

Effect of Gender Issues on the Academic Performance of Learners in Secondary Schools: A Case Study of Msumarini Secondary School

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ABSTRACT

The essence of this study was to determine the effect of gender issues on the academic performance of learners in selected schools in Msumarini-Kilifi District, Kenya. The methods used for data collection were face-to-face interviews, which were carried out with parents, and questionnaires, which were distributed to students and teachers. Observation was done on the state of the learners. The findings revealed by 70% of the respondents that gender issues affect the learner's performance negatively. 58% of the respondents also revealed that the majority of the learners in the schools are boys. According to 70% of the respondents, most of the schools had a gender bias in all the resources used by the learners. 80% of the respondents revealed that poverty has greatly affected the performance of the learners. To ensure quality, the study recommended that the government step in to see that all children are taken to school, both girls and boys. Parents and the community should be sensitised to the importance of educating all their children, both boys and girls. The government, non-government organisations, publishers, and curriculum developers should work hand in hand to produce gender-sensitive books, which will change attitudes and stereotypes.

Keywords: Msumarini-Kilifi District, Government intervention, Academic performance, Parental involvement, non-government organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Gender refers to being female or male [1]. Today, we use this term more frequently than sex. It is more specific [2]. Within our gender groups, we are influenced by societal expectations of how we should behave [3]. In Kenya, the traditional implications of being feminine and masculine are: Feminine: traditionally, it is considered that feminine characteristics include being delicate, shy, motherly, a home keeper, quiet and a good listener. Masculine: Traditionally, masculine characteristics are seen as being strong, powerful, dominant, courageous, and decision-makers [4, 5]. There were attitudes perceived to be the characteristics of men and women [6]. Gender issues are factors that affect girls and boys [7]. They include poverty, early marriage, and child labour. These are issues that need to be addressed if we are to become a developed nation [8]. The performance of the girls and boys in these schools has been deteriorating due to gender disparities, which have affected the learners' academic performance [9]. The academic performances of both girls and boys in the schools of Abothuguchi West Division have been very poor. This has mainly been due to the inferiority complex between girls and boys. Gender has greatly affected girls who think that boys are better in some subjects as compared to girls, such as mathematics, which has greatly contributed to the poor academic performance of learners. However, this work will examine the impact of gender on the academic performance of learners in the Kiobatek district and examine strategies used by schools to improve the academic performance of the girls and boys in the Msumarini-Kilifi District.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher used a cross-sectional survey research design. A quantitative research design was used to collect data to examine a large sample.

Target population

The researcher targeted learners at Msumarini Secondary School in Msumarini-Kilifi District, Kilifi District, Kenya. The researcher and both teachers and pupils were respondents from the upper and lower classes. Questionnaire tools were used and given to 40 respondents.

Sample size

The method of selecting the sample was random sampling from five schools. A total of 200 respondents were obtained.

Research procedure

The researcher began by getting an introduction letter from Kampala International University, which will be

presented to the selected.

Data collection instruments

The research will use questionnaires to collect the required data. The questionnaires will contain questions on both personal information and knowledge and understanding of gender issues.

Interview

Respondents who cannot interpret questionnaires will be interviewed by face-to-face contact. The interviewer will guide explanations or explain the importance of the interview. The questions asked will be clearly explained to them.

Questionnaires

Well-typed questions with a brief introduction that familiarises the respondent with the questions posed by the researcher will be given to relevant people with a request to answer the questions. The questions are simple to answer but will help us know the performance of learners in the secondary schools in the district.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) was used for the processing and analysis of quantitative data. The researcher generated frequencies, pie charts, and cross-tabulations.

RESULTS

Table 1: Sex

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male	28	58
Female	20	42
Total	48	100

Source: Primary data

Observation and analysis

According to Table 1, the targeted pupils were both boys and girls from both the lower and upper classes. In most of the schools, boys were found to be the majority, making 58.3% and girls 42%.

Table 2: Age

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
11-15yrs	24	50
7-10yrs	20	41.75
16-20yrs	3	6.25
21-25yrs	1	2
Total	48	100

Source: Primary data

Observation and analysis

According to Table 2, it was found that the majority of the pupils in the primary schools, who make up about 50%, are between the ages of 11 and 15; the majority found it upper primary. It was also found that there are a number of pupils between the ages of 27 and 10, although they are mostly found in the lower classes. In the upper secondary, there were pupils between the ages of 21 and 25, though they are very few.

Table 3: Shows Class attendance

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	28	58.
Yes	20	42
Total	48	100

Source: Primary data

Observation analysis

It was found that the majority of the pupils in the schools do not attend classes regularly. This makes up 58%, while those who attend classes regularly were found to be 42%.

Table 4: Shows the Encouragement at school

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	30	62.5
Yes	18	37.5
Total	48	100

Source: Primary data

Observation and analysis

According to Table 4, however, the majority of the pupils are not encouraged at school. These make up 62.5% of the total school enrollment. Respondents said that they get encouraged at school.

Table 5: Shows the Parents supporting education

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	28	58
Yes	20	42
Total	48	100

Source: primary data

Observation and analysis

According to Table 5, it was found that 58% of the respondents do not get support from their parents in their education. 42% of the respondents were found to be getting support from their parents.

Table 6: School Environment

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	30	62.5
Yes	18	37.5
Total	48	100

Source: primary data

Observation and analysis

According to Table 6, it was found that most of the school environments are not conducive to learning. This was shown by the percentage of respondents being 62.5% and 37.5, respectively.

Table 7: Shows the community support

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	28	58
Yes	20	42
Total	48	100

Source: primary data

Observation and analysis

According to Table 7, it was found that most of the communities are not supportive of education matters. This was shown by the percentage of respondents being 58% and 42%, respectively.

Table 8: Shows the Gender biasness in resources

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	35	73
Yes	13	27
Total	48	100

Source: Primary data

Observation and analysis

According to Table 8, most of the respondents complained that there was a lot of gender bias in the resources they were using at school. This was shown in the percentage of 73%, while only 27% said there was no gender bias in the resources used at school.

Table 9: Shows the Level of Poverty

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	38	79
Yes	10	21
Total	48	100

Source: Primary data
Observation and analysis

According to table 9. It was found that poverty greatly affects the learning of the respondents. This was presented by 79% of the total respondents.

Table 10: Shows the Sex (Teachers)

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	29	72.50
Female	11	27.50
Total	40	100

Source: Primary data
Observation and Analysis

According to Table 10, it was found that of the targeted learners, 72% were male teachers and 27.5% were female teachers. Hence, most of the schools in Msumarini-Kilifi District, Nyeri District, are taught by male teachers.

Table 11: Shows working experience

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
10yrs	12	30
8yrs	10	25
6yrs	8	20
4yrs	5	12.50
2yrs	3	7.50
Above 10yrs	2	5
Total	40	100

Source: primary data
Observation and analysis

The table above shows that teachers who had served for years comprised 30% of the total number of teachers in the targeted schools. Teachers who served for 8yrs were 25%, 20% had served for 6yrs 12.50% had served for 4yrs, 7.50% had served for 2yrs while 5% had served for more than 10yrs. This shows that most of the teachers have long teaching experiences.

Table 12: Shows the Academic qualification

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Certificate	48	95
Diploma	2	5
Degree	0	0
U. T	0	0
Total	40	100

Source: Primary data
Observations and analysis

According to the table above, 95% of the sampled schools were P.L. certificate holders; diploma holders were the second category, with 5%; there were no degree holders in the sampled schools. Equally, there were no untrained teachers in the targeted schools.

Table 13: Shows Text books

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	30	75
Yes	10	25
Total	40	100

Source: Primary data

Observation and analysis

According to the table above show that 75% of the teachers in the targeted schools complained that there was not enough textbooks in the schools they teach whereas only 25% of the teachers agreed that there are enough textbooks in the schools. Enough text books or sufficient reference materials are crucial for efficient and effective teaching.

Table 14: Shows access to the text books

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	28	70
Yes	12	30
Total	40	100

Source: Primary data

Observations and analysis

According to Table 14, 70% of the teachers in the targeted schools suggested that teachers and pupils do not have access to the text books. 30% of the teachers agreed that teachers and pupils have access to the text book. There is therefore a need for reference materials to facilitate the effective teaching and learning process.

Table 15: Shows the Positive attitudes and interaction towards the learners

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	25	65.50
Yes	15	37.50
Total	40	100

Source: primary data

Observation and analysis

According to Table 15, most of the teachers in the targeted schools do not have a positive attitude towards their learners. These teachers in this category make up 65.5% of the total, while 37.50% represent those who strongly agreed to have a positive attitude towards their learners. Teachers need to change their negative attitudes towards the learners. That they can deliver the services required by the learners to the maximum.

Table 16: Shows the Gender biasness in resources

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	30	75
Yes	10	25
Total	40	100

Source: Primary data

Observation and analysis

According to Table 16, teachers who support the idea that there is gender bias in the resources used in the schools comprise 75% of the total number of teachers in the targeted schools. 25% of the teachers disagreed that there was gender bias in the resources used in the targeted schools. Teachers should ensure that resources used in their school get discouraged and drop out of the school, especially girls.

Table 17: Shows the Gender friendly environment

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	36	90
Yes	4	10
Total	40	100

Source: primary data

Observation and analysis

According to the findings, 90% said that the school environment was not friendly to the learners, hence affecting their performance in the school. 10% said that the environment in the schools was friendly to the learners. Teachers, parents, and pupils should try to enhance the school environment for better performance.

Table: 18: Shows the Community support to girl child education

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	29	72.50
Yes	11	27.50
Total	40	100

Source: Primary data

Observation and analysis

Table 18 shows that 72.50% of the people in the community do not support girl child education, while 27.5% support girl child education. This shows that a lack of support from the community for the girl child affects the performance of the learners.

DISCUSSION

As the government tried to implement the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 26 and all the education principles, it started some programmes for school-going-age children in Kenya [20].

According to the data collected, 58% of those attending school are boys. The researcher noted that 50% of the pupils in the primary schools are aged between 11 and 15 years. 4.7% of the learners are aged between 7 and 10 years, while 25% of the learners are between 21 and 25 years old. The data showed that the attendance of most children at school is not regular. 58% of the children, who are the majority, do not attend classes regularly. 42% of the children attend classes regularly. The researcher observed that those in the lower primary classes are more regular in school attendance than those in the upper classes which is in line with Daraganova *et al.*, study [21]. According to the data collected, 62.5% of the respondents are at school, the researcher observed that 37.5% of the learners feel that they are encouraged at school. The researcher noted that a higher percentage of the respondents, up to 58%, do not get support from their parents in their education. 42% get the support they need from their parents in their education. This finding supports Naite report which indicated that students with highly involved parents had better academic performance and higher test scores [22]. The research found that it was not conducive to learning. 62.5% of the respondents said that the environments are conducive to learning. According to the data collected, 70% of the communities do not support the education of their children, especially girls. Only 30% of the community supports education matters. The researcher noted that 70% of the schools had a gender bias in the resources used by the learners which is similar to [23]. Only 30% of them do not have a gender bias in their resources. The data showed that poverty greatly affects the performance of the learners in the schools; 80% of the respondents and 20% did not. This result is in line with Chinyoka and Naidu study [24].

CONCLUSION

The majority of the learners in primary schools are boys. Many of the school-going children are aged between 1 and 15 years. Most of the pupils in the schools do not attend classes. The majority of the learners do not feel encouraged when at School. Parents in many of the communities do not support the education of their children, especially girls. Most school environments are not conducive to teaching and learning. Gender bias in the resources used at school affects the academic performance of the community. Poverty has greatly affected the academic performance of the learners in the schools. Most of the teachers teaching in primary schools are male. The majority of the teachers are in the age bracket of 31–40 years. Most of the teachers complained that there are not enough textbooks in the schools and that they even have no access to the few that are available. The majority of the teachers have a negative attitude towards their learners, i.e., both girls and boys.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The government should step in to see to it that parents take all their children to school but girls and boys. Guidance and counselling should be introduced in schools to advise and direct the children, most of whom are in their adolescent stages, to prevent pregnancies and dropping. Parents need to be sensitized on gender issues through discussions during parent's days on their attitudes towards the learning of their children. The school can take the opportunity to discuss gender disparity. An attractive environment encourages both boys and girls to stay in school. Gender clubs should be introduced in schools. Gender debates talk from role models, games in which girls and boys play together, essay competitions, and study visits to successful women farmers, or businesswomen. Visits to technical training institutions like village polytechnics or institutes of technology where girls are undertaking male-dominated courses can be made. Physical facilities provided for boys and girls should include separate toilets and latrines. This is an issue relating to space.

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