

# Assessing the Factors Affecting Students Academic Performances in Secondary Schools (A Case Study of Six Secondary Schools in Kenema City)

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## ABSTRACT

The study did an investigation on factors that affect students' academic performances in secondary schools in Kenema City. The study was guides by research objectives to bring out the factors affecting students' academic performance in secondary schools.It also focused on the services of guidance and counseling on students' academic performances in secondary schools. The study employed qualitative research design and the instruments were interviews conducted, focused group discussion and other documentaries were used in the data collection. The findings revealed that many students could not master the English (LO1) and had poor knowledge of some vocabularies used in various subjects. They had weak English capacity to the extent of failing to make good and logical sentences in English. The poor capability in English has limited their ability to understand concepts in various disciplines like geography, physics and chemistry. The result also showed that with the exception of art text books, science text books were not enough in Kenema Secondary Schools. This limited the effective learning of various disciplines in physics. The research further indicated that the schools were experiencing the problems of science on one hand and the interaction during learning in the class room. Schools were observed to have skipped formative evaluation of students because of high cost of stationaries. Lastly, the result showed that many schools had no trained and qualified or expert counselors to counsel pupils in their academic pursuit. It further indicated that even if students were pretending to learn, they lost interest between many hours of known academic activities like chatting on emails, smartphones, computer laptops andthis gave poor concentration in their studies. Summary, conclusions and recommendation were part of the study.

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## INTRODUCTION

School, colleges and universities will have no worth without student. Students are the most essential asset for any educational institute. The social and economic development of the country is directly linked with students' performance (academic achievement) which plays an important role in producing the best quality graduates who will become great leaders and improve manpower for the country thus responsible for the country's economic and social development. Academic achievement is an apparent phenomenon in many developing countries like Sierra Leone since is measured in final examination, whereby success is measured by academic performance or how well students meet standard set out by the West Africa Examination Council and the institute itself. Student's performance at the level of secondary has the strong impact on other levels of higher and tertiary education.

A number of studies have been done to identify and analyze the numerous factors that affect students' academic performance in various centers of learning. Their findings identify students' effort, previous schooling, parents' family income, self-motivation, age of student, learning preferences, class attendance, and entry qualification as factors that have a significant effect on the students' academic performance in various settings. Parental involvement is another factor that has been consistently related to a child's increase in academic performance. This research covers how communication skills affect students' academic performance, the status of teaching/learning facilities, students' academic performance and how the lack of guidance and counseling services affect students' academic performance. The concept of secondary education is the third level of education in which the students are enrolled after successful completion of their primary school education. Students shall spend six years of studies in secondary education.

The curriculum of secondary school education consists of a number of optional plus core and compulsory subjects. All schools offer core and compulsory subjects in form one to three, subjects include: mathematics, English, Integrated science and social studies. The optional subjects in form one to three include: Home Economics, religious moral education, creative practical Arts, Business studies, Physical Health Education, French, and for the senior sector we have three streams: Arts, Science, and commercial and the core subject offered in this area are mathematics and English language. Ministry of education outlined seven objectives of secondary education in Sierra Leone as follows:

- To consolidate and broaden the scope of baseline ideas, knowledge, skills and principals acquire and developed at the primary:
- To enhance further development and appreciation of national unity identity and ethic, personal integrity, respect for and readiness to work human rights, cultural and moral values, customs, traditions, and responsibilities and obligation:
- To promote the development of competency in linguistics, ability and effective use of communication skills in English and in at least one foreign language
- To provide opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding in prescribed or selected fields of study

- To prepare students for tertiary and higher education, vocational, technical and professional training;
- To inoculate a sense and ability for self-study, self-confidence and self-advancement in new frontiers of science and technology, academic and occupational knowledge and skills; and to prepare students to join the world of work.

The government of Sierra Leone saw the importance of developing secondary as entry point to producing citizens who can compete in the free market economy. In spite of the effort made by the Government through the ministry of education there is an increase rate from primary schools to secondary, but still there is problem in quality of education provided to the students. There evidence is shown by the decline in the students' academic performance. According to Galabawa et al (2008) there is deterioration of secondary education in community schools, poor method of instruction that fosters rote learning, lack or absence of laboratories and other facilities in schools. Therefore, analysis of secondary school learning environment may help to identify specific issues related to learning environment to student that need to be address to improve academic performance of students in ordinary certificate examinations. Many researches have been done about the different factors that affect the students' academic performance in secondary schools. There are two types of factors that affect the students' academic performance which are the internal and external classroom factors ( students competence in English, Class size, English text books, class test results, learning facilities available, homework, location of the class, complexity of the course material, teachers' role in the class, technology used and examinations system. The External classroom factors include extracurricular activities, family problems, work and financial, social and other domestic problem.

Studies have shown that students' performance depend on many factors such learning facilities, age and gender differences and many other that can affect student performance. Studies carried out by UNICEF in the area of language in Sierra Leone pointed out that language should be taken into account as an important factor in the total structure of education because it involves the total mental capacity of the child. In another study talked about the relation between proficiency in the language of instruction, on the educational performance of students in schools. Another research conducted in 2013 that was commissioned by Gbamaja to find out the actual situation in the schools in relation to the factors affecting students' academic performances. This gave a detailed account of the extent to which secondary school students' knowledge of English had deteriorated. This is one of the very first studies that provided documentary evidence of the language situation which complaints had been raised about. It confirmed the alarm that had been raised about the existence of a serious language of instruction problem in secondary schools, also found that the most important factor which positively supports effect on students' competence is English.

The guidance from the parents and the teachers indirectly affect the performance of the students'. Emmanuel Conteh, who has worked as a biology teacher in Kenema city secondary schools for many years, admit: "I personally was compelled to switch to Krio by a sense of helplessness born of inability to make students understand the subject matter by using English. (Conteh Emmanuel, 2001). The time

the learners are taking to learn in the classroom and how efficient the teachers perform in schools are all a matter of concern.. The performance of the student is also affected by communication skills: it is possible to see communication as variable which may be positively related to performance of the student in learning Kamara (2003) found that students' performance is significantly correlated with satisfaction with academic environment and the facilities of library, computer lab and other important facilities in the institution. With regard to background variables, he found a positive effect of high school performance and school performance and school achievement; he found no statistical evidence of significant association between family income levels and academic performance of the student.

It was found out that the member of educated homes will be educated and their impact on school is positive, for professional development as it is essential for student learning. The proper use of the facilities provided by the student, a good match between students' learning style positively affect the students' performance, as Pakistan held the view that the student performances are linked with the use of library and the level of their parental education. The use of library positively affects the student performance. The academic environment is the effective variable for students and positive relationship with fathers' education and grade level

#### STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Performance in public schools is something which everyone expects to be of higher quality because of the role the sector plays to provide service to the community. It is certain that those who failed to perform better cannot contribute well to the human recourse and economic growth because they do not have the skills needed. Despite the importance, this has not been implemented effectively as many public schools still lack improved performance. This is alarming and it indicates that performances in schools are poor. The poor achievements among public secondary students in Kenema city reflect superficial and temporary knowledge. In last decade, achievements in examination in public secondary school in kenema city inclusive have been very poor.. The poor achievements among public secondary students in Kenema city reflect superficial and temporary knowledge. In last decade, achievements in examination in public secondary school in Kenema city inclusive have not been encouraging at all.

#### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of the: study was to assess the factor affecting students' academic performance in secondary schools in kenema city. The study intends to investigate the factors responsible for poor academic performance of students such as low ability to use English to communication well in the lessons. This is very useful feedback to curriculum planners to review the proper use of language in teaching in secondary schools.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study was confined to public secondary schools in Kenema city. The private school was not included because they would not be open to share confidential information. However, every effort was made to ensure that sampling used was adequate to collect information required for drawing conclusions from the respondents. The study would provide feedback on the status of teaching and learning facilities such as, chemicals, textbooks and laboratory equipment. The feedback will guide the ministry of education to improve on its resource allocation in secondary schools aiming at improving the quality of education in schools. The study will also provide feedback on the status of guidance and counseling as a component needed to support students' growth through effective use of time, decision making hence good performance among secondary school students. Finally the study expects to bring out useful insights on which to build on, modify or improve the ways of teaching/ and learning in the Sierra Leonean context.

## OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The study intended to achieve the following specific objectives:

To access the factors affecting student's performance in secondary schools in Kenema city and

to examine effectiveness of teaching and learning facilities such as text books and laboratory equipment on students academic performances in secondary schools in Kenema city to examine the roles of guidance and counseling services and its effects the academic performances of students in secondary schools in Kenema city.

## METHODOLOGY

The study intended to assess factors affecting students' academic performance of secondary schools in Kenema city. The research investigated the experiences in-depth the causative factors of students and the poor performances in secondary schools. Students were assessed as to what extent they are comfortable with teaching/learning environment and classroom setups.

The Study was conducted in Kenema city and it involved six 6 secondary schools namely; Methodist Secondary School, Ahmadiyya Secondary school Holy Rosary Secondary School, Ansarul Islamic secondary school, Holy Trinity secondary school and Community initiative Academy secondary school. A target populations of 300 respondents were used for the study. The researcher used simple random sampling for the categories to determine the respondents among the students. Gay (1996), states that for a descriptive research a sample of 10-20% of population is sufficient for reliable findings.

Population should have at least one thing in common (Komboetal, 2006). However, a sample is a subset of people, items, or events from a larger population are collected and analyzed to make inferences, this study used the experience of 6 education officers 6 Heads of Secondary Schools, six (6) parents, 30

teachers that is 5 from each school chosen and 252 students ,42 from each of the six schools made up the 300 respondents. These respondents would give enough data for a researcher to analyze the findings (Patton et al, 2002).

The study employed the focused discussion. The focused group discussion is another nature of the interview that is used in collecting data for the investigation. Different sets of questions were developed for the different categories of respondents. Interviews were also conducted for different sets of respondents. The advantage of this method is that it allows those who cannot initiate discussion to contribute after observing the contribution of their colleagues in the group. The method again can generate a lot of data in a shorter time than other method like interview and questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively

Bagdon and Bicklen (1998) hold that the interview uses oral method to collect data between the interviewer and the interviewees, the interview can be open or structured. The interview usually has power to use the probes to allow the interviewer to get more depth information than any other method like questionnaires. This research focused on the methodology that was used in the study. It dealt with research design, location of the student, target population, sampling techniques and sample size, research instruments, validity instruments, reliability of instruments, data collection procedures and ethical considerations.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The data are presented in three themes. The first of them is the effect of English on the academic performance of students in secondary schools, second the effects of the teaching and learning resource on the academic achievement of students and last the effects of counseling practice on the students' academic performance.

### ENGLISH ABILITY ON STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCES IN SIX SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The interview held in the Holy Rosary Secondary school, Holy Trinity, Ansarul Islamic Methodist and Ahmadiyya secondary school indicated that the school teachers were using English as language of instruction (LOI) but in many cases the students were not comfortable in the vocabularies used and they were not mastering the language. This made them miss many concepts in the lesson. One agriculture teacher remarked during the interview that he is getting problem to encourage students to take science because they fear the agriculture terminologies used in the lesson. This also make them perform poorly in the internal examination as well as national examinations. The students were of the same opinion with the observation of the teacher on the challenge of LOI. The students said that the agriculture is getting tough; one needs to know many topics e.g. soil, soil texture, soil structure, soil leaching and many terminologies used in chemistry e.g. gases, interpret the result using the practical manuals. Given low level of English the students do not perform well in their final examinations. One teacher who once

marked the examination at WASSCE showed this example as evidence of the problem of LOI. The question was asked for the student. Make a sentence using a word: book. Many students could not construct and write a logical sentence on the use of a book. An object used for reading in the classroom. One of the students wrote: mother gives me a book to buy chips. Here, the word book was conceived by a student as money.

The parent who seemed to be educated had this to say in relation to the English as LOI: the schools are in confusion. They insist to use English in their teaching but a majority of the students are not capable of using English in their learning so there is problem in learning. It shows that the students can do better if they are taught in their mother tongue but the ministry is still neglecting this fact.

The teacher who teaches English as subject said that many students are not capable to speak English despite of some effort the school use. They cannot use tenses correctly they cannot make good and logical sentences. But mind that in all subjects they are asked questions in English. What would you expect the performance of those students to be, it is a failure; because they cannot write good and correct English. If they cannot write the tenses correctly it is doubt if they are also able to understand well the demand of the questions.

Another history teacher said to pass history one has to know how put down some factors and discuss the question depending on what exactly one was asked. But because the students are not capable of the English language they fail to comprehend even the demand of the questions. For example, a question can be asked to state the effects of the scramble and partition of Africa, then, one fails and states the reasons for the scramble and partition of Africa. The effects and reasons are two different terminologies in history.

One student who was involved in the focused group discussion explained this with regard to the English as LOI. The subject like Geography requires one to read and understand the geography terminologies. Example the volcanic features, the land formation feature and the atmospheric features and the regional geography feature like agriculture and population. Given our low English it becomes difficult to follow the textbook and finally you are not motivated to go on reading the text because you don't comprehend what is presented in the text.

The teacher at Holy Rosary secondary school explained that the school put down some rules to ensure that the students are developing the needed skills in using English. So the students are encouraged to speak English when they need services from the teachers. We have however not succeeded because even some teachers are breaking the rules by allowing the use of Krio in the classrooms and when servicing the students. This limits the students' understanding as there is mixing of languages.

#### EFFECTS OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCE ON THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS--TEXT BOOKS

The interview results held in these secondary schools indicated that the schools had some resources for teaching like textbooks. The teachers said that the schools have many arts textbooks like those of

teaching government, geography. However the teachers remarked that the textbooks for teaching science subjects like physics and chemistry and computer science are not enough. The teachers further explained some of the problems of textbooks at the schools:

The Ministry of Education usually received some funds for the schools development. Nowadays the funds are not coming regularly. The schools are in serious shortage of funds and the schools cannot purchase the textbooks for the students to use in their learning, either the parent do not understand if the students are to buy the textbooks using their own funds.

A parent living in Dauda town community when asked to give his opinion on the challenge of the school resources and how they affect the performance, had this to say: I observe the students taking the private study without textbooks and this makes me worry if they are seriously learning and getting the concepts of the subject. What I see they do is to use notes written by their fellow student whom also may have not passed the examination because of the same poor system of learning.

The student who was about to take final SSS3 examination at Ahmadiyya secondary school in 2018 remarked by saying that their school is struggling to assist the students to do better in their examination. However, the school has the library room but the books are not their so it is used as the study room instead of resource room.

## SCIENCE LABORATORIES AND THE EFFECT OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ON STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Many of the schools in kenema town have laboratories but not well equip for those doing science practicals. This corresponds to the national movement engendered by the ministry of education that every senior school must have the science laboratory to assist the students to learn science effectively. Despite of this move the progress of the science laboratories was not promising as a school like Methodist secondary school in kenema despite the fact that the school had completed a part of the; the laboratories was seen as a big hall and not in any way used by the students to conduct practicals

One student at Holy Rosary secondary school explained that: the students who opted for science subject are forced to choose the alternative practical subject. To us this is not a good opportunity to learn science by seeing, observing the specimen and recording the results; as this is in hypothetical model.

The principal at Methodist secondary school remarked that the schools are using both the allocated funds and the community contribution to make sure that the science laboratories are completed. We are not yet their but we are typing. As we are waiting; the science students are affected because they cannot do the practical in the laboratories and the chance for them to interact with the chemicals, use equipment and specimen as part of the science drills is limited. This has a greater impact in the way the students' perform the science subject at our school.

## CLASSROOMS CONGESTIONS AND THE STUDENT LEARNING IN KENEMA SECONDARY SCHOOLS

In a course of doing interview with the teachers the Ahmadiyya secondary school the research was given chance to observe the classroom teachings. The status of the classrooms was not able accommodate a big number of the students. This problem was observed and it was noted in all classrooms from SSS one to SSS three. The teacher said that when there are larger numbers of students, it is not easy for the teacher to manage the classroom and follow up the stages of teaching effectively, as there is not chance and time to attend to all students in the classroom. There is no learning here the teacher ended her remarks. The student at Methodist secondary school showed the dissatisfaction with the number of the students in their classroom. He said we are studying in difficult situation, the classroom are not having enough spaces. The big number forces the school to have congested classroom. During learning the teacher cannot attend all questions asked by students when they need clarification about a certain issue or concepts in academic. This is not good to us. My parents are planning to transfer me to another school.

## EFFECTS OF STATIONERIES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCES OF STUDENTS IN KENEMA SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The focus group discussion held at Holy Rosary secondary school generated that the data on the issues of stationeries and its effects on the academic performance. The discussion revealed that many currently the schools stationeries are very expensive. For example one realm cost 250,000 Leone. To prepare midterm test which are typed and printed (need of toners) in a computer you need more than twenty realms and several

The effects of English as language of instruction (LOI) capacity among student on the academic achievement of student. The English capacity among student and academic Achievement / performance The interview held in kenema showed that a majority of the student were not capable if using English as a language of learning (LOI). The problem manifested its self with the problem of many learners failing to master vocabularies used in various subject taught in secondary school e.g Geography and physics. This problem of failure to master the vocabularies used in those subject limited them to understand basic concept taught in those subject. For instance, Learners said: They had problem with understanding technologies with physical geography (Vulcan city), Atmospheric composition and Regional Geography (Agriculture and population ). No doubt this observation extend the finding established that many learners were failing to perform well in Geography in SSS3 in Methodist, because they were not comfortable or clear with many Geography concept e.g. Physical Geography

The research further showed that students who had reached SSS Four and set for National Examination in English , some could not make a correct sentence using simple word like “BOOK”. The student conceived wrongly, the word book to be money. So, the student constructed a sentence as follows: Mother gave me a book to buy chips ” . This is very serious problem of

vocabulary understanding. One would accept that the candidate had learnt this terminology / word from early classes of SSS One (1) to SSS two (2). So if asked, could make good and correct sentence like: “ My sister lost my book”, our teacher taught chemistry by using his book “, “The school which perform well in SSS3 examination in 2010 were given book for mathematic ” The above finding raised this question that if a candidate fails to write a simple English sentence how could he/she manage to write an essay of history or compose a story from given series of picture in the English subject. It is Obvious that such student cannot do anything with such type of question in an examination, hence he will fail.

Sumra et al (2014) in their paper , declining quality of education :Suggestion for arresting and revising the trend showed that many learners in secondary school were not capable of using English, so they did not pass their examination as could not understand what exactly they were asked to do. Galabawa (2009) urged in the same line by saying that many students could have joined advanced education in Tanzania, only if , English would have be substituted with Kiswahili. Qorro (2006) had urged and debated that learners learn better if they use mother tongue which is Kiswahili for this case . but despite these debates the curriculum in Tanzania has continue to maintain English language as a language instruction . the study done by mosha (2004) in Zanzibar critically showed that many factor which affect the language (English ) This included the teacher themselves were not competent in the use of English in teaching frequently they used Kiswahili : in many cases student had not been encouraged to speak English in normal conversation . This reduced their ability to master the language. It is high time the curriculum to reflect mother tongue language to be language of instruction if we want to make better performance for learners in schools

The Effects Of Teaching and Learning Resources on The Academic Performance( Textbooks)The interviews and method employed in searching data in kenema indicated that many secondary schools had social science textbooks for teaching learners. However, the data indicated that, the schools were experiencing shortage science textbooks which hindered the chance for the students to learn effectively. The data / findings indicated that in the Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP) Schools used to receive capitation grant for running schools, including purchasing textbooks. But the current trend has revealed that the fund are not any more enough and the school are not having purchasing power for science textbooks. This was evidenced by the following quotation.

Under SEDP we usually received funds for the school development. Nowadays the funds are not coming regularly. The schools are in serious shortage of funds and the schools cannot purchase the textbooks for the student to buy the textbook using their own funds.

The finding further showed that the parent have observed that their sons and daughters are not having the relevant science textbooks and this has raised worry if the student are getting the right concept when doing private studies. Student also learned that their libraries are turned to be study rooms as they do not have stock of textbooks in particular, the science textbooks . the finding suggest that, the student academic performance cannot be affected to be good because

some of the student taking science subject have on these textbooks. It was revealed further in the report which investigated on the mass failure of form four in 2010, that student who failed science , they failed to answer physics questions. The major reason associated with this failure is that they could not answer the question set from current topic (Modern physics). Had these student being given access to modern science textbook, They could also manage to tackle modern physics questions.

(Science Laboratories )

As a nation we are larking behind technologically because many of our learners divert and opt other social science subject and neglect science stream. This could have been contribution by problem of school system which created ambition to open more secondary school but, we failed to vision how the school will be facilitated in term of its facilities like laboratories . However , while we are working in the completion of the laboratories, the quality of education in schools in serious condition. The observation at Methodist, Ahmadiyya and other schools in kenema showed that the laboratories were just big hall but without labors ion features. This scenario made science student to be denied to access , specimen and do drill in practical and interact with equipment which lead their fear during practical time . Obvious, a failure . jidanva (2013), mollel (2015) establish similar finding when discovered that many learners in schools are using alternative practical which limit their competence in knowing science . The above finding are further supported Galabawa et al (2008) who hold that there is deterioration of secondary education in community school in Tanzania since there is poor system of controlling, supply of textbook used in schools, poor method of instruction that fosters rote learning , lack or absence of libraries and laboratories in schools.

#### CLASSROOM CONGESTION ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCES

The interview and additional observation in some school in kenema revealed that many schools were having classroom congestions . The finding were further revealed by the student who had showed dissatisfaction with the status of congestion in a classroom . Pedagogically large class size causes congestion in the classroom. The situation create many difficulties to the teacher teaching in the class . For example if a geography teacher is teaching Provide continuous assessment in form of quiz, exercise and weekly tests to keep them learn seriously with the commitment of learning and get the concepts they were taught in the classrooms. To prepare a weekly test require papers and toners to print weekly test papers.

It has been noted that one realm costs more than 250,000 Leones, a toner varies in price, but it goes up 300,000 Leone per one object; since the schools cuts budget to meet financial tension, they deny the learners chance to practice and master concepts learnt in their course of learning. Since they are not tested frequently; they cannot do well with the examination at national level. One, thus, would not doubt to correlate high percentage of failure with such low level of schools formative evaluation practices.

## THE EFFECTS OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PRACTICE ON THE STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN KENEMA DISTRICT

Learners at the stage of SSS 4 are almost in foolish age. The adolescent age, the age at which teens do things without consideration of the future effects. This age, learners need much counseling so that they can manage transitional to higher education. Surprising, many schools within kenema and this could speak for other schools in Sierra Leone do not have timetable for counseling young teens on academic matters and social life including relationships. The data finding further showed that the school teachers for doing counseling are not there, if they do their records of what exactly the counselors are doing is not documented. The data indicated that the schools which do counseled their students do well in examination there include private schools and seminarians.

The finding has revealed that since the schools are not having proper counseling programmes, the young may use time uneconomically and waste time with non-academic activities; these include chatting on interest, what Sapp etc. sending love emails on their smart phones as a result a lot of time is lost and consequently learners do not have enough time to review what have been taught in the classroom.

The finding has also revealed that despite of these learners pretending learning they use a lot of time in smart phones and they have poor study habits (less concentration with studies) and they do not have skills to make summary, less drills of doing questions, and poor concentration as they are interfered by many non-academic issues. So performance of these students cannot be expected to be good as they do not have plans on how to be effectively as their counterpart, seminars.

What has been established under this study is in line with Evodia, (2014) Who established that many secondary schools in Moshi were not effectively practicing guidance and counseling, thus many learners were turning to marijuana smokers and prostitution and drugs use. Automatically, no one although the study was not directing itself on what affects students would experience academically.

### SUMMARY

The study focused on the factor affecting academic performance of students in secondary schools kenema city. The secondary schools covered were Methodist, Ahamadiyya, Ansarul, Holy Trinity, Community Initiative Academy and holy Rosary secondary school. The study employed qualitative design as it intended to seek respondent's opinion on how they experience factors for affecting academic achievement of selected secondary school kenema city. The sample was purposeful and it involved 300 respondent comprised of students, parents, ministry of education staffs, Heads of schools and teachers. Interviews, focus group discussions and documentaries were employed as data collection methods. The research on the effects of academic performance in kenema secondary school, showed that many students could not master the English as (LOI), and have very poor knowledge of vocabularies used in various subjects. They had weak English capacity to the extent of failing to make good and logical sentence in English. The poor capability in English limited

their ability to understand concept in various subjects. Moreover, arts textbooks were not enough in Kenema secondary schools. This limited effective learning of various disciplines like physics. The funding further indicated that the schools were experiencing problems of science on one side and interaction during learning and examinations. The services of guidance and counseling and the effects on academic performance of students in Kenema secondary schools. The result showed that many schools had no counselors to counsel students. The school had no time table for counseling. The schools had no program to assist students to build confidence in academic and study skills like reading/studying time, time management, answering questions and control fear during examination. While on the other side, seminarian and private schools were given this counseling. Lastly, the poor academic performance in Kenema secondary schools is associated with weak practice of school guidance and counseling as it limits study skills formation, student management, school life, relationship management and building study habits that encourage more time on task.

The use of English as a language of instruction in secondary schools implies that many students of SSS complete their learning cycle without acquiring basic language skills in using foreign languages such as English.

Deteriorating teaching and learning facilities in school such as laboratories, library and textbooks supply put the teaching environment at risk and on one side it lowers the quality of teaching of our students but it can also trigger teacher turnover.

## CONCLUSION

While the debate goes on which language of instruction a nation has to take to allow effective learning in our secondary schools, there is a need for schools to strengthen the good practice for students to practice English everywhere and every place they require school services. They would build vocabularies, build skills in communication using English and confidence in using English ultimately they can apply it in their studies and in answering questions. It can now be concluded without doubt the factors causing poor academic performance such as those observed in are directly related to:

- i. Poor command of English among secondary school pupils which hinders them from understanding concepts, do not make correct sentences, do not understand terminologies of various subjects and difficulty in understanding what are the questions demand.
- ii. The second factors association with poor academic performance among schools in Kenema is inadequate and poor status of teaching and learning facilities such as lack of science textbooks, classroom congestion, shortage of science laboratories and high cost associated with stationeries.
- iii. Lastly it can be concluded that the poor academic performance of the student in Kenema secondary school was also caused by the school due to lack of counseling programmers, the

school do not to have time table for counseling of student . The poor, ineffective and the weak status of guidance and counseling services made the student failure to manage time, manage their affairs and misuse time on non-academic activities. Lack of counseling also made student develop poor self-concept and confidence about one self and the lacked the needed study skill which did not empower them to handle examination matters.

### RECOMMENDATION

- i. The problem for the learner's failure to master English as (LOI) may have it roots in the capacity of teacher to use the language. Professional development in language needs to be identified and executed if we want to reverse this problem.
- ii. While the notion is more on the improvement of resources for learning in secondary schools, including laboratories, there should be another approach to expose learners n to the real laboratories for them to do real practical.
- iii. The old schools need to be given more resources to also accommodate the new schools that have no such facilities.
- iv. It should be mandatory that all schools should develop guidance and counseling programmers and the community and government must ensure counselors are trained and qualified and are assisting student in schools with these numerous problems.
- v. School heads and government must encourage and motivates teachers to be more committed, dedicated, and to show interest and love for their job and the students.
- vi. To establish rules that English must be the medium of communication in and out of school to serve as practice for students and even some teachers.

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