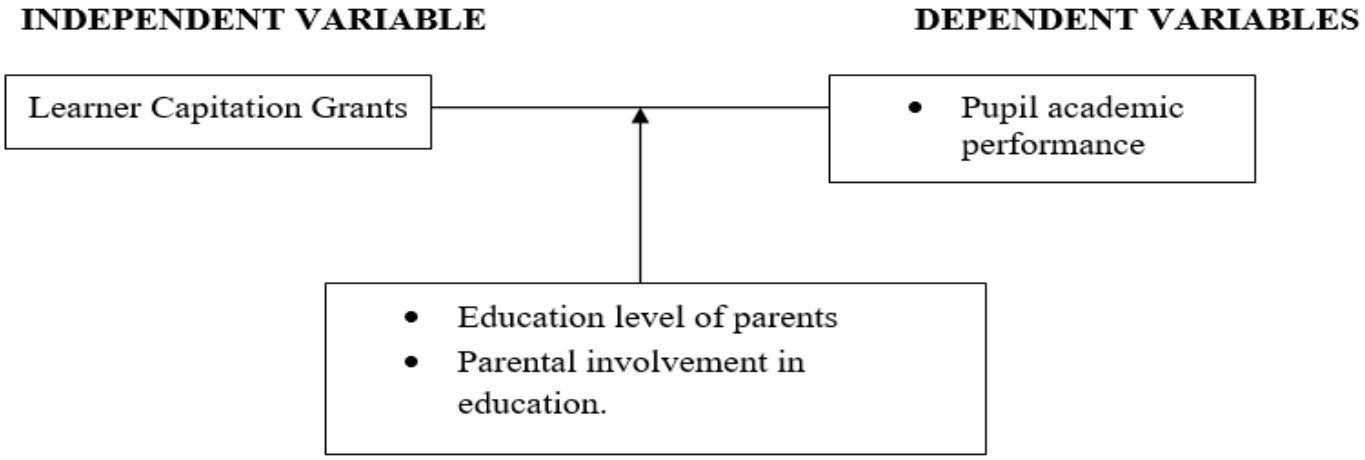

Figure 1: Influence of learner Capitation Grants on Pupil academic performance Pupils in Primary Schools

Rousseau (1712-1778) states that all people are created equal, born with the same moral and political rights. Social institutions such as schools should in some sense attempt to treat learners equally as they strive to achieve their educational goals and aspirations. The main concern of this theory is the provision of equal opportunity for all individuals since they are born with abilities, talents and given amount of capacity, which largely is inherited and cannot be substantially changed. Education is the greatest equalizer. The theory support provision of basic rights to all and seek to avoid discrimination. This enables individuals to pursue their own vision of life within the framework of the state law. The theories are relevant because the government has made a choice to invest in education for all learners in order to improve retention rates, completion rates and academic performance. The conceptual framework helped the researcher to focus on the variables of the study for optimal results. Provision of learner capitation grants is aimed at improving retention rates, completion rates and pupils academic performance. However, retention rates, completion rates and pupils academic performance are affected by educational level of parents, human and physical school resources, parents economic ability and other factors. Free Primary Education policy was looked at in terms of the money the government sends to schools for the cohorts 2017 to 2024.The conceptual framework helped the researchers to conceptualize the various variables involved in the study.

Research Objective

The research objective wasto determine the influence of learner capitation grants on pupil academic performance in public primary schools.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey and correlation research designs were used. Study population comprised of 110 Headteachers, 110 Deputy Headteachers, 1500 teachers, 2 Sub-County Directors, 2 Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer and 5 Curriculum Support Officers. Taro Yamane (1967) formula was used to get the sample sizes. That is: $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$ where:

n = Required sample size

N = Total population size

e = Margin of Error (0.05 for 95% confidence)

Purposive sampling was used to select Sub-County Directors, Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer and Curriculum Support Officers. Questionnaires, Interview Schedules, Observation Guides and document analysis were used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data was collected using closed items of questionnaires and document analysis guide while qualitative data was collected by use of interview schedules. Face and content validity of the instruments were determined by use of research experts in the faculty of education whose input was incorporated in the final instruments. Reliability of instruments were determined using Cronbach's alpha. The reliability coefficients of the instruments were 0.84, 0.81 and 0.79 for Headteachers, Deputy Head teachers and teachers questionnaires. Since these coefficients were greater than 0.70, the instruments were reliable. Quantitative data was analyzed using frequency counts, means and regression analysis. Qualitative data was transcribed and analyzed for content in emergent themes and sub-themes.

RESULTS

Demographic Information of Respondents

This section provides the characteristics of respondents in relation to gender, highest academic qualifications, years served as a teacher, time taken at the current work station, years served as Head teacher, Deputy Head teacher or teacher, professional qualifications, whether or not teachers, Deputy Head Teacher (DHT) or Head Teacher (HT) have undertaken professional fresher courses.

Head Teachers

The Headteacher's demographic information was based on gender, highest academic qualifications, years served as a teacher, time taken at the current workstation, years served as Head teacher, professional qualifications, whether or not the HT has undertaken professional fresher courses. The results were presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Headteachers

Category	Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	57	68.7
	Female	26	31.3
	Trans gender	0	0.00
	Total	**83**	**100.00**
Highest Academic Qualification	P1	0	0.00
	S1	0	0.00
	Diploma	27	32.5

	Degree	48	57.8
	Masters	6	7.2
	Others (PhD)	2	2.4
	Total	**83**	**100.00**
Highest Professional Qualification	B5	0	0.00
	C1	0	0.00
	C2	0	0.00
	C3	0	0.00
	C4	35	42.2
	C5	45	54.2
	D1	3	3.6
	Others	0	0.00
	Total	**83**	**100.0**
Head Teacher's Work Experience	6–10 Years	3	3.6
	11–15 Years	16	19.3
	16–20 Years	46	55.4
	21–25 Years	15	18.1
	26–30 Years	2	2.4
	Total	**82**	**98.8**
Refresher Course	Yes	83	100.0
	No	0	0.00
	Total	**83**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data, 2024

Key: P1 (Primary teacher 1), S1 (Secondary Teacher 1), B5-D1 (Professional Job groups equivalent to professional qualifications)

Table 1 shows that out of 83 HTs, 57(68.7%) were males while 26(31.3%) were females. This implies that more male teachers are promoted to headship positions as compared to females in Suba West and Mbita Sub-Counties. Considering highest academic qualifications of Headteachers, there was no Headteacher with either P1 or S1. However, 27 HTs (32.5%) had Diploma, 48(57.8%) had Degrees, 6(7.2%) had Masters while only 2 (2.4%) had PhDs. This shows that nearly all Headteachers have requisite academic trainings and hence are competent in undertaking their mandates as Headteachers of Suba West and Mbita Sub-Counties. Regarding highest professional qualifications, none of them were in job groups B5, C1, C2 or C3. However, 35 (42.2%) were in C4, 45 (54.2%) were in C5, 3 (3.6%) were in D1 while no Headteacher represented other categories of job groups. Therefore headteachers have the necessary experiences in the field of education. They have requisite skills to manage the primary schools within Suba West and Mbita Sub-Counties. Head Teachers' work experience indicated that 3 Headteacher had 6-10 years (3.6%), 16 Headteachers had 11-15 years (19.3%), 46 Headteachers had 16-20 years (55.4%), 15 Headteachers had 21-25 years (18.1%). However, 2 Headteachers (2.4%) had worked for a period between 26-30 years.

Head Teachers had attended refresher courses to improve their management and professional developments. The professional developments help Headteachers to improve on efficiency. Out of 84 Headteachers, all had attended fresher trainings. This again implies that Headteachers had necessary qualifications and updates in professional development issues and the current educational trends and demands as far as learner capitation are concerned.

Table 2: Demographic Information of Deputy Headteachers

Category	Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	52	69.3
	Female	23	30.7
	Trans gender	0	0.00
	Total	75	100.00

Highest Academic Qualification	P1	0	0.00
	S1	0	0.00
	Diploma	32	42.7
	Degree	35	46.7
	Masters	8	10.7
	Others (PhD)	0	0.00
	Total	75	100.00
Highest Professional Qualification	B5	0	0.00
	C1	11	14.7
	C2	16	21.3
	C3	12	16.0
	C4	33	44.0
	C5	3	4.0
	D1	0	0.00
	Others	0	0.00
	Total	75	100.0
Deputy Head Teacher's Work Experience	6–10 Years	11	14.7
	11–15 Years	23	30.7
	16–20 Years	14	18.7
	21–25 Years	23	30.7
	26–30 Years	4	5.3
	Total	75	100.0
Refresher Course	Yes	75	100.0
	No	0	0.00
	Total	75	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2024

Key: P1 (Primary teacher 1), S1 (Secondary Teacher 1), B5-D1 (Professional Job groups equivalent to professional qualifications)

Table 2 shows that out of 75 Deputy Head teachers (DHTs), 52 (69.3%) were males while 23 (30.7%) were females. However, there was no trans-gender. This implies that more male teachers are promoted to deputy headship positions as compared to males in Suba West and Mbita Sub-Counties. Considering highest academic qualifications of Deputy headteachers, there was no Deputy headteacher with either P1 or S1. However, 32 Deputy headteachers (42.7%) had Diploma, 35 (46.7%) had Degrees, 8 (10.7%) had Masters while none had PhD. This shows that nearly all Deputy headteachers have requisite academic trainings and hence are competent in undertaking their mandates as Deputy headteachers of Suba West and Mbita Sub-Counties. Regarding highest professional qualifications, none of the DHTs was in job group B5, 11 (14.7%) were in C1, 16 (21.3%) were in C2, 12 (16.0%) were in C3, 33 (44.0%) were in C4, 3 (4.0%) were in C5, none was in D1 and other categories of job groups. Therefore Headteachers have the necessary experiences in the field of education. They have requisite skills to manage the primary schools within Suba West and Mbita Sub-Counties. Deputy Head Teachers' work experience indicated that 11 Deputy headteachers (14.7%) had worked for a period between 6-10 years, 23 Deputy headteachers (30.7%) had worked for 11-15 years, 14 Deputy headteachers (18.7%) had worked for 16-20 years, 23 Deputy headteachers (30.7%) had worked for 21-25 years while only 4 Deputy headteachers (5.3%) had worked for 26-30 years.

Teachers

The demographic information was based on gender, highest academic qualifications, years served as a teacher, time taken at the current workstation, years served as teacher, professional qualifications, whether or not the teacher has undertaken professional fresher courses. Teachers' demographics were presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Demographic Information of Teachers

Category	Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	123	54.4
	Female	103	45.6
	Trans gender	0	0.00
	Total	226	100.00
Highest Academic Qualification	O level	1	0.4
	P1	135	59.7
	S1	1	0.4
	Diploma	36	15.9
	Degree	40	17.7
	Masters	13	5.8
	Others (PhD)	0	0.00
	Total	226	100.00
Highest Professional Qualification	B5	87	38.5
	C1	92	40.7
	C2	42	18.6
	C3	5	2.2
	C4	0	0.00
	C5	0	0.00
	D1	0	0.00
	Others	0	0.00
	Total	226	100.0
Teacher's Work Experience	0–5 Years	54	23.9
	6–10 Years	64	28.3
	11–15 Years	86	38.1
	16–20 Years	20	8.8
	21–25 Years	2	0.9
	Total	226	100.0
Refresher Course	Yes	209	92.5
	No	17	7.5
	Total	226	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2024

Key: P1 (Primary teacher 1), S1 (Secondary Teacher 1), B5-D1 (Professional Job groups equivalent to professional qualifications)

Table 3 shows that out of 226 teachers, 123 (54.4%) were males while 103 (45.6%) were females. However, there was no trans-gender. This implies that more female teachers are employed as primary school teachers as compared to males in Suba West and Mbita Sub-Counties. Considering highest academic qualifications of teachers, 1 teacher (0.4%) was O-level graduate, 135 teachers (59.7%) had P1, 1 teacher (0.4%) had S1 qualifications, 36 (15.9%) had diploma, 40 teachers (17.7%) had Degrees, 13 (5.8%) had Masters while none had PhD. Teachers' work experience indicated that there were 54 teachers (23.9) with 0-5 years, 64 teachers (28.3%) with 6-10 years of work experience, 86 teachers (38.1%) had worked for a period between 11-15 years, 20 teachers (8.8%) had worked for a period of 16-20 years, while 2 teachers (0.9%) had worked for 21-25 years. Regarding highest professional qualifications, 87 teachers (38.5%) were in job group B5, 92 (40.7%) were in C1, 42 (18.6%) were in C2, 5 (2.2%) were in C3, none were in C4 and above. The professional developments help teachers to improve on efficiency. However, 17 teachers (7.5%) had not attended fresher courses.

Research Objective

The research objective was todetermine the influence of learner capitation grant on academic performance of pupils in public primary schools.

In order to achieve this, respondents were probed to rate the influence of learner capitation grants on academic performance based on; infrastructure developed through capitation grants, teaching/learning resources acquired through capitation grants and other resources.

Infrastructure Developed Through Capitation Grants

In this category, respondents were asked to rate the influence of infrastructure developed through capitation grants on academic performance. The ratings were based on a scale of 1 to 5 where No Influence (1), Low Influence (2), Moderate Influence (3), High Influence (4), Very High Influence (5). The results were then descriptively analysed into Frequencies, Percentages and Means. The results were presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Influence of Infrastructure Developed through Capitation Grants on Academic Performance

Infrastructures	**RESPONDENTS**		**RATINGS**							**MR**	**OMR**
			NI 1	**LI 2**	**MI 3**	**HI 4**	**VHI 5**	**NR**	**T**		
Classrooms	HT	F	0	0	16	47	20	0	83	4.05	4.23
		%	0.0	0.0	19.3	56.6	24.1	0.0	100		
	DHT	F	0	0	22	46	7	0	75	3.80	
		%	0.0	0.0	29.3	61.3	9.3	0.0	100		
	T	F	0	0	1	32	190	3	223	4.85	
		%	0.0	0.0	0.4	14.2	84.1	98.7	98.7		
Library	H	F	0	0	9	53	19	2	81	4.12	4.24
		%	0.0	0.0	10.8	63.9	22.9	2.4	97.6		
	DHT	F	0	0	23	45	7	0	75	3.79	
		%	0.0	0.0	30.7	60.0	9.3	0.0	100		
	T	F	0	0	0	43	178	5	221	4.81	
		%	0.0	0.0	0.0	19.0	78.8	2.2	97.8		
Washrooms	HT	F	0	0	5	57	21	0	83	4.19	4.32
		%	0.0	0.0	6.0	68.7	25.3	0.0	100		
	DHT	F	0	1	10	56	8	0	75	3.79	
		%	0.0	1.3	13.3	74.7	10.7	0.0	100		
	T	F	0	0	1	41	181	3	223	4.81	
		%	0.0	0.0	0.4	18.1	80.1	1.3	98.7		
Play fields	HT	F	0	0	3	52	28	0	83	4.30	4.21
		%	0.0	0.0	3.6	62.7	33.7	0.0	100		
	DHT	F	0	1	11	55	8	0	75	3.93	
		%	0.0	1.3	14.7	73.3	10.7	0.0	100		
	T	F	0	3	35	57	127	4	222	4.39	
		%	0.0	1.3	15.5	25.2	56.2	1.8	98.2		
Staffroom	HT	F	0	1	5	47	30	0	83	4.28	

		%	0.0	1.2	6.0	56.6	36.1	0.0	100		
	DHT	F	0	1	17	51	6	0	75	3.83	4.01
		%	0.0	1.3	22.7	68.0	8.0	0.0	100		
	T	F	1	27	53	44	95	6	220	3.93	
		%	0.4	11.9	23.5	19.5	42.0	2.7	97.3		
School fence	HT	F	0	0	4	48	31	0	83	4.33	
		%	0.0	0.0	4.8	57.8	37.3	0.0	100		
	DHT	F	0	1	18	48	8	0	75	3.84	4.25
		%	0.0	1.3	24.0	64.0	10.7	0.0	100		
	T	F	1	1	10	69	140	5	221	4.57	
		%	0.4	0.4	4.4	30.5	61.9	2.2	97.8		
Overall Ratings	**HT**									**4.21**	
	DHT									**3.83**	**3.93**
	T									**3.76**	

Source: Field data, 2025

Key: HT=Head Teacher, DHT- Deputy Head Teacher,

T= Teacher, NR= Nil Response, T=Total.

MR=Mean Rating, OMR=Overall Mean Rating

Interpretation of Mean Ratings

1.00-1.44	No influence (NI)
1.45-2.44	Low influence (LI)
2.45-3.44	Moderate influence (MI)
3.45-4.44	High influence (HI)
4.45-5.00	Very high influence (VHI)

Table 4 shows the ratings of HTs, DHTs and Teachers on the influence of infrastructure developed through Learner Capitation Grants on pupils' academic performance as was signified by Overall Mean Rating of 3.93 which implies high influence. Further details which determined the influence of infrastructure developed through Learner Capitation Grants on pupils' academic performance were; HTs had the highest overall mean rating of 4.21 (out of the possible mean of 5.00) followed by DHTs (3.83), whereas Teachers had the lowest overall mean rating of 3.76. When HTs, DHTs and teachers were asked challenges they faced in their schools towards the utilization of the school infrastructure, majority of them indicated poor states of the existing infrastructures as the major challenges. The current dilapidated infrastructures may lead to poor academic performances. Table 4 further shows the Influence of Infrastructure Developed Through Capitation Grants on Academic Performance. Majority of the HTs (56.6%), DHTs (61.3%) and a few Teachers (14.2%) rated that classrooms have High Influence on pupils' academic performance. However, 24.1% of the HTs, 9.3% of the DHTs and 84.1% of Teachers noted that classrooms have Very High Influence on pupils' academic performance. Cumulatively, 80.7% of HTs, 70.6% of DHTs and 98.3% of Teachers confirmed that classrooms have High Influence on pupils' academic performance. Overall mean rating of the construct is 4.23 (out of the possible mean of 5.00).

In Table 4, majority of the HTs (63.9%), DHTs (60.0%) and a few Teachers (19.0%) rated that library has High Influence on pupils' academic performance. However, 22.9% of the HTs, 9.3% of the DHTs and 78.8% of Teachers noted that library has Very High Influence on pupils' academic performance. Cumulatively, 86.8% of HTs, 69.3% of DHTs and 97.8% of Teachers confirmed that library has High Influence on pupils' academic

performance. Overall, mean rating of the construct is 4.24 (out of the possible mean of 5.00). In Table 4, majority of the HTs (68.7%), DHTs (74.7%) and a few Teachers (18.1%) rated that washrooms have High Influence on pupils' academic performance. However, 25.3% of the HTs, 10.7% of the DHTs and 80.1% of Teachers noted that washrooms have Very High Influence on pupils' academic performance. Cumulatively, 94.0% of HTs, 85.4% of DHTs and 98.2% of Teachers confirmed that washrooms have High Influence on pupils' academic performance. Overall, mean rating of the construct is 4.32 (out of the possible mean of 5.00). In Table 4, majority of the HTs (62.7%), DHTs (73.3%) and a few Teachers (25.2%) rated that play fields have High Influence on pupils' academic performance. However, 33.7% of the HTs, 10.7% of the DHTs and 56.2% of Teachers noted that play fields have Very High Influence on pupils' academic performance. Cumulatively, 96.4% of HTs, 84% of DHTs and 81.4% of Teachers confirmed that play fields have High Influence on pupils' academic performance. Overall mean rating of the construct is 4.21 (out of the possible mean of 5.00).

In Table 4, majority of the HTs (56.6%), DHTs (68.0%) and a few Teachers (19.5%) rated that staffroom has High Influence on pupils' academic performance. However, 36.1% of the HTs, 8.0% of the DHTs and 42.0% of Teachers noted that staffroom has Very High Influence on pupils' academic performance. Cumulatively, 92.7% of HTs, 76% of DHTs and 61.5% of Teachers confirmed that staffroom has High Influence on pupils' academic performance. Overall, mean rating of the construct was 4.01 (out of the possible mean of 5.00). In Table 4.12, majority of the HTs (57.8%), DHTs (64.0%) and a few Teachers (30.5%) rated that school security has High Influence on pupils' academic performance. However, 37.3% of the HTs, 10.7% of the DHTs and 61.9% of Teachers noted that school security has Very High Influence on pupils' academic performance. Cumulatively, 95.1% of HTs, 74.7% of DHTs and 92.4% of Teachers confirmed that school security has High Influence on pupils' academic performance. Overall, mean rating of the construct was 4.25 (out of the possible mean of 5.00).

Teaching/Learning Resources Acquired Through Capitation Grants

In this category, respondents were asked to rate the influence of teaching/learning resources acquired through capitation grants on academic performance. The ratings were based on a scale of 1 to 5 where No Influence (1), Low Influence (2), Moderate Influence (3), High Influence (4), Very High Influence (5). The results were then descriptively analysed into Frequencies, Percentages and Means. The results were presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Influence of Teaching/Learning Resources Acquired Through Capitation Grants on Academic Performance

Capitation Grants	RESPONDENTS			RATINGS						MR	OMR
			NI 1	LI 2	MI 3	HI 4	VHI 5	NR	T		
Pupil textbooks	HT	F	0	0	14	55	12	2	81	3.98	4.16
		%	0.0	0.0	16.9	66.3	14.5	2.4	97.6		
	DHT	F	0	1	21	46	6	1	74	3.77	
		%	0.0	1.3	28.0	61.3	8.0	1.3	98.7		
	T	F	0	0	2	55	165	4	222	4.73	
		%	0.0	0.0	0.9	24.3	73.0	1.8	98.2		
Teacher reference books	H	F	0	1	3	59	18	2	81	4.15	4.06
		%	0.0	1.2	3.6	71.1	21.7	2.4	97.6		
	DHT	F	0	0	8	58	8	1	74	4.00	
		%	0.0	0.0	10.7	77.3	10.7	1.3	98.7		
	T	F	0	8	68	57	89	4	222	4.02	
		%	0.0	3.5	30.1	25.2	39.4	1.8	98.2		
Stationary	HT	F	0	0	2	58	21	2	81	3.72	4.17
		%	0.0	0.0	2.4	69.9	25.3	2.4	97.6		
	DHT	F	0	0	10	49	15	1	74	4.07	

		%	0.0	0.0	13.3	65.3	20.0	1.3	98.7		
	T	F	0	0	3	55	164	4	222	4.73	
		%	0.0	0.0	1.3	24.3	72.6	1.8	98.2		
Overall Ratings	**HT**									**3.95**	
	DHT									**3.95**	**4.13**
	T									**4.49**	

Source: Field data, 2025

Key: HT=Head Teacher, DHT- Deputy Head Teacher,

T= Teacher, NR= Nil Response, T=Total.

MR=Mean Rating, OMR=Overall Mean Rating

Interpretation of Mean Ratings

1.00-1.44	No influence (NI)
1.45-2.44	Low influence (LI)
2.45-3.44	Moderate influence (MI)
3.45-4.44	High influence (HI)
4.45-5.00	Very high influence (VHI)

Table 5 shows the ratings of HTs, DHTs and Teachers on the influence of teaching/ learning resources on pupils' academic performance as was signified by Overall Mean Rating of 4.13. Further details which determined the influence of Teaching/Learning Resources on pupils' academic performance were; Teachers had the highest overall mean rating of 4.49 (out of the possible mean of 5.00) followed by both HTs and DHTs at 3.95.Table 5 shows the Influence of Teaching/Learning Resources Acquired through Capitation Grants on Academic Performance. Majority of the HTs (66.3%), DHTs (61.3%) and a few Teachers (24.3%) rated that pupil textbooks have High Influence on pupils' academic performance. However, 14.5% of the HTs, 8.0% of the DHTs and 73.0% of Teachers noted that pupil textbooks have Very High Influence on pupils' academic performance. Cumulatively, 80.8% of HTs, 69.3% of DHTs and 97.3% of Teachers confirmed that pupil textbooks have High Influence on pupils' academic performance. Overall mean rating of the construct is 4.16 (out of the possible mean of 5.00). In Table 5, majority of the HTs (71.1%), DHTs (77.3%) and a few Teachers (25.2%) rated that teacher reference books have High Influence on pupils' academic performance. However, 21.7% of the HTs, 10.7% of the DHTs and 39.4% of Teachers noted that teacher reference books have Very High Influence on pupils' academic performance. Cumulatively, 92.8% of HTs, 88.0% of DHTs and 64.6% of Teachers confirmed that teacher reference books have High Influence on pupils' academic performance. In Table 5, majority of the HTs (69.9%), DHTs (65.3%) and a few Teachers (24.3%) rated that stationary have High Influence on pupils' academic performance. However, 25.3% of the HTs, 20.0% of the DHTs and 72.6% of Teachers noted that stationary have Very High Influence on pupils' academic performance. Cumulatively, 95.2% of HTs, 85.3% of DHTs and 96.9% of Teachers confirmed that stationary had High Influence on pupils' academic performance.

To confirm the influence learner capitation grants on academic performance of pupils, regression analysis was computed using data on learner capitation grants Table 6 and data on pupils' academic performance (Table 7)

Table 6: Learner Capitation Grants Received in Suba West and Mbita Sub-Counties for the years 2019-2024

Amount (Thousands Ksh.)	Public Primary Schools	
	f	%
200-299	60	12.22
300-399	101	20.56
400-499	141	28.72
500-599	111	22.61
600-699	78	15.89
Total	**491**	**100.00**

From Table 6, it can be noted that schools received learner capitation grants that varied from Ksh. 200,000 to 699, 000 depending on learner population in the school.

Table 7: Pupils Academic performance in Public Primary Schools in Suba West and Mbita Sub-Counties for the Cohort 2024

LEARNING AREAS	ENROLMENT	LEVEL OF PEERFORMANCE			
		EE	ME	AE	BE
English	**491**	43	120	144	184
Kiswahili	**491**	49	111	151	180
Mathematics	**491**	56	112	157	166
Integrated Science	**491**	54	97	159	181
Agriculture	**491**	53	106	151	181
Home Science	**491**	57	107	145	182
Physical and Health Education	**491**	56	115	145	175
Social Studies	**491**	56	113	153	169
Art	**491**	61	112	144	174
Music	**491**	69	106	143	173
Christian Religious Education	**491**	80	105	136	170

Interpretation of Academic Performance:

Descriptor	Score
Exceeding Expectations (EE)	4
Meeting Expectations (ME)	3
Approaching Expectations (AE)	2
Below Expectations (BE)	1

From Table 7, it can be observed that pupils academic performance varied from BE (1) to EE (4).

To determine the influence of learner capitation grants on pupil academic performance in public primary schools, regression analysis was computed using data on learner capitation grants received by schools and academic performance of pupils in respective schools (Tables 6 and 7). The results of the regression analyses were as shown in Tables 8, 9 and 10.

Table 8: Regression Analysis on influence of learner capitation on pupils academic performance in public primary schools in Suba West and Mbita Sub counties

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.828[a]	.686	.608	.03369	.686	8.744	1	88	.042

a. Predictors: (Constant), Learner Capitation Grants
b. Dependent Variable: Academic performance of pupils

From Table 8, it can be noted that learner capitation grant accounted for 60.8 of academic performance of pupils in public primary schools. The other 39.2% was due to other factors that were not subject of this study. This was signified by the p-value of 0.042 which was less than the set p-value of 0.05. This means that learner capitation grants had a high influence on pupils' academic performance.

To confirm as to whether learner capitation grants were significant predictors of learner academic performance, Analysis of Variance was computed (Table 9).

Table 9: Analysis of Variance on influence of learner capitation grants on pupil academic performance

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.010	1	.010	8.744	.042[b]
	Residual	.005	88	.001		
	Total	.014	89			

a) Dependent Variable: Academic performance of Pupils
b) Predictors: (Constant),Learner Capitation Grants

From Table 9, it can be observed that learner capitation grants were significant predictors of academic performance of pupils in public primary schools as signified by [F (1, 88) = 8.744, p = 0.042]. This means that learner capitation grants can be relied upon to explain the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools as the p- value was less than 0.05. .

To confirm the influence of learner capitation grants on pupil academic performance in public primary schools, linear regression analysis was computed. The results were as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Linear Regression Analysis of the influence of learner capitation grants on pupil academic performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.060	.585		1.811	.144
	Amount	.003	.001	.828	2.957	.042

Dependent Variable: Academic Performance of Pupils

Regression Equation $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 - \varepsilon$
From Table 9, can be observed that for every one unit increase in learner capitation grants, academic performance improved by 0.003 units as signified by the coefficient 0.003. The Regression Equation is $Y = 1.060 + 0.003X_1$. The regression equation can used to predict academic performance of pupils in public primary schools.

DISCUSSION

Learner capitation grants are critical in enhancement of education at all levels as they enhance learner enrolment in academic performance. This is possible when the grants are used prudently to provide educational resources for learning. This however does not mean that challenges are not faced in the utilization of these grants. While providing educational resources, it is necessary conditions that educational resources should be of high quality and maintained so that they add value to learning activities that culminate into better performance. When Head teachers, Deputy Head Teachers and teachers were asked challenges they faced in their schools towards the utilization of the school infrastructure, majority of them indicated poor states of the existing infrastructures as

the major challenges. The current dilapidated infrastructures may lead to poor academic performances. The quantitative findings support that of Mwendwa (2011) who found that availability of physical facilities and teacher professional Development all influenced academic performance of learners in schools. This was supported by a Curriculum Support Officer (CSO) who stated that improved academic achievement is associated with more adequate classroom sizes, improved locker spaces, proper stocking of libraries, adequate science laboratories, adequate computer laboratories, adequacy of sanitation facilities, adequate water supply, adequate toilet facilities, good pupil to teacher ratio and a learner friendly learning environment. The sentiments by one of Curriculum Support Officer illustrated how infrastructure aids academic performance by providing requisite resources as in the verbatim quotes. The quantitative findings concur with Munyi (2015) that FPE had brought about large classes which adversely affected the teaching learning processes. During an interview with Sub County Director of Education who indicated that Classrooms have a significant impact on student academic performance. A well-designed and managed classroom environment can positively influence student learning, motivation, and overall achievement. Factors such as the physical space, social dynamics, and instructional practices within a classroom that are provided for learner capitation grants can all contribute to a student's educational success. The views of the Sub County Director of Education showed that conducive classrooms provide proper learning environment and hence better performances.

The quantitative findings support the sentiments of Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers that Libraries courtesy of learner capitation grants significantly impact academic performance by providing a supportive environment for studying, access to resources, and opportunities to develop good study habits. They also help students develop essential skills like information literacy and critical thinking, which are crucial for academic success and future endeavors. Students who utilize library resources and services often show improved academic performance, including improved standardized test scores. The sentiments of the Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer revealed that resources in the library could be utilized by learners to their academic advantages. All the achievements were due to provision of learner capitation grants.

According to Munda (2010), poor facilities are strongly associated with student truancy and higher rates of suspensions and failure to complete studies in various stages, but adequate learning facilities and good acoustics help students remain ready to learn, students' ability to remain focused; retain information, hence good academic achievement by the end of the academic course. It is for this reason that learner capitation grants were introduced. Due to the importance of washrooms in schools in terms of sanitation needs of learners, it is necessary for the government to provide enough standard washrooms in all schools. This was also noted by SQASO that Clean and well-maintained washrooms could positively impact overall performance in various settings, including workplaces and schools, by improving hygiene, reducing absenteeism, and enhancing user comfort and satisfaction. Poor sanitation, conversely, can lead to health problems, reduced attendance, and negative perceptions. The statement of the Sub County Quality Assurance Officer postulate the importance of well-maintained washrooms. When learners use such rooms, they do not contact various diseases leading to healthy coexistence in schools. This in turn translate into academic performance. Since learner capitation grants are not considered to be adequate, it is important that other financiers like parents and non Governmental Organizations should be enlisted to provide support.

In line with the quantitative findings, Bell's (2021) concluded that quality and adequacy school infrastructure appears to be the motivating factor in providing quality education. Good academic performance therefore is central in academic achievement at various levels. This was further supported by a SCDE 2 that Playgrounds could help develop motor skills, balance, agility, and coordination, while natural environments offer benefits like improved motor development, diverse play behavior, and attention restoration. In sports, field conditions, including surface types and maintenance, can affect biomechanics, performance, and injury risk, especially in team sports. The statements of SCDE 2 elaborates that play grounds are used for holistic development of learners. Therefore, every school deserves the fields for recreational activities.The sentiments were supported by CSO 4 that a school staffroom significantly impacts teacher and student performance. A conducive staffroom environment, free from excessive noise and distractions, allows teachers to recharge, plan lessons, and engage more effectively with students. Conversely, a poorly managed staffroom can lead to teacher stress, burnout, and reduced classroom engagement, ultimately affecting student learning. The quantitative findings support that of

SCDE 1 who said School security provides protection to learners hence enhancing their concentration in class. If learners were scared, they would not concentrate in class. They would not pass well in examinations.When the respondents were asked challenges, they face in utilization of the resources and the influence of the challenges on academic performance, the most outstanding challenge was pegged on inadequacy and irrelevancy of the resources. Since the resources were found to be inadequate or inconsistent with Competency Based Curriculum (CBC), they led to poor academic performance schools with low enrolment. It should be noted that schools that receive higher capitation grants performs better as they had more educational resources courtesy of the economies of scale. This means that schools with larger population received more learner capitation grants that were used to provide the educational resources that were required for acquiring the desired knowledge and skills that culminated into better performance.

The quantitative findings support Munda (2010) that if there is enough money to purchase instructional materials to aid in teaching and learning practices within the school, the quality of education will be improved. During the interview, CSO 2 said that Teaching and learning resources, such as textbooks, materials, and technology, significantly influence student performance by enhancing engagement, motivation, and learning productivity. They enable teachers to deliver instruction that is more effective, support student understanding, and foster a positive learning environment, ultimately leading to improved academic outcomes. The statement suggests that teaching without resources is exposing learners to memorization hence affecting memory, learning and retention. Learner capitation grants indeed enable schools to procure educational resources that impact positively on learner performance. This was supported by echoes of SQASO that Books significantly impact performance, particularly in academics, by improving cognitive skills, such as memory, focus, and comprehension. Reading also enhances emotional intelligence and social skills, leading to better relationships and well-being. Furthermore, reading can contribute to professional development by expanding knowledge, updating industry trends, and improving overall performance. Books expand memory through learning experiences. That is why teachers must always have reference materials while teaching. Reference books also provide alternative sources of learning contents (OECD, 2012). Equally, Sub County Director of Education alluded that Good stationery, like notebooks and planners, helps students organize their thoughts, notes, and study materials, leading to better retention and study habits. Having the necessary supplies, such as pens and pencils, can instill confidence and motivation in students, making them feel prepared and equipped for their studies.

CONCLUSION

Learner capitation grants influence academic performance of pupils in public primary schools. This is attributed to the fact that educational resources for implementation of the school curriculum are availed and used accordingly. It is against this background that the government has over the years increased learner capitation grant and sustained their disbursement to schools. Essentially, they are used to provide educational resources that are geared towards provision of quality education as signified by better academic performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Heads of school should ensure that learner capitation grants are well budgeted for in order to provide the required teaching learning resources.
2. The learner capitation grants should be used to repair and maintain teaching /learning resources which natural undergo wear and tear.
3. The heads of schools should always provide accurate data to the Ministry of Education so as to receive adequate learner capitation grants.
4. The Heads of schools should account for learner capitation grants they receive year by year and respond to audit queries competently. In this respect educational resources provided, should be optimally used in the enhancement of learner academic performance.
5. The Ministry of Education should ensure that learner capitation grants are disbursed to schools in time so that the learner academic needs are catered for timely.

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