

An exploratory study of factors influencing school achievements among HIV/ AIDS orphaned school pupils in Tanzania: A case of Bukoba urban district

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The purpose of the study was to investigate factors that influenced the primary school HIV/AIDS orphaned pupils' school performance in Bukoba urban district. The study examined whether or not orphanation due to AIDS had any significant effect on the academic performance of the orphaned pupils. Further, it examined variables that were assumed to influence school achievement among primary school pupils. These variables included school environment, teachers' attitudes, pupils' school attendance as well as home environment and they formed the six research questions that directed the investigation. The sample population of study comprised 57 AIDS orphaned and 52 non-orphaned pupils who were selected by stratified and strategic sampling techniques. Thirty-three strategically selected teachers and one member from each government department, party and non-governmental organizations also formed part of the sample. The educational production function (EPF) model was considered appropriate to guide the investigation. The study further revealed that school environment and teachers' attitudes were not significant factors influencing school achievement among the orphaned pupils. However, home environment was found to be a significant factor in influencing school achievement. Nevertheless, this influence was off-set by relief agencies which provided school material support to the orphaned pupils. In the light of the findings and conclusions advanced in this study, several recommendations were made. It was recommended that the government in collaboration with non-governmental organizations should establish a boarding primary school to cater for pupils, in particular, the orphaned pupils, so that social and material support can easily be provided to them. It was also recommended that non-governmental organizations operating in the study area be coordinated to pull together the resources and have a common goal. Further, it was recommended that the ministry of education and culture should introduce programmes on AIDS in the teacher colleges to equip teacher trainees with knowledge and skills so that upon graduation they could help the orphaned pupils. It was further suggested that schools be provided with supports and games facilities to provide more chances for pupils' interaction at

schools. A community based approach was proposed to enlighten the mass on their social responsibility of caring the orphaned pupils. Four data gathering techniques were employed. These included: documentary review, sociometric test, questionnaire and interview schedules. Documentary review covered both primary and secondary sources of information. Primary sources constituted the academic performance and attendance of both group pupils. Secondary sources included newspaper, newsletters, reports, minutes of meetings monographs, books operation manuals etc. Which provided more information and experiences on AIDS and related problems. Questionnaire and interview schedules comprised both open – and close-ended questions and were administered to the teachers, students and other officials. Sociometric test was administered to standards six and seven pupils, including those in sample, at random selection. The instruments were pre-tested to determine their validity and where the inconsistencies were noted, were adjusted accordingly. A t-test of significance, tabulation and content analysis were employed to analyse the data. The findings of the study revealed that orphanation did not have any significant effect on the orphaned pupils' academic performance and attendance. However, there were incidences when pupils were forced to remain absent from school on parents/ foster parents instructions to attend domestic activities, but this did not seem to have serious effects on performance. For the purpose of future research, it was recommended that a similar research could be conducted in other districts affected by AIDS pandemic. Further, a study could be done in those areas where social and material support and health education programmes have not been provided.