Contribution of age on girl child academic performance in Primary schools in Nyatike Sub-County, Migori County, Kenya

Abstract: The purpose of the study was to establish the contribution of age on girl child academic performance in primary schools in Nyatike Sub-County, Migori County, Kenya. The study used descriptive survey research designs. The target populations was 48 head teachers, 423 Teachers, 1037 Parents, 5 Zonal Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (ZQASOs). The researcher used purposive sampling technique to select 48 head teachers and 5 ZQASOs; while 30% technique was used to sample parents 311 and 127 teachers. The instruments of data collection were questionnaires, in-depth interview, and document analysis. Validity of the study was done by soliciting the experts opinions from the school of education in Kisii University. Reliability of the instruments was addressed through piloting and test-retest in 5 schools and reliability coefficients obtained was 0.721 which indicated that the instruments were reliable. Data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data was analyzed using an ongoing process as themes and sub-themes emerged. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The finding revealed that 72 percent of teachers concurred that age influenced the girl child academic performance. It was concluded that age significantly influenced the girls academic performance. It recommended that the schools and the community should develop relations that would assist girl child explore the full potentialities needed for academic performance. The researcher considered the ethics including plagiarism and getting the consent of respondents among others.

Keywords: Age, girl-child, academic, performance schools Kenya.

INTRODUCTION

Education of the girl child in many parts of the world has met a number of challenges that calls for solutions. The work of Neupane (2017) in rural Nepal, prescribed that the girl-child who finally forms women folk in our society needed not only to be protected, but also to be empowered for both local and national development. Gender stereotyping both at school and at home, at school girls are considered less intelligent than boys and textbooks testify that girls do household chores while their brothers are outside playing. In the United States of America, Smith, Brooks-Gunn and Klebanov (2017) pointed out the irony that riches and the poorest countries share the problem of drop out of girl-child. They contended that in United States of America over 30 percent of high school students leave school prematurely and a big percentage was found in the developing World. The problem of the girl-child drop out has been experienced almost everywhere globally being fuelled by almost similar factors and circumstances.

Research done by Chinyoka and Naidu (2013) on education and economics at Iowa State University observed that numerous studies have shown that labour and time in school are sensitive to changes in peculiar cost returns. Similarly, studies from India by Sharma, Samantaray and Dash (2017) on democratic analytical study of girl child drop out from schools found that the girl-child rate of dropping out of school and finally registering poor performance has been on the increase. This has been majorly determined by home environment, parental occupation and class. Indeed, home conditions and parental level of education has been significant to girl-child academic upward mobility. The same applies in Taiwan when Krashen (2015); Gyan (2013) established that when girls or women try to combine schooling with home apprenticeship, the choice between work time and study time may lead to family tensions, poor performance, poor lesson attendance and eventual drop out. This inevitability affects their academic performance. The girl child may have very little time to concentrate on that which pertains to her school work (Sharma et al. 2017). The academic performance has to be affected in that there could be less or not enough time for revising their school work and assignments.

In Zimbabwe the situation was not any different, according to Chitiga and Chinoona (2017), when they commented on progress in gender equality in education, it was realized that, a problem that people believe more to do with school anxiety and lack of motivation than the inability to meet academic requirements existed. They further talked about the parental care/monitoring which represents a risk of factor in adolescence when combined with the increased impulsiveness, opting for unwanted type of school as well as developing a friendship network with peer prone to problematic behaviour pathetic (Chinyoka & Naidu 2014); (Gomba, 2018).
A concern for girl child education in Africa has taken a center stage. In Malawi and Nigeria the work of Okeke, Nzwi and Njoku, (2012) and Nkamare (2019) reiterated that UNICEF was the first organization to come forward to assist the government with teaching learning materials which were gender friendly. According to Glynn et al. (2018) the UNICEF has also helped the government of Malawi and Nigeria to implement among other things: two projects keeping kids in school and closing the gender gap the major objective of these community based school projects was to improve the quality of primary education and ensure access to educational facilities within walking distance especially for girl-child in close collaboration with the communities (Nkamare 2019).

The Kenyan case has been equally interesting. Research done by Atieno and Yambo (2017) opined that much care should be taken on the girl child who has been found to be vulnerable due to socio-environmental factors prevailing in many communities. In this endeavor parents of the girl child have a duty to perform to transform their life since home is the first girl-child’s social institution that initiates character formation. Similarly, Adhanja, Nyakan and Yambo (2016) in their study on family based socio-economic factors that affect students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Kenya, found that the parental occupation and their level of education was significant. An effect of socialization on academic achievements of girls was also found out to be blamed for the low academic performance of female students. The gendered roles include domestic chores and biased upbringings that portray boys as superior to girls (Yambo 2012; Gitonga 2019). This was found to be contrary to the theory of feminism which has been one of the three theories that underpin this study that advocates for equal rights and equal treatment of females and males the results of the study by Neupane (2017) also linked female students’ participation in domestic roles to their low participation in class which results in low academic achievements. A similar study done by Saito (2011) on South Asia girls established that girls during their puberty undergo a socialization process which trains them to be good mothers and this puts severe constraints on their schooling and academic pursuits.

Statement of the Problem

Education is considered to be a basic human right and a basic need for all. It is a life changing career that transforms both the mind and the body. The crucial role education plays in the human development and settlement is far much than a rich man who did not go to school. Despite the many benefits that come from the formal education and the government efforts to provide equal opportunities for both girls and boys, there has been low turnout to access basic education and this leads to poor participation in education by the girl child in Nyatike Sub-County. For instance of the total enrolment 10,004 students in secondary schools in Nyatike Sub-County in 2007 5,432 (54.3%) were boys while 4,572 (45.7%) were girls. However no study has been carried out in Nyatike Sub-County to ascertain the claim of gender disparity in secondary education in favour of boys. This study will therefore fill this gap and give suggestions on how to address this critical challenge in the government efforts to enhance access to education among girls.

Contribution of Age on Girl-child Academic Performance

Age and schooling has been a matter of concern. Consequently, Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2010); Oxford Dictionary (2015) defined age as the number of years that a person has lived and has existed. According to Gyan (2013) and Glynn et al. (2018), girls in the third world countries often begin schooling at the age of four years. Many collectivists’ cultures around the world especially third world countries found on the South of Sahara normally live with their household family until they get to an age of five or seven before a child begins a primary school (Kihombo (2017). The research done by UNICEF (2004) and World Bank (2005) established that investing in formal and non-formal education, training for girls and women, with its exceptionally high social and economic returns, has proved to be one of the best means of achieving sustainable development and economic returns. On the other hand, denying women their right to education has been the same as denying them their rights to livelihood. Some of these pertinent rights included improved health, good nutrition and empowerment to societal contribution (Donald et al. 2010). Education for girl child should be carefully looked into. Families with school going age girls should prioritize each and every girl’s education at an early age so that they should learn when they are young.

Regarding the age of girl child and education in India, Sharma et al. (2017) who worked on democratic analytical study of girl child drop out from schools in India reported that if a child drops out from school and unable to complete a desirable education then it was unlikely and unfortunate for their upward academic progress. Primary education, popularly known as basic education, has been a child’s fundamental right, not a privilege (Santhya 2019). It is the most important aspect in one’s life which plays a vital role in building a child’s personality and career at a later stage. Educating a girl child has been of foremost importance for the development of nation like India as put forward by Shovan and Susmita (2012) who also contended that men and women who are educated contribute to the progress and development of a nation. The foregoing statement has been found to be in order: “If we educate a man we educate an individual, but if we educate a woman we educate the entire family” (Sharma et al. 2017: 13). Education is of utmost importance for the proper growth and development of the individuals. It does not only shape the life pattern
and living style but it also helps in shaping up thinking, attitudes views and personality of an individual being. Parents with low levels of education are more likely to have non-school going children kept at home for various reasons.

In Africa, the matter regarding girl-child education has been dealt with for so long but the traditional aspect has equally been felt. In this respect, Nkamare (2012) when dealing with gender issues and its effect on the development of the child in Ogbunabali community in Port Harcourt, Rivers State Nigeria indicated that it is necessary if more women are to become agents of change. Indeed, girls should have same opportunities for education as boys which may lead to reduction of poverty and increased access to information and educational issues. Literacy of women, according to Ahamad and Najeeba (2013); Ubong (2016) whose work dealt with insecurity and girl-child education in Nigeria prescribed that girl-child security and education was an important key factor to improved health, nutrition and education in the family and to empowering women to participate in decision-making in society at large.

A study done in Tanzania by Nyagiati and Yambo (2018); Melack (2014) described poor academic performance as any performance that fails blow a desired standard. Furthermore, poor academic performance of an individual candidate in a learning situation has been one in which a candidate fails to attain a set standard of performance in a given evaluation exercise such as formative and summative tests, and examinations. The communities can therefore help to identify and address factors affecting education such as poor academic performance, few girls attending schools and many others. This was illustrated in the case of Gambia where techniques of Participation Rural Appraisals (PRA) were adopted to access education. The work was carried out by World Bank (2005) in order to understand why girls do not attend schools, to mobilize communities around these problems and assist them in organizing their own solutions to face life challenges (Nyanda, Yambo & Getange 2018).

In Kenya, a research carried in Masaba in Kisii County by Keraia and Gakunga (2016) noted that equality of boys and girls to access education was paramount to development and attainment of good qualifications which would enable them to get employment or proceed with further studies. They recommended that parents still need to be sensitized on the elimination of retrogressive and oppressive beliefs, cultures and practices that still act as barrier towards girl’s educational success to date. There is need to change the attitude of teachers, parents and students on the cultural issues which hinder the gender friendly practices in schools and at home (Duku 2016). This has therefore called for a clear guideline and sensitization to ensure equity in access and completion rates.

The work of Gitonga (2009) in Laikipia district in Kenya found out that girl-child education in Africa and more so in Kenya has for a long time been plagued by a pedagogy of differences, by way of education that mostly stresses on the differences and not the similarities between boys and girls. This type of education places the boy on a superior platform to that of the girl. Additionally, Otieno and Yara (2010) opined that the problems of the girl-child education start right at home. It is at this level in the community that girls are educated differently from boys. The parents, siblings, relatives and even the neighbours perceive girls to be radically different from boys. They wrongly believe that, boys are more intelligent, more capable, more responsible and therefore more important to the society than girls. In this regard, Chepleting, Chepkemei, Yano and Chebet (2013) revealed that although both girls and boys are brought up together at home and in the community the girls are forced to grow up differently through this oppressive socialization. They are not given the same opportunities as boys to prove their potentials. According to Kirui, Yambo and Langat (2018) when girls are forced to grow up differently, as a result, the girls grow up believing that they are grossly inferior to boys just because they are girls. As gender bias prevails in the society girl-child education will continue to suffer social discrimination. In respect to this, boys may as well go to school earlier while girls remain at home still assisting their parents (Chepleting et al. 2013).

A study done by Odhiambo, Odera and Yambo (2014) in Migori County on strategies used by Principals to cope with challenges faced in promotion of girl-child education in mixed day secondary schools, found that parents’ efficacy for involvement and education goals for their children were stronger predictors of schools’ success than parental level of education and ethnicity. Moreover, the study found out that teachers’ communication to parents predicted parents’ involvement, suggesting that regardless of level of education; parents need encouragement from educators to become involved in their children’s education for better performance (Yambo 2012).

**Research Methodology**

This study adopted the descriptive research design, which Creswell (2017) described as a systematic method for gathering information from a sample of individuals for the purposes of describing the attributes of the larger population of which the individual are members. The target populations was 48 head teachers, 423 Teachers, 1037 Parents, 5 Zonal Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (ZQASOs). The researcher used purposive sampling technique to select 48.
Table 1. Sample Technique

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head teachers</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZQASOs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>1037</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1213</strong></td>
<td><strong>369</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Head teachers and 5 ZQASOs; while 30% technique was used to sample 311 parents and 127 teachers based on the work of Best and Khan (2006) and Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) who contended that 30% has been statistically considerable and convenient was used. The instruments of data collection were questionnaires, in-depth interview, and document analysis. Validity of the study was done by soliciting the experts’ opinions from the school of education in Kisii University. Reliability of the instruments was addressed through piloting and test-retest in 5 schools and reliability coefficients obtained was 0.721 which indicated that the instruments were reliable. Data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data was analyzed using an ongoing process as themes and sub-themes emerged. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

**FINDINGS**

**Contribution of age on girl child academic performance in primary schools in Nyatike Sub-County, Migori County, Kenya**

Data generated for this section was based on the objective: to find out the contribution of age on girl-child academic performance. This section looked at whether the contributions of age on girl child drop out in the location of study affecting girl-child academics.

![Fig. 1 showing teachers response on the contribution of age on Girl-Child on academic performance](image)

The teachers were asked to ascertain whether the variable, age contributed on girl child academics performance. The findings from them showed that they responded as: Strongly Agree 52(41%), Agree 40(31%), Strongly Disagree 13(10%), and Disagree 22(17%). It was therefore alluded that 72 percent of teachers concurred that age influenced the girl child academic performance and the finding was supported by studies done by Chinyoka and Naidu (2014); Neupane (2017); Yambo (2012) who reiterated that age was a key factor in the learners academic endeavor in schools and even higher institutions of learning.

More respondents were engaged on this variable of age. The study also sought the views of parents of the girl-child on the contribution of age on their academic performance. Parents were asked about the same and they responded as:

![Fig 2. Parents response on contribution of age on girl-child performance](image)

Yes 282(90.6%) No 29(9.4%)
When parents' were asked to respond on the contribution of age on girl-child performance, their response indicated that: Yes had 282(90.6%) while No 29(9.4%) out of 311 who respondent to this question. It was therefore evident that the way in which teachers and parents responded meant that the age has meaning at the time an individual child begins and continues in school. This sentiment was in line with the work of Nkamare (2012); Adhanja et al. (2016) and Gomba (2018) who postulated that age was an important aspect to consider in girl child education for they even develop and grow faster than boys comparatively.

**CONCLUSION**

Now that age has been found to be a key factor to consider in this study, parents are encouraged to take their children to school at the school going age especially the girls. This would help them avoid challenges associated with age that would otherwise jeopardise their academic pursuits alongside the boys counterparts. Similarly teachers should provide a conducive atmosphere for for girls in schools for their academic performance.

**Recommendation**

Parents and teachers should develop cordial relationships that would be friendly to girls to continue their academic goals in schools.

**REFERENCES**


