

# FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PERFORMANCE OF KISWAHILI IN KCSE IN DISTRICT IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT World over, language is considered part and parcel of life in the society. It is through it we share and exchange our values, attitudes and aspirations as bearers of culture and makers of future culture. It is a forceful instrument for giving people their identity. Kiswahili as a national language found a language rising steadily to international status has been facing a myriad of challenges in education in Kenya. Many factors have hindered good performance in the language in the national examinations. In Embu District students have been performing unsatisfactorily in Kiswahili Kenya Certificate of Secondary examination, which was the prime concern for this study. The study investigated the factors that inhibit good performance in Kiswahili in secondary schools. Specific factors considered in the study included the attitude of learners, availability and use of teaching resources, interference by other languages as well as the type, size and category of schools. The literature was broadly reviewed under; the status of Kiswahili language nationally and internationally, drawbacks to good performance in Kiswahili and their influence on Kiswahili performance. The study used ex post facto research design. Two sets of questionnaire were used as research instruments, their reliability and validity established during the pilot study and subsequent consultations with lecturers in the Faculty of Education and Faculty of Social Sciences. The instruments' reliability was found to be 0.73 and 0.83 for the teachers' and students' questionnaires respectively. A target population of 101 Kiswahili teachers and 304 students was used in the study. From this population, a sample size of 88 Kiswahili teachers and 350 students participated in the study. Purposive sampling was used to select the Kiswahili teachers while stratified random sampling and simple random sampling were respectively used to select the students in the study. The questionnaire return rate was 88.0% and 97.0% for Kiswahili teachers' and students' questionnaires respectively. The data obtained was analysed using descriptive statistics. Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation were used to answer research questions 1, 5 and 6. For research questions 2, 3 and 4 the chi-square test was used for analysis. The 0.05 level of confidence was used as the standard for establishing relationship between variables. If the calculated value was found to be higher than the critical value, then this showed significant relationship existed between variables. The study identified factors that inhibit good performance in Kiswahili in KCSE as: negative attitude by learners, inadequate teaching resources, inappropriate teaching approaches and inadequate number of lessons allocated for Kiswahili. In addition the study revealed that there was no significant relationship between Kiswahili performance and learners age and gender, school type, category or size, home background and learners first language. However, a significant relationship was found to exist between Kiswahili performance and learning Kiswahili as a national language, career development and use of other languages. Based on the findings, the study recommended that strategies be laid down to improve Kiswahili performance. The envisaged strategies should aim at the factors that inhibit good performance in Kiswahili.