INFLUENCE OF HOME BASED FACTORS ON GIRLS ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN MIXED SECONDARY SCHOOLS:
A CASE STUDY OF RONGO SUB-COUNTY

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ABSTRACT
This study intended to investigate the influence of home based factors on girls’ performance in mixed secondary schools in Rongo Sub-County. Despite the fact that education plays a crucial role in preparing the young for their future roles in society; girl’s performance especially in mixed schools is quite poor. The purpose of this study was to determine home based factors affecting girls’ performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations in selected secondary schools in Rongo Sub-County. The study sampled mixed secondary schools which are ten in number using simple random technique to select six schools. From the sampled schools, equal numbers of students were selected from form four classes in each school totaling 60. Twenty teachers were included in the study and six head teachers. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Descriptive survey design technique was used. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics while qualitative data was transcribed and inferences and conclusions drawn. The findings of the study may provide education stakeholders with strategies for countering the factors affecting girls’ academic performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination in Rongo Sub-County. The study established that socio-economic status of parents, home environment, domestic chores and parental attitude toward girls affected girls’ academic achievement. The recommendations of the study were; positive attitude towards girls’ education, continued guidance and counseling, increased bursaries and special relationship between girls and female teachers.

Key Words: Home Based Factors, girls’ academic achievement, mixed secondary schools Rongo Sub-County
INTRODUCTION

Education is regarded as a powerful tool for development in Kenya. It has often been referred to and described as the key to progress and social mobility. Lack of the same on the other hand is considered to be the single most obstructive bottleneck to socio-economic betterment. The last decades of the twentieth century saw many concerted efforts in research into gender issues all over the world. In Africa, international bodies and educationists began in the 1960s to look into the ways girls and women were fairing in education. Their findings were depressing. By 1970s pro-female initiatives by some African governments to encourage enrolment of girls in schools were started. Consequently, low enrolment figures indicated in the earlier years (1960-70) were in the 1990s shown to have improved. Kenyan females constituted nearly 50% of the children enrolled in grade one (Forum for Africa Women Educationist 1996). What about academic achievement? Researchers and teachers have to recognize prejudicial practices which may still disadvantage girls particularly within classrooms, even where policy and statistics suggest that equality has been achieved.

Our education system in Kenya is characterized by examinations and therefore it is an issue that attracts public attention. These examinations are used as yardstick for learning and selection purposes. Each parent is eager that his child passes the examination as it is the basic requirement for entrance into formal sector. It is a criteria for determining those who should proceed and pursue in the examination at each level. Therefore every student going through this system of formal education has to sit for these examinations in our case, Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations. Every year whenever Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations results are release, single sex schools usually dominate the top positions. In 2014 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations, results summary at the top were single sex schools.

Education for girls is vital because women are central to development. Therefore girls’ education should be great contributions that can strengthen women’s role in development thus raise the quality of global decision-making. It is therefore important to identify problems which hinder women from achieving equally in education especially in mixed schools.

Despite a lot of research being done about performance of girls in secondary schools, little has been done on mixed secondary schools with a view to improving the situation in Rongo Sub-County. There was need to establish the various selected factors that influence girls’ academic achievement such as home based factors.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the study was to determine home-based factors affecting girls’ academic achievement in mixed secondary schools in Rongo Sub-County, Kenya
The current study was based on a theory postulated by Pearson, where society views all activities that are carried out to be based on social roles and interactions of men and women. This is an assumption of gender roles as dictated by society. The society seems to have ultimate authority on the precise nature of what women and men actually do, and their real contribution to production and reproduction which turns out to be biased against women according to (Orodho2004). This theory argues that because of biases, the performance of women and men is affected in nearly all spheres of life such as; business, education, and environmental conservation and development projects.

Pearson’s gender relations’ framework was found appropriate for this study because it emphasizes the various social, cultural and economic norms and standards, which must be considered when girls or females take the opportunities to participate in social activities such as education. This theory was therefore relevant for the study because it captures the variables, which govern the study.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Quality Education is the key to providing the right human resources for social and economic production sectors facilitating wealth creation and improving living standards, Abdullah (2011). A report from the department of international Development 1998 revealed that countries consider the provision of education important for their overall socio-economic development and consequently formulate policies and allocate an annual basic substantial amount of resources to it (Education insight, 2006; Government of Kenya 1963).

To understand the nature of structural constraints in the Education system that hinder advancement of women, it is important to understand the place of women in Education as was stipulated by some of the early educators as the present Education systems have borrowed greatly from them. A historical procedure was set for boys being favored for school attendance. The trend was supported by the emphasis on early marriage for girls in indigenous Africa societies and the lack of attentive role models to which girls could aspire. First mission schools were therefore for boys. Obura (1985), examined the image of girls in primary school text books in Kenya and found that they were usually associated with traditional gender roles rather than academic achievement. Other arguments from the dailies and other studies emphasize gender roles for girls, how rough the road to women liberation is and how girls do not fare well in the science rooms (standard correspondent, 9th September, 2005; 29th September, 2006; Wakhungu, 2004).

Much has been done to investigate how family background affects students’ performance. Maundu (1996) wrote “Studies conducted in Britain and in the United States of America during the 1960s and 1970 indicated that a Briton or America student’s social and economic background is more important is exploring his or her academic achievements than school characteristics and
experiences. He further says that parents’ level of occupation and amount of possessions are parameter to measure students’ academic performance. Indeed in this case the students primary standards, lack of parental advice and poor economic background hindered students’ performance. It is always the girl who gets sacrificed.

Post primary education for a girl has important individual benefits in terms of her options and resources over her lifetime. These benefits extend beyond the girl in affecting her family and the society as a whole. The benefits to society include enhanced economic development, education for the next generation, healthier young girls and families and fewer maternal deaths (UNICEF 2004). The benefits of education for a girl and society can be explained by the effect that education has on empowering girls to acquire and use new personnel, social and economic behavior that in turn, affect societal change (Moulton, 1997).

In a number of studies and newspaper articles, there are arguments on whether or not to send girls to mixed schools (standard correspondent 15th and 22nd September, 2005; Okonkwo, 1987) Eshiwani (1975, 1983a, 1983b 1nd 1985) presented various arguments in the studies he carried out on gender differences in learning mathematics and science, women’s access to education and who gets university admission in Kenya.

Newspaper reports on education achievement in Kenya often do not leave us guessing who is winning between the girls and the boys as they are frequently dominated with reports of how well the boys’ schools are doing (Nation correspondent 1st March, 2005; 1st March, 2007). It is against this background that this study sought to find out home based factors that affect the academic achievement of girls in mixed schools in Rongo sub-county.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Data was collected using questionnaires for students and teachers. Interviews were conducted for head teachers. The research employed descriptive survey design technique. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics i.e. frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Qualitative data was transcribed and reported (Orodho 2003, 2004a, 2004b).

**4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The Research question responded to was “Which home-based factors affect girls’ academic performance? Table 1 a & b presents the responses of the head teachers:

**Table 1a & b: Head teachers’ response**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(b) Head teachers had problems with lateness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response most affected</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1a & b presents the results in figures. On whether parents were keen on girl’s performance the results show that parents are less interested in girl’s performance as compared to that of boys rated at 40% for girls and 60% for boys. On the issue of late coming all the head teachers agreed that they had a problem with lateness. In addition (4) 80% of head teachers said they had most problems with girls on lateness. This could be attributed to girls having to do chores at home or not being able to run fast as boys. Few head teachers (1) 20% said that they had problems of lateness with boys.

Table 2a & b: Teachers response

(a) Are the parents keen on girls’ performance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>78.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Who is more affected by coming to school late?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teachers just like head teachers agreed that parents were not keen on their girls’ performance. Among the teachers, (43)78.2% said parents were not keen on girl’s performance unlike (12) 21.8% who said they were keen. On who was most affected by parents’ attitude Table 2b shows that whereas only 38.2% of the boys were affected, 52.77% of the girls were affected. This indicates that more girls than boys were affected by lack of parent keenness on their performance. In this case, then it is unlikely for the girls to perform well.
Table 3a, b, c and d: Students’ response

(a) Do you have family chores to do before and after school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Do the roles interfere with your studies?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) Is the home environment conducive for study?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(d) Do your parents support your studies?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the studies in the sample, most (55) 91.7% of the girls agree that they had roles to play as family members and only (05) 8.33% said they had no roles. Some of the roles the girls cited were mainly household chores like cooking, laundry, minding the young ones, cleaning the house, shopping and fetching water. In addition, (39) 65.0% of girls agreed that the roles affected their studies while 35.0% boys said that family roles did not interfere with their studies. The girls cited lack of time to study at home as a result of too much work and regular lateness to school. Further, Table 3c indicates that (34)56.7% of the boys said that their home environments were conducive for their studies while (26) 43.3% girls said their home environments were conducive for study. This implies that most girls did not find home environment conducive for studies. They cited reasons like noisy neighborhoods, small rooms and lack of electricity. Such problems are likely to interfere with their academic work. Taking into considerations that
municipality schools are mostly day schools it is automatic that girls have more household chores to attend to before and after school thus a setback to their academic goals.

Finally, Table 3d, indicates that (35) 58% of the girls felt that their parents supported their studies. Some of the indicators they mentioned included payment of fees and buying of uniform. Of the boys, only (25) 41.7% felt their parents supported their studies. Therefore, more girls than boys felt they were supported by their parents in their studies. This appeared contrary to results recorded in table 1a and 2a about parent keenness in their daughter’s performance.

**DISCUSSION**

Both principals and teachers agreed that parents took less interest in the performance of their son than in their daughters’ performance. The study found out that more girls reported to school late than the boys. The study findings revealed most girls reported to school late because they had to perform domestic chores before reporting to school, this impacted negatively on syllabus coverage. Overall, this would finally translate in below average performance. This finding was in contradiction to an argument raised in one of the dailies on girls and their role in the kitchen (Standard Correspondent, 9th September 2005).

All principals (100%) observed that there is relationship between girl’s’ home environment and their academic performance. They further noted that this could be possible because most parents were low-income earners. Such home environments were not conducive for learning. This concurs with the study by Pale and Krystal (1975) which found out that gender and economic factors had an impact on learning achievement.

The study also found in case there was little income; boys were given preference with regard to fee payment. This meant that girls would stay out of school for a longer period of time which compromised their academic performance.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Most parents were not keen on their daughter’s performance. The girls came to school late and their areas of residence were not conducive for learning. Generally teachers and head teachers cited that several problems faced the girls in mixed schools thus denying them a chance to do well in Kenya certificate of secondary education examinations.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The government should increase bursaries allocated to secondary schools in order to cushion students from economically disadvantaged families. They should be given more opportunities when it comes to bursary allocation.

Girls should also be encouraged to think positively especially the ones in mixed schools should be made to know that what the boys can do the girls can do as well.
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