



**INFLUENCE OF FAMILY BACKGROUND ON GIRLS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN KENYA  
CERTIFICATE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN TURKWEL ZONE IN LOIMA SUB-COUNTY IN  
TURKANA COUNTY**

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**ABSTRACT**

Academic performance of the girl child in public primary schools in Turkana County is generally low yet it is acknowledged that an educated girl plays a significant role in society as compared to an educated boy child. The study sought to determine the influence of family background on girls' academic performance in Kenya Certificate of primary education in Turkwel zone in Loima sub-county in Turkana County. The study was guided by gender relations theory by Pearson. The descriptive research design was used to realize the objectives. The target population included eighteen public primary schools in the zone, 268 class eight girls, 270 BOM members, and 82 teachers. Sampling was done through purposive, probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Research instruments included questionnaires for headteachers, teachers and an interview guide for BOM members. Quantitative data collected from the respondents was cleaned and coded in line with the various variables and prepared for computer analysis by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and were presented using mean, frequencies and percentages, pie charts and bar graphs. Finally, the study found out that the family regarding the family's economic status, number of siblings and the structure of the family had an impact on the academic performance of the girl child. It was therefore concluded that a positive attitude towards girls could help to improve the performance of girls. The study further recommends that research be done to find out the influence of culture and school administration on the academic performance of the girl child.

*Key Words: Background, Family, Economic status, Siblings*

## INTRODUCTION

Education has a profound effect on girls' and women's ability in creating awareness about other rights and achieve status in society such as social, economic and political representations, hence creating satisfaction. Female Education worldwide, especially at the primary school level, provides benefits to the family and the society at large. Research evidence shows that the education of women enables them to better manage their households, to apply improved nutritional practices, to maintain proper hygiene and too effectively to utilize a wide range of available services including family planning among others (UNESCO, 2009). The World Bank is an active member of the global partnership for girls' education initiative (UNGEI), which comprise of donors such as UNICEF, UNESCO, SIDA, NORAD, DANIDA and global campaign for education. Therefore, factors affecting the performance of female is the concern of not only the local society but even the international community (UNICEF, 2003).

Poor school performance not only results in the child having low self-esteem but also causes significant stress to the parents. There are many reasons for children to underperform at school, especially rural schools such as medical problems, below-average intelligence, emotional problems, poor socio-cultural home environment and even environmental causes among others (Sirin, 2005). Many factors come at play regarding girls' academic performance, enrollment, access, and retention.

Children whose parents are of high educational scales have a far better statistical chance of participating in secondary Education (Oloo, 2003). Important factors include parental involvement in their children's education, how much Television children are allowed to watch

and how often students change schools. This is further supported by Ahawo (2009) who observed that in modern society's parents' influence played a very important role in the academic life of a student. Otula (2007) supported this by stating that effective learning involves the partnership of students, teachers, and parents. Ahawo (2009) observed that parents' involvement determines the emotional and material input that further determined the motivation level in children towards education. Hussein (2009) further noted that girls performed poorly compared to boys in public primary schools.

According to the Republic of Kenya (2015), the performance of girls in Turkana is consistently lower than that of boys. The table below shows the performance in Turkwel Zone.

**Table 1: Turkwel Zone KCPE Analysis Summary 2016**

| <b>Range</b>  | <b>Boys</b>  | <b>Girls</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Below 250     | 658          | 660          | 1,318        |
| 251-299       | 309          | 204          | 513          |
| 300-349       | 143          | 78           | 221          |
| 351-399       | 25           | 09           | 34           |
| 400 and above | 04           | 02           | 06           |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>1,141</b> | <b>951</b>   | <b>2,092</b> |

The 2015 and 2016 mean was 201.833 and 223.515 respectively with the deviation of +21.68. It was clear that the available statistics showed that boys performed better than girls yet there was no single research that had been done to find out why girls in Turkana public primary schools underperformed. It was in the light of this background that this study was done to assess school-

related factors affecting girl child academic performance on Kenya certificate of primary education in public primary schools at Turkwel Zone, Loima Sub- County in Turkana County.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Kenyan government has put serious measures to provide education to all children. However, the performance of girls at KCPE is low and it is a persistent problem to some counties most affected being Arid and Semi-Arid areas (ASAL) in the country. This poses a serious implication to the achievement of vision 2030 in the country. According to the Republic of Kenya (2015) the performance of girls in Turkana is consistently lower than that of boys. Educating the girl child in any community is highly regarded as it is considered to be as good as educating the whole community. Despite building only four girls' boarding facilities in the zone to ensure that timely strategies are put in place to ensure that girls compete fairly with their male counterparts, girls' performance is still low. Although studies done on primary school revealed that such factors like inadequate and relevant textbooks, teacher qualification and the pupils' background affect performance in examination generally, research has been done to assess factors affecting girl child academic performance on Kenya's certificate of primary education. This study, therefore, assessed the influence of family background on girls' academic performance in Kenya Certificate of primary education in Turkwel zone in Loima sub-county in Turkana County.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The relationship between family socioeconomic status (SES) and the academic performance of children is well established in sociological research, gender, unexplained absences, parental educational attainment, housing type, ethnicity, and student age are all statistically significant variables and predictors of academic performance. In contrast, family structure, the main source of family income and geographical location do not significantly predict outcomes in school performance once other factors are controlled for (Sirin, 2005). The findings support the notion that the 'social' and the 'economic' components of the socioeconomic status equation have distinct and separate influences on educational outcomes. While financial assistance to schools and families in need is important, policies and programmes that also assist low-income parents in providing appropriate psychological and educational support for their children should also be promoted. There were indications that boys compare to girls are more affected by poverty. Recent work in France examined a program that encouraged parents to participate more in their child's school and found very positive results (Avvisati et al 2010). The program emphasized the importance of parents' involvement in their children's education. It also provided parents with better information on the school system, including information on the roles and responsibilities of various personnel and school offices. While the results were very encouraging, this approach has not been tested in a context where the average education of parents is lower. According to Jensen (2010), the increased access to education of the poorest groups in society normally hurts the average examination and test results. There is also a positive correlation between educational background and income of the parents and test and examination results of the pupils (White, 2004).

Comparative studies between Uganda and Zambia show a significant relation between income, education of parents and test and examination results of pupils. In 2005 in Zambia, the examination results for English of pupils from the most developed regions were on average 20% higher than the results of the lowest developed regions ( Husain & Millimet, 2008). The socio-economic status of parents in one way or the other affects academic achievement. Omoraka (2001), noted that children with rich parents have certain needs, physical and sociological which when met contribute positively to their academic performance. These needs may include a conducive reading atmosphere, good food, playing ground, provision of books and other material and attendance at the best schools available. All these help to promote effective learning and good performance in schools. Children whose parents are of high educational scales have a far better statistical chance of participating in secondary Education (Oloo, 2003). Important factors include parental involvement in their children's education, how much Television children are allowed to watch and how often students change schools. This is further supported by Ahawo (2009) who observed that in modern society's parents' influence played a very important role in the academic life of a student. Otula (2007) supported this by stating that effective learning involves the partnership of students, teachers, and parents. Ahawo (2009) observed that parents' involvement determines the emotional and material input that further determined the motivation level in children towards education. Social status of a family greatly influences the academic performance of girls and involvement in domestic chores which includes; fetching water, firewood, taking care of children and going to the market, also affect the academic achievement of girls in Kisumu East District. The economic status of a family has a greater impact on the Girl Students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Kisumu East District such that girl students' from rich families are adequately catered for and hence higher concentration on

learning. Girl Students' from poor families lack basic items and this adversely affects their participation in education. The academic achievement of girl students' is also affected to a greater extent by the family size and birth order in a family such that moderate families of four children and birth orders of one, to four generally have higher academic achievement. Girls' academic achievement is also influenced by the number of siblings who are either working or studying marketable courses at college level (Ahawo, 2009). The report by Schultz (2002) is classic, and one of the earliest and widely quoted documents on socioeconomic status and achievement. The report argued that for the US, out-of-school variables such as family background and progression to higher levels of learning. There is a reliance on scores and transition rates as core measures of achievement. In Kenya, examinations are generally accepted as valid measures of achievement (Maiyo, 2009).

Secondary school placement, and to some extent admission, depending on the performance of the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination in standard eight (Michael, Miguel & Rebecca, 2004). A learner's level of need to achieve success significantly affects his performance (Weiner, 1990). The need for achievement is the desire to seek the attainment of realistic, but challenging, goals and achievement in one's academic activities. The relationship between achievement goals, learning strategies, and academic achievement has been widely explored in previous studies (Jensen, 2010). But studies that examine the relationships among intrinsic motivation, achievement goal, learning strategy, and academic achievement have been lacking. Individuals' actual achievement behavior depends not only on their motivation to achieve but also on whether they expect to achieve and whether they fear failure. People are more likely to work hard when they perceive a reasonable chance to succeed than when they

perceive a goal to be out of reach. Children's expectations of success can be measured by asking them to predict a certain grade, indicate how sure they are that they can solve a particular problem, and select the hardest task they think they can do from a collection of tasks varying by the degree of difficulty (Mbilinyi, 2003). Children with high expectations for success on a task usually persist at it longer and perform better than children with low expectations. In addition to child-rearing practices, reviewed previously, teaching styles and communication patterns to affect children's attributions. Alika and Egbochuku (2009) found that the socio-economic status of the girls imposes considerable constraints upon their continuing stay in school. they asserted that a girl's particular socio-economic inheritance may have a direct and important effect on educational attainment.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research adopted a mixed methodology since both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. These two sets of data were collected concurrently from the field. After data collection from the field, qualitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics by using frequency counts, the mean, and standard deviation; as well as inferential statistics using by employing SPSS version 21.0 and excel computer packages.

Qualitative data on the hand was organized into themes and categories as they emerged from the field and presented in narrative form with the results presented in the form of tables and figures.

### **Location of the Study**

The research was carried out in Turkwel zone, Loima Sub County in Turkana County. The zone is found in a newly created Sub-County called Loima. The sub-county borders Turkana west sub-county, Northern Uganda to the southeast and lokichogio sub-county to the far north. The



Zone is characterized by semi-arid climate. The sub-county and the county at large are inhabited by the Turkana people. Their major economic activity is pastoralism.

### **Target Population**

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a population is defined as a complete set of individual objects or cases with some common observable characteristics. The target population for this study included eighteen public primary schools in the zone, 268 class eight girls, 270 BOM members, and 82 teachers. The headteachers were targeted because they were school managers who supplied strategic and non-strategic curriculum delivery materials which directly or indirectly had an impact on the performance of girls in public primary schools. Teachers were targeted also because they were the implementers of the curriculum therefore directly contributing to the girls' academic performance.

**Table 2: Target Population**

| <b>Respondents</b> | <b>Target population</b> |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Teachers           | 82                       |
| Class eight girls  | 286                      |
| BOM members        | 270                      |
| Head teachers      | 18                       |
| Total              | 624                      |

### **Sample Population**

Mugenda (2003) clearly states that 10%-30% of the accessible population is enough for a descriptive study. The study sample population, therefore, consisted of fifteen percent of the target population. A sample size of 30% was considered diverse, representative, and generalizable and produces reliable results (Mugenda, 2008).

**Table 3: Sampling grid**

| <b>Respondents</b> | <b>Target population</b> | <b>Sample population</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Sampling technique</b> |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Head teachers      | 185                      | 185                      | 30                | Random                    |
| Class eight girls  | 268                      |                          | 30                | Random                    |
| teachers           | 82                       |                          | 30                | Random                    |
| BOM members        | 270                      |                          | 30                | Stratified random         |

**Data Collection Instruments.**

**Questionnaires**

Kombo and Tromp (2006), states that a questionnaire is an instrument that gathers data over a large sample. According to Mugenda (2003) questionnaires are cost-effective and easy to score and they can be clarified. The researcher used a questionnaire with open and minimal closed-ended questions answered by the key respondents of the research study. This was mainly vital for the variables that cannot be directly observed such as views, perceptions, opinions, and feelings of the respondents. Also because of the time constraint and sample size, I found the questionnaire instrument as the most ideal tool for collecting data. Closed-ended questions were easy to give out and examine hence saved time and money; it was helpful to the researcher

regarding available resources and times to complete the study. On the other hand, open-ended questions though difficult to analyze, stimulated the respondents to think hence they gave an insight into their feelings, interests, and decisions

### **Interview Schedules**

McMillan & Schumacher (2001) an interview guide provide flexibility and the ability to probe and clarify responses, they identify nonverbal as well as verbal behavior, and they provide high response rates and are adaptable. Gay, Mills & Airasian (2009), also states that interviews can be used to search and investigate participants' responses to collect in-detail data about their experiences. Despite their demerits of being costly and time-consuming, the study used an interview guide to gather in-depth information from BOM members.

### **Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments**

#### **Validity**

According to Gay, Mills & Airasian (2009), validity refers to the degree to which a research instrument collects what it is supposed to measure. To improve the validity of the instrument the instruments were pre-tested by piloting. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), a pre-test comprises one to ten percent of the target population thus the pilot was done in 2 public schools representing 10% of the 18 public schools in Turkwel Zone in Loima Sub County, 8 teachers, and 26 class eight girls were interviewed. To determine both face and content validity, the researcher gave the tools to a panel of three experts who helped in improving them. The researcher sought his supervisors' opinions regarding the validity of the instruments.

## **Reliability**

Reliability measure is an indication of stability and consistency with which the instrument measures the concept. It has to do with the accuracy and precision of a measurement procedure. A measuring instrument is reliable if it provides consistent results ( Kothari, 2004). Morrison (2008) defines reliability as a measure of consistency over time and similar samples. A pilot test was done using the instruments to help in improving their clarity and comprehensiveness. The study was done in two schools randomly selected from the target population. Using the pre-test and post-test technique determined the validity and reliability of the research instruments. This provided the researcher with the opportunity to correct the instruments to make them valid and reliable before administering them to collect data.

## **Data analysis Techniques and Procedures**

Data collected was analyzed using a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0. Data was coded in the software and then edited for inconsistency before analyzing. Qualitative data from responses in semi-structured items in the questionnaire and interview schedule for BOM was subjected to content analysis in which patterns were identified based on research questions analyzed and presented in categories and themes based on research objectives. Both descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data. The descriptive statistics involved frequencies, percentages, and means

## **RESULTS**

The pupils were requested to indicate whether their family background affects their academic performance. The results were as shown in table 12

### **Table 4: Family background**

| <b>Response</b> | <b>Number of individuals</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Yes             | 69                           | 86.25             |
| No              | 11                           | 13.75             |
| Total           | 80                           | 100               |

From the findings, 86.25% of the respondents indicated that family background affected their academic performance while 13.75% of the respondents indicated that family background affected their academic performance. Therefore, the majority comprising 86.25% of the respondents indicated that family background affected their academic performance.

The parental respondents who were school board members were also requested to indicate the extent to which family background negatively influenced the academic performance of girl children in public primary schools in their area. The results were as shown in Table 13

**Table 5: Extent of influence of Family background on Academic performance**

| <b>Influence of family background</b> | <b>Number of individuals</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| To a moderate extent                  | 11                           | 13.58             |
| To a great extent                     | 24                           | 29.63             |
| To a very great extent                | 46                           | 56.79             |
| Total                                 | 81                           | 100               |

From the findings in Table 5, 29.63% of the respondents indicated that family background affected the academic performance of girl child in public primary schools to a great extent, 56.79% reported that family background affected the academic performance of girl child in public primary schools to a very great extent while only 13.58% reported that family background affected the academic performance of girl child in public primary schools to a moderate extent. It can be deduced therefore that the majority of the respondents representing 56.79% reported that

family background influenced the academic performance of girl children in public primary schools to a very great extent.

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On the influence of the family background on the academic performance of the girl child, the study found out that the family background of the girl child substantially affected the performance of girls. This is in line with Ahawo (2009), who observed that in modern society; parents' influence played a very important role in the academic life of a student. Oloo, (2003) equally supported this view to state that children whose parents are of high educational scales have a far better statistical chance of participating in secondary Education. The study found that girls at home are over engaged with household chore and taking care of their siblings at the expense of studying and even doing their assignments which impacted negatively on their academic performance. However, Ahawo (2009) suggested that parents should be involved in determining the emotional and material input of the children that further determines the motivation level in children towards education.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

On the influence of the family background on the academic performance of the girl child, the study found out that the family background of the girl child substantially affected the performance of girls. It was concluded that when girls are at home they are over engaged with the household chore and taking care of their siblings at the expense of studying and even doing their assignments which impacted negatively their academic performance.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The study further recommends that the county government of Turkana to take up measures to discourage teenage pregnancies through organized competitive co-curriculum activities and ensure that public primary schools have enough sanitary facilities and bathing water as this will curb absenteeism thus improve the performance of girls.

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