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PERCEPTIONS OF PRE-SERVICE BACHELOR OF EDUCATION (ARTS) STUDENTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

The study used Ex post facto research design to find out Pre-Service Bachelor of Education (Arts) degree teachers' perceptions on the Internal and External Education Environmental Factors that influence high school students' academic performance. Internal factors are those within the institution that have a direct influence on the students' academic performance; and, the external factors are those outside the institution but can affect the students' academic performance, if not well managed. The research was carried out at Kikuyu Campus, University of Nairobi. Data was collected using a self-report response questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics and analysis of variance. The results indicated that learning resources, effective teaching and assessment are the most important attributes in the internal factor, while family size and home environment are the most critical attributes in the external factor. The findings seemed to indicate that the internal factors have the highest influence on students' academic performance as compared to external factors. The findings have implications on Pre-Service teacher education in universities and on curriculum implementation.

Keywords: internal factors, external factors, education environment, academic performance, assessment. .

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Introduction

Education is one of the acknowledged qualities of an individual that aids not only in achieving desired goals but also in contributing to the community and nation's growth[2]. Education environment contribute greatly in the achievement of the future goals of the students[3]. Education is any knowledge which an individual achieved either formal, informal or non-formal which helps the individual to distinguish between any situations the individual finds himself or herself[4]. According to the findings, the school environment and teachers' expectations of students have a significant impact on student achievement[5]. Teachers working in poor school environment lack the basic learning facilities; have low expectations from their students that will result to poor students' academic performance[6]. The quality of an educational system depends greatly on the teachers' qualifications, teaching experience, competency and dedication[7]. Teachers are facilitators impacting pupils' understanding of principles[8]. All schools strongly emphasis the academic performance and educational attainment in every aspect of personal and professional life of the students, because emotional intelligence of an individual determines the success of an organization[9]. Research has also pointed out that the psychosocial atmosphere in the classroom differs depending on the type of school, including co-educational and single-sex institutions[10]. Regardless of the necessity of such research, investigations on special needs students who provide education to people with disabilities are also required[11]. Special education is intended to give students with impairments with a learning environment in which they can pursue their education. Individuals' ability to appropriately process information in a manner that will allows the information to be learned and kept may be hampered by suboptimal environmental conditions at school, work, or at home[12].

Review of literature

The factors that influence students' academic performance have been categorized as internal education system-based and external to the education system-based environment factors.

Internal Education Environment Factors

Internal factors are key aspects within the institution that have the tendency of influencing students' academic performance. These are identified as Academic Professionalism and Approachability; Learning Resources; Effective Teaching; Language Proficiency; and, Assessment.

Academic Professionalism and Approachability have been given prominence for quite a while. The professionalism and approachable attitude of teachers, is critical in the process of influencing students' academic performance. Teachers are renowned as a source of knowledge. They need to be approachable to the students in terms of the problems and difficulties they encounter, for proper solutions and guidance addressing those problems and any other challenges13.

Learning Resources present in diverse ways, key include: -

The place where the encounter between the students and the teachers takes place. The physical conditions on the classroom like seating accommodation, light, temperature, ventilation and other facilities are of concern to the authorities[14]. A suitable classroom environment will increase students' enthusiasm in studying and make them more likely to concentrate on the teacher's presentation. Library Facilities offer a unique opportunity in the school

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environment. Students' use of the library has an impact on their performance, particularly for students who belong to the deprived, marginalized, and socioeconomically challenging portions of society, who rely heavily on library resources for their education. Therefore, a well-equipped library will positively influence their education[15].

Laboratory Facilities exist to meet what **r**esearch findings have indicated that students remember what they see more than what they hear[16]. The meaning attached to this is that knowledge gained by laboratory activity is retained for a long time in the minds of humans. Because what one hears cannot easily be forgotten, hence one sees can easily be remembered and that is what they do understand. Therefore, the education environment should be able to provide laboratories that will influence students' academic performance. Teaching is the process of imparting relevant knowledge, cultivating expected new confidence, and changing pupils' attitudes and behaviours. An effective teacher masters the numerous strategies and procedures that are appropriate for various sorts of students in any educational environment, there by influences the academic performance of the students [17].

If any student has issues in understanding the language been used in the academic process it becomes a big challenge to them, because language is one among the main factors that has so much influence on the success of a student[18]. Proficiency in the language of instruction and examination is the most critical element that influences students' accomplishment, because if students have good communication skills and a firm command of the language then their learning efficiency will improve[19].

Communication skills boost students' achievement, because it is a characteristic that is positively linked to the students' performance in open learning[20]. Assessment is a continuous process that involves four factors: the teacher, the student, the evaluation, and the situation[21]. It is strongly believed that teacher and student interaction is a fundamental aspect of teaching and evaluation[22]. A poor understanding of the assessment standards prevents teachers from performing adequately and appropriate on the students' work. As a result, this situation is likely to raise uncertainty and create mistrust among parents and various parties towards the reporting of teachers' assessment. Moreover, the quality of the evaluation may be distinctly questionable, too.

External education environment factors are outside the institution but have strong relationship with the education environment, which if neglected can impact seriously affect students' academic performance. These are identified as Home Environment; Role of Parents; Motivation; and, Family Size.

Home Environment is distinctly marked by the family house. The house has an impact on an individual because parents are the first socialising agents in a child's life; therefore, location and the type of home have a greater influence on the student[23]. Accordingly, there is a general understanding about the impact of the home environment on student's academic success. The role of parents has also been underscored. The parents are quick to notice the weakness and strength of their children and smart to take responsibility for providing help[24]. Parent's socio-economic condition, for instance professional qualification, income and occupation, is also linked to a child's

academic performance[25]. As a result, pupils whose parents have a high socioeconomic position will tend to perform better than students whose parents' socioeconomic status is low[26].

Research shows that motivation guides a learner to have a definite goal, direct the learner appropriately and helps to achieve a set goal [27]. It influences the learner because it gives satisfaction to do more, since the more the motivation the better the learning. Lack of motivation leads to lack of interest, excitement, and dedication to the learning process, which as well may result in low academic accomplishment[28]. Students belonging to a small family size with outstanding social economic background will perform better than those students from a large family size with outstanding social economic backgrounds[29,30].

Significance of the Study

Understanding the education environment will help both the education authorities, parents and students in diverse ways. The education authorities will be able to identify the weakness and strength of the institution. The parents will be able to make decision as to which institution to enrol their children and students will have the assurance of getting a stable and secured job after graduation. Therefore, this research work will technically analyse the internal and external factors in the education environment that will lead to a successful students' academic achievement.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the most critical internal and external education environment factors.

2. To determine which of the elements, internal and external, has the greatest influence on students' academic success.

3. Hypotheses

H_1: There is no significant difference the internal factors and the high school students' academic performance

H_2: There is no significant difference the external factors and the high school students' academic performance

Methodology

The researchers conducted an exploratory research design to assess students' evaluation skills for acquiring a better knowledge about the education environment; by exploring students' perception on education environment factors that influence academic performance. The study was carried out at Kikuyu Campus. One hundred and eighty (180) students were chosen from all the departments at the ccampus for the study, using simple random sampling technique. Based on previous literature reviews gathered, a structured questionnaire was designed with five points Likert scale to collect primary data. The questionnaire that was used was specifically developed in view of the uniformity in the direction of the questions. All study respondents were required to answer the same statements and respondents provided answers to all the questions with greater flexibility[31]. Further, the approach had the ability of gathering data quickly as it was administered in person[32]. The questionnaire had two sections. The first section sought to collect demographic information of respondents. The second section had twenty-seven statements and one open-ended questions designed to capture the insight of the students in terms of internal factors, external factors and academic performance. The

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measuring tool was set on a Likert scale, specifically designed to measure the perception of the students by rating their agreement on statement, "5" "Strongly agreed" to "1" "Strongly disagreed."

Collection of Information

Primary data was collected from the students in the college by using structured questionnaire and secondary data from literature reviews of previous researches related to the study. Only 150 questionnaires were completely filled and returned out of 180 questionnaires administered to the **Demographic Data Analysis**

Respondents' Department

respondents, for measuring the students' perception on the education environment.

Data Analysis

Frequency tables with graphs were used to analyze the demographic data and objective one, while objective two was analyze using descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis at 0.05 level of significant.

Table 1: Respondents by their departments and their respective percentage composition.

Departments	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Geography	37	24.7	24.7	24.7
History & Govt.	44	29.3	29.3	54.0
Religious Educ.	19	12.7	12.7	66.7
Business & Econ.	14	9.3	9.3	76.0
Phys. &Sports Educ.	9	6.0	6.0	82.0
Literature	27		18.0	100.0
Total	**150**	18.0 **100.0**	**100.0**	**-**

Source: Survey Data May, 2021

According to figure 1, it was discovered that a larger number of the respondents were from History and Government department with 44(29.3%) followed by Geography department with 37(24.7%); 27(18%), 19(12.7%), 14(9.3%) and 9(6%) were for Languages, Religious Education, Business Education and Economics and Physical and Sports Education departments respectively.

Level of Education

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Table2: Shows the frequency of levels of education of respondents

Frequency professionalism	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative per cent Academic	
Learning Resources	32	21.33	21.33	21.33
Effective Teaching	44	29.34	29.34 50.67	
Academic Proffessionalism 36	24	24	74.67	
Language proficiency.	5	3.33	3.33	78
Assessment.	33	22	22	100
Total	**150**	**100**	**100**	

Source: Survey Data May, 2021

Objective1a.

internal factors: To identify the most critical internal and external education environment factors that influence high school students' academic performance:
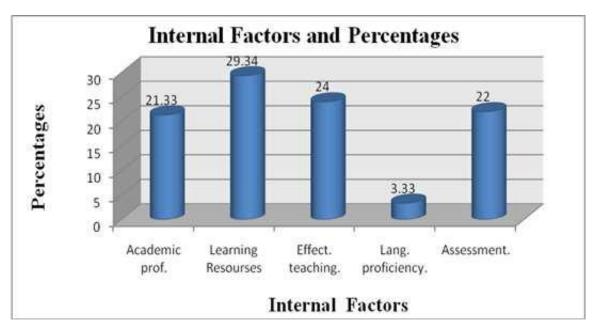

Figure 3: The percentages of the internal education environment factors.

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According to the figure 3, learning resources has the highest percentage (29.34%) among the internal education environment factors that influence academic performance of students, followed by effective teaching with 24%, next by assessment 22%, academic professionalism 21.33%, and language proficiency 3.33%. Therefore, according to objective one, learning resources is the most critical internal factor positively influencing students' academic performance.

Analysis of Objective1b.

External factors: To identify the most critical external factor that influence high school students' academic performance

Table 4: Frequency of the external education environment factors

External Factors	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Home environment.	40	26.67	26.67	26.67
Role of parent.	31	20.67	20.67	47.34
Motivation.	35	23.33	23.33	70.67
Family size.	44	29.33	29.33	100
Total	**150**	**100**	**100**	

Source: Survey Data May, 2021

Table 4 revealed that 29.33% of the respondents rated family size as the most important external education environment factor that affect students' academic performance, next home environment 26.67%, motivation 23.33% and role of parent 20.67% respectively. According to objective two, it was confirmed that family size was the most critical external factor.

Analysis of Objective Two

Table 5: Reliability of the scale of the research instrument

Statistics on Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.746	16

All of the items in Table 5 have Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.746, higher than 0.70, indicating that the questionnaire was extremely reliable.

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Table 6: shows the descriptive statistics of the internal and external factors
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Academic Perf.	150	2.80	5.00	3.8907	.46780
Internal Factor	150	2.29	4.57	3.9801	.60314
External Factor	150	2.25	5.00	3.4912	.38797
Valid N (listwise)	150				

The findings in table 6 revealed that, internal and external education environment factors have Means of 3.9801 and 3.4912, Standard deviations of 0.60314 and 0.38797 respectively, indicates a strong positive relationship with education environment. The proximity of the difference between the mean and standard deviation of each factor, as well as the deviation between the factors summed towards means and standard deviations, confirms all of this.

The internal and external education environment factors are used to analyze Students' academic achievement. Multiple regression analysis (comprise of model summary, ANOVA and Coefficient) was used because "it is a reliable method of identifying which factor among the factors (Internal and External factor) that has the greatest influence, matters most, which one can be ignored besides the independency rate of variables that impact with one another".

Analysis of Multiple Regression Coefficients

Table 7: Model summary of regression analysis

Summary of the Model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
		.015		
1	.122[a]		.002	.46745

a. Predictors: (Constant), External Factor, Internal Factor

b. Dependent Variable: Academic performance

Table 7 illustrates that "R" determines the quality of the dependent variable's prediction, with a "R" value of 0.122 indicating a 12.2% positive prediction level. The "R2" score of 0.015 indicates that the dependent variable has a very low variability that can be clarified using independent

variables. Nevertheless, "Adjusted R^2" indicates the percentage of variance in academic achievement as measured by independent variables. Therefore, adjusted R^2 of 0.002 specifies a zero percent accountancy but a positive variation between the independents variables.

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Table 8: Shows the statistical analysis of variance

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.486	2	.243	1.112	.000[b]
	Residual	32.121	147	.219		
	Total	32.607	149			

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), External Factor, Internal Factor

The analysis of variance in table 8 revealed that, the mean square is achieved by dividing the Sum of Squares by the corresponding df (degree of freedom). However, F-ratio been the main concern in this table is used to verify whether the regression model is a good fit for the data. Because the p-value is less than 0.05, the independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable, as shown in the table. $F(2, 147) = 1.112$, hence, the regression model is a good fit of the data.

Table 9: Shows the outcome of regression coefficient analysis Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.656 .139	.380		9.619	.000
	Internal Factor		.103	.115	1.352	.008
	External Factor	.065	.066	.084	.980	.009

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

Table 9 shows the value that indicates individual contribution of the predictors to the model, and the relationship between the students' academic performance and each predictor. If the value is positive, then relationship between the predictor and the outcome will be positive, where as a negative value represents a negative relationship. When all other independent factors are maintained constant, the unstandardized coefficient shows how much the dependent variable fluctuates with independent variables.

According to regression equation:

$$AP = a + IF\ x_1 + EF\ x_2 \ldots\ldots (1)$$

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Where:

AP = Academic Performance, a = Constant, IF = Internal Factor and EF = External Factor.

Therefore $AP = 3.656 + 0.139x_1 + 0.065x_2$………. (2).

Equation 2 reveals that if the internal factor increases by one unit, there will be a corresponding increase of 0.139 on students' academic performance keeping all other variables constant. "**B**" under unstandardized coefficient indicates positive values both internal and external factors. The implication is that there is a direct relationship for internal and external factor on high school students' academic performance as perceived by pre-service graduate teachers at Kikuyu campus, University of Nairobi. It was also revealed on the model that the internal factor causes 13.9% variation on students' academic performance in the positive direction, and significant p-value less than 0.05. Hence H_1 failed to be rejected as stated hence had a positive influence on the internal factor in addition to students' academic performance. Again, the external factor causes 6.5% variation positively and significant p- value less than 0.05,

therefore H_2 was also failed to be rejected. According to the study, external factors have a favourable influence on pupils' academic achievement. In the model, the t- value for the regression coefficient is used to evaluate if the internal and external factors are significant predictors on the high school students' academic performance. The results of the t- value confirmed that, internal factor (t= 1.352; 0.008 < 0.05), External factor (t= 0.980; 0.009 < 0.05) because their p-values are less than 0.05, the factors are statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Beta (β) result under standardized coefficient in table 9 shows the influence of internal factor and external factor. It can be contingent that the internal factor (β= 0.115) has the highest influence than the external factor (β= 0.084).

Suggestions for Open Ended Question

The following are the suggestions which the students highlighted for the improvement of the education environment for effective academic performance. The table below shows the frequencies and percentages of the responses received from 150 respondents.

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Table 10: Shows percentages of respondents' suggestions

No	Responses(N=150)	Frequency	percent	Valid percent	cumulative percent
1	There should be well equipped library, laboratory and classroom with needed learning materials	51	34	34	34
2	There should be highly experienced, qualified, honest, dedicated teachers	23	15	15	49
3	The compound should be spacious, clean, well taking care-of.	13	9	9	58
4	The students suggested that teachers should be punctual, effective in teaching and waste no time	36	24	24	82
5	All forms of assessment should be given fix date to the knowing of the students well before the assessment date.	27	18	18	100
	Total	**150**	**100**	**100**	**-**

Source; Survey Data May, 2021

According table 10, majority (34%) of the respondents suggested well equipped library, laboratory and classroom with appropriate learning materials, followed by 24% respondents suggested instructors who were punctual, effective in teaching and managing time, 18% suggested that assessment should be well coordinated in the interest of the students, 15% emphasis that the teachers should be highly experienced, qualified, honest, dedicated, and 9% suggested that the high school institutions should be spacious, clean, well taken care-of, in order to influence students' academic performance.

The most important suggestions gave by students for influencing students are: well equipped library, laboratory and classrooms; lecturers should be punctual, teach effectively and assessment should be done at the appropriate time in a conducive atmosphere.

Discussion

It was discovered that in the internal factors, learning resources (classroom, library and laboratory) was highly rated by respondent for influencing high school students' academic performance. Because if the institutions had well equipped classrooms, libraries and laboratories, the students' academic performance would be favourably influenced. This was in agreement with previous research findings [33,34,35]. Followed by effective teaching, meaning if the teachers are highly committed, punctual and effectively teach the students what they are expected to be learning, their academic performance will be definitely influence as also confirmed in other findings[36]. Assessment is third rated internal factor, that if teachers did accurate and appropriates assessment of the students it would positively influence their performance. But if they had poor assessment standards, the

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quality of the evaluation would be questioned hence negatively influence students' academic performance. In the external factors, family size was the most highly rated as having influence on high school students' academic performance. Because a small family size with a strong socio-economic status would influence high school students' academic performance greatly than a large family size with a strong socioeconomic status[37]. Next, home environment with extended family that is located in a deprived area, peer group pressure would negatively influence students' academic performance is implied[38].

Conclusion

For an education environment to influence students' academic performance, learning resources, effective teaching, assessment, family size and home environment should be highly considered. The teachers who are dedicated, punctual and honest, have high experience in teaching and can manage time should be for reward. Well equipped libraries, laboratories, classroom and internet facility for the improvement of the education environment, should be made available in high schools for both students and teachers' utilization.

In view of the findings of the research, it is suggested that similar research can be conducted in educational institutions.

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