

**HSRC Winter Conference  
July 2004**

**Comparison of various factors that influence pupils' academic performance in four African countries**

**Abstract**

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Educationists tend to generalize about the influence to academic performance of certain student, teacher and school factors but little attention is given to the differential effects of the same factors across countries with diverse educational challenges. The major aim of the study is to identify the main factors that influence performance in mathematics and literacy among grade 4 learners through a comparative analysis of data from four African countries, Botswana, Malawi, Mauritius and Uganda. Data was collected from a sample of learners, teachers, school principals and parents in a UNESCO funded project in these countries. The analysis will involve the use of multiple methodologies such structural equation modeling (SEM) and hierarchal linear modeling (HLM) in order to systematically eliminate factors that have insignificant effects on learner performance. Limitations and strengths of these methodologies will be highlighted especially when they are applied in the analysis of social science data. Conclusions will also be drawn about the factors that have significant effects on performance in the two learning areas and in education in general.