

Influence of School Administrative Practices on Girl Child Drop Out: A Case of Public Secondary Schools in Masaba South Sub-County, Kisii County, Kenya

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate the school administrative practices on girl child dropout in Public Secondary Schools in Masaba South Sub-County, Kenya. This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population was 5865 girls from thirty-nine public secondary schools. The study used simple random sampling technique to select the 12 schools which were involved in the study. The forms two and three girls were purposively sampled. The study ensured validity of questionnaires through expert judgment with the help of supervisors from Kisii University whose opinion was incorporated. The data collection tools were subjected to test and retest procedure to ascertain questionnaires' reliability. Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient formula was used for this study and the correlation coefficient of 0.8 was obtained and therefore the instruments deemed reliable for this study. Data was collected using the questionnaires and interview schedules. Quantitative data was analyzed through the use of descriptive statistics. The qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The analyzed data was presented in tables and bar charts. The study revealed that it was not only the school administrative practices which played a role towards girl child drop out but also the Ministry of Education's failure to implement certain policies which may sustain a girl child in school. It was recommended that there should be collaboration between education stakeholders and government in providing infrastructural support.

Keywords: school, Administration, drop out, girl-child, education.

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Introduction

The future of many countries depend on how well their citizens are educated, the type of education offered and how well it is developed (Todaro, 2007). More in particular, quality education for girls is one of the criteria path ways to promote social and economic development (World Bank, 2009). Since 2002, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the global community have been striving to attain the Dakar Education for All (EFA) goals. Despite the contribution of education to the socio-economic wellbeing of a country and an individual, there is still low participation of girl-

child in education. Sub-Saharan Africa is among the regions that have experienced premature departures of girls from Schools (UNESCO, 2010). Early departures of girls from schooling certainly result in wastage. Wastage here means the inefficient utilization of both human and economic resources by the education system (Omare, 2007). Omare (2007) further argues that the interruption of schooling by female students is also costly in terms of the quality of life of those who drop out as well as to the society at large.

In Africa high rates of girl child dropout have been attributed to various factors including institutional factors such as school administrators. The school administration affects the survival of girls and perpetuates the gender gap in education through various fronts. For instance, the working environment, teacher attitudes and teaching practices, gender bias in curricula and classroom culture all affect female attainment and persistence in schools (Republic of Kenya, 2013). In Kenya, at independence, there were three major problems to solve; poverty, ignorance and disease. Hence, more emphasis was laid on education as the key to economic, social and political development (Republic of Kenya, 2013). The Government of Kenya has made tremendous efforts to improve girls' education including affirmative action on the expansion of facilities to enable the girl child to study science subjects and a policy to allow a girl who drops out of school due to pregnancy to continue with education Republic of Kenya (2013).

School Administrative Practices and Girl-Child Dropout

A study conducted by National Women's Law Centre (2012) in USA revealed that girl child dropout was a crisis. It indicated that one in every four girls did not complete school. The study further indicated absenteeism triggered by unsafe feelings in the school led to dropping out completely. On the same note, the study noted that pregnancy was a major cause of leaving school by the girl child. The study found out that three in every ten young women would become pregnant before age of twenty years, a rate higher than any other developed country. Cardoso and Verner (2007) identified cultural and social barriers for girls to access education in Pakistan. The scholar found out that there was a high level of illiteracy among parents who did not realize the importance of education for girls. Other conclusions of the study were that poverty led parents to prefer boys for schooling than girls, early marriage was common in Pakistan and therefore girls were prepared for housekeeping rather than for school education and that women had low status in some tribal societies. Their study further established that women in Pakistan were regarded as less intelligent, responsible for housework and serving the men-folk of the family. However, in this case the study was only concerned with cultural and social barriers for the girls' access to education.

Most of the studies did not address how schools' administrative practices influenced girl child drop out. From the above studies, it is conclusive that the researchers mainly concentrated on the question of girls' dropout in relation to culture, poverty, early marriages and child labor as most common causes of girl child drop out from schools. They did not specifically address the question of girls dropping from high schools or primary schools, and therefore this study for more research which may establish if administrative practices contribute to girl child drop out. In Masaba South Sub-county, low participation and high dropout rate of female students in secondary schools was highly prevalent according to a report released by MoE (2013). The report further pointed out that the dropout of female children from schools in this region was due to a complex interplay of socio-cultural, economic and structural factors. However, this study sought to single out the role of school administrators on girl-child dropout. In this report by the Ministry of Education (2013), the researcher did not establish the elements which showed the influence the school

administrators played on the girl dropout from the Sub-County secondary schools, hence the need for this research.

Cardoso and Verner (2007) carried out a study in Pakistan and found out that there was an increasing rate of dropout children especially the female gender. The study revealed that social and home environments had great impact on the dropout. Nekatibeb (2012) found out that the girl child dropout in secondary schools was widespread in rural Zimbabwe. It should be noted that the study did not focus on the role of school administration on the girl child dropout. This is one of the gaps which the present study would fill. In Niger and Burkina, those children who do not qualify for promotion to the next grade are forced to either repeat the same grade or drop out of school; the same paper has also cited countries like Kenya whose examinations as those with high stakes at the end of primary and secondary school levels (Sabates *et al.*, 2010). These are all purely school policy and administrative factors which contribute to school dropout not for only girls but for both genders.

Sabates (2010) in his study observed that learners had brief/short stints in school because of limited learning opportunities in overcrowded classrooms with inadequate learning materials and half-baked teachers. On the same note, Alexander, (2008) in his paper concluded that if children of different ages and abilities are lumped in single classrooms “without proper adaptation of teaching methods to improve learning and to induce school engagement” coupled with familial and other psychosocial aspects such as ill-health, malnutrition and poverty, then many children may fail to attend school and eventually drop out. In Kenya, Nyaga, (2010) observed that parents tend to discourage their daughters to acquire too much education for fear that they would have difficulties in finding educated husbands or being good wives. Furthermore, Amadi (2013) in her study found that in Kenya, between 10,000 to 13,000 girls left school each year due to pregnancy alone. This would be as a result of particular school policies that may allow such students to temporarily take leave until they give birth and seek readmission.

Teacher attitudes and teaching practices have important implications for the success and persistence of girls in schools. Studies from several countries in Sub-Saharan Africa indicate that both female and male teachers believe that boys are academically better than girls (Brock and Cammish, 2011). In many countries there are indications that teachers paid more attention to boys than girls in the classrooms. Still in others there are conditions where boys are being given priority in the distribution of books and other learning materials.

Sexual harassment has been an issue of special concern since the mass rape of 75 schoolgirls in Kenya. Cardoso and Verner (2007) indicate that there is a pandemic of sexual violence and harassment in educational institutions in Pakistan, and it is a real concern for students, parents and school authorities. Male students are mostly identified as offenders and their acts include verbal abuses, cartooning, harassing, beating and raping. Ackers *et al.*, (2011) report that in Guinea boys are very aggressive towards girls and that they used physical force threatened and teased girls to silence them in the class and eventually dropped out of school. It is worthy to note from the above literature that points out school management have a great responsibility of taking care of and or maintaining girl children in school. Factors such as sending the girls home for fees, terminating their studies on grounds of early pregnancies, unfriendly learning environment all contribute to girl child drop out. It is a reality that girls drop out of school in Masaba South Sub-County (MoE, 2013). The aim of this study was to establish whether the school administrators did have any influence on a girl child drop out from Public Secondary schools in the Sub-County.

Methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. This study settled on this design because it gave an in depth description of the extent of female drops out from schools and the role of school administrative practices that contributed to girl child drop out. Given the constraints of time and resources, this design was found appropriate for this study. The research was carried out in Public Secondary Schools of Masaba South Sub-County, Kisii County, in western Kenya.

The total student population in secondary schools in the Sub- County was 13,292 (DEO, Masaba South, 2014). A sample of 280 was selected to represent the target population. The questionnaires and interview schedule for data schedule. Given that the data required for the study was both quantitative and qualitative, the student obtained an introductory letter from Kisii University, proceeds and acquired a research permit from the National Council for Science and Technology (NACOSTI). Both quantitative and qualitative data collected was analyzed. Interpretation of the data was done and conclusions drawn.

Findings

Principals' Responses on School Administrators' Role on Girl Child Drop out

The following are summarized results of the responses that were given by sampled Principals of some Secondary Schools in Masaba South Sub-County on the role of school administrative practices that contributed to girl child drop out in Masaba South Sub-County as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. School Administrative Practices that influence Girl Child Drop out

Administrative Practices influencing girl child drop out	F	%
Tough school rules	12	100
Infrastructural facilities, learning environment, materials and sanitary factors	10	83.3
Pressure to perform in examinations	10	83.3
Girls learning in same classrooms with boys	7	58.3
Male teacher-girl relationships	7	58.3
Weak guidance and counseling structures	6	50
Negative remarks made by principals, teachers on girl child	5	41.6
Uniforms	2	16.7
School fees	1	8.3
Sneaking out of school	1	8.3

The principals who participated in the study cited tough school rules 12 (100%) as being unbearable and made majority girls to drop out of school. On the same subject, 10 (83.3%) principals were all in agreement that inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor learning environment and unavailability of sanitary materials led to girls dropping out school. Further, 10 (83.3 %) principals who participated in the study agreed insurmountable pressure meted on students to perform well in examinations proved unbearable for majority girls to stay in school, a finding that agreed with Harriet *et al.*, (2015), who observed that tough school rules and regulations which once implemented encourage girls to drop out of school probably because of their inability to cope. This finding was also in agreement with a Research Report by Harriet *et al.*, (2015) which revealed that most head teachers had a believe that they were legally mandated to expel pregnant girls yet there was no law or policy authorizing such measures but a practice that was only within individual school rules, regulations and policies.

The Principals 10 (83.3%) revealed that some girls dropped out because their schools did not have a conducive learning environment (Infrastructural facilities, learning environment, materials and sanitary factors). This finding was in agreement with Sabates *et al.*, (2010) in their report to UNESCO which pointed out that walking long distance to schools, inadequate facilities, overcrowded classrooms, and, lack of girls' school safety, were common causes for school drop-out among school girls.

Ten principals representing 83% responded that unbearable pressure for academic excellence engineered girls who did not meet the cut off to drop. This finding was in agreement with Amadi *et al.*, (2013) whose findings had established that repeating of classes led to drop out. This was attributable to the fact that unbearable pressure for academic excellence on the part of girls engineered them to drop out of school because those who did not meet the cut off mark would not be promoted to the next class, hence decided to drop out. On the other hand Frances Hunt, (2008), found out that girls who were needed to repeat were instead withdrawn from school and sought admission in different schools.

Seven principals 7 (58.3% cited intolerance by girls to learn in the same classrooms with their male students was also mentioned as that which made the girls to drop out of school. This finding was in agreement with a study Nkosha *et al.*, (2013) who found out that sharing of classes in Zambian basic schools was perceived as a cause of girl drop out from school and it is a situation revealed in this study about the perception of principals about the role of administrators' on girl child drop out.

Principals 7 (58.3%) observed that a mixed class led to drop out. Girls viewed boys as being more important than them. This finding concurs with previous studies which show that many households have preference for the education of boys over girls, with girls' education often perceived as unimportant hence girls' susceptibility to drop (Frances Hunt, 2008). Furthermore, Josephine, and Aramanzan, (2011) found out that girls preferred to study in single sex schools because in Uganda, if a girl became pregnant while in a mixed secondary school, she would be expelled from school unashamedly, and especially one can be withdrawn from class while boys cheered up and went on with lessons.

Principals 6 (50%) disclosed that weak guidance and counseling structures in schools did contribute to girl child drop out because they were no professional teacher counselors and had extra teaching responsibilities. A study by Amadi *et al.*, 2013 had observed that there were inactive guidance committees in schools in Kenya and they proposed the need to set up active guidance and counseling committees in schools to help girls overcome the rate of school girl dropout, an assertion that confirms the findings of this study too.

According to principals, other factors that had little impact on girl child drop out included school uniforms (16.7%), being sent home for fees (8.3%), sneaking out of school (8.3%) and involvement in drug use (8.3%). The findings by principals did not agree with Hunt (2008) which found out that high dropout rates led to limited access to secondary schools, increased exposure to alcohol use, drugs and child labour. This would be attributed to the fact that only a few schools were sampled and probably where the vice was not common.

Class Teachers' Responses on the Role of School Administrative Practices

On what the class teachers felt were administrative issues that led to girl child drop out, they had various responses as summarized in the Table 2

Table 2. Class Teachers' responses on Administrators' Influence on Girl Child Drop out

Statements	F	%
Tough school rules	12	100
Pressure to perform in examinations	10	83.3
Girls learning in the same class with boys	10	83.3
Infrastructural facilities, learning environment, materials and sanitary facilities	9	75
Male teacher-girl relationships	9	75
Weak guidance and counseling structures	6	50
Negative remarks made by teaching staff on girl child	3	25
Corporal punishment	1	8.3
Walking a long distance to school	1	8.3
School fees	1	8.3
Source: Field Data, 2016		

The class teachers 12 (100%) who participated in study were convinced that tough school rules were responsible for the drop out of some girls from schools in Masaba South Sub-County. Class teacher respondents, 10 (83.3%) observed that girls dropped out of school due to greater demand from teachers to perform well in examinations. Any poor performance in class exams attracted a repeat in the same form. After repeating once or twice without proceeding to the next level, such girls dropped out because they got discouraged. This finding corroborated with Amadi *et al.*, (2013) whose findings had showed that repeating of classes led to drop out among girls. The class teachers 10 (83.3%), cited use of the same classrooms with boys made some girls to drop out of schools probably because they felt uncomfortable when they are on their monthly periods and boys demanded for relationships from them. On the issue of girl-teacher relationship, class teachers representing 75% (9) disclosed that some girls dropped out because of the stigma of pregnancy resulting from some of their teachers' sexual involvement with female students. This finding agrees with Population Council and UNESCO's Harriet *et al.*, (2015) which pointed out that stigmatization and discrimination against pregnant girls and adolescent mothers was a bottleneck to resuming education for the affected girls.

Further observation was made by nine 9 class teachers representing 75% revealed that inadequate infrastructure, learning materials and inadequate sanitary facilities were contributory factors to girls' drop out. These finding was in agreement with Grant *et al.*, (2013) who found that female students were more likely to drop from school if their toilets at school were dirty.

Class teachers 6 (50%) identified guidance and counseling as not being vibrant in helping to address the challenges girls were facing. They revealed that teacher-counselors did not have formal training in guidance and counseling and therefore were not skilled enough to handle girls' issues, and therefore lived with their problems which forced them to dropout. A study that was conducted in Botswana by UNESCO (2015) was in agreement with this finding which concluded that there was poor integration of sexuality issues, including gender issues and abuse, and a lack of trained teachers in the country's schools. This finding is in agreement further with the fact that class teacher respondents 3 (25%) did also indicate that negative remarks made against a girl child by members of the teaching staff did make some girls to drop out of school. This finding was in agreement with Sunita (2011) who pointed that teachers' attitudes demonstrated that students with low academic expectations were treated in a negative way.

In their study, sampled children reported discriminatory practices of the teachers such as verbal abuse and corporal punishment that was meted out to them were viewed as most significant reason for their dropout from school. This was common in instances where girls had reported to school back after delivery and failure to perform well in a particular teacher's subject.

Other issues that class teachers pointed out as least contributing to girl child drop out included corporal punishment (8.3%), an established fact that corroborates with Sunita (2011) where he found out that when corporal punishment was meted out to school students resulted to them dropout from school; Sunita Chugh, 2011; Brown and Park, 2002; Mukudi, 2004, all pointed out that when the cost of schooling was high, including fees, resulted to students being sent home for fees and this finding was in agreement with girls who would drop out for lack of fees (8.3%). Walking a long distance to school and from school which accounted for (8.3%) showed some girls would rather drop out from school. This is in agreement with Ainsworth *et al.*, (2005) study which found out that the likelihood of attending secondary school for girls' decreases with the greater distance compared to the nearer secondary schools because of the length of time and energy needed to cover the distance for girls and parental anxiety about sexual safeguard of their daughters.

Overall, the Teachers' responses seemed to be more objective than the Principals' because perhaps they did not want to portray the serious role they play in influencing girl child drop out from secondary schools in the Sub-County.

Form Two and Three Girl Responses on Role of School Administrative Practices

Of those girl respondents on the item on the role of school administration's influence on girl child drop out, they responded variously attaching much more relevance to certain issues than others as summarized in Table 3

Table 3. Girls' responses on school administrative practices

Statements	F	%
Tough school rules	220	86.2
Infrastructural facilities, learning environment, materials and sanitary facilities	210	82.4
Male teacher-girl relationships	200	78.4
Pressure to perform in examinations	190	74.5
Negative remarks made by principals, teachers on girl child	170	66.7
Girls learning in same classrooms with boys	150	58.8
Poor performing schools	65	25.5
School fees	42	16.5
Corporal punishment	29	11.4
Reporting to school very in morning	26	10.2
Unfair corporal punishment	16	6.3
Sneaking out of school	15	5.9
School not participating in sports	13	5.1
Unavailability of school van/bus	10	3.9
Unattractive school uniform color	09	3.5
Schools are non-boarding	05	2.0

Source: Field Data, 2016

According to girl respondents 220 representing 86.2%, who took part in the study, implied that strict schools rules made some of the girls to drop out because they would not withstand them. The views of girl respondents were in agreement with Harriet *et al.*, 2015, who noted in their study that tough school rules encourage girls to drop out of school probably because of their inability to cope or probably due to the girls perceptions that rigid school rules and regulations in their schools only acted as traps to catch and punish those who break them. The majority of the girls 210 representing 82.4% revealed that they do not have sanitary facilities to manage their hygiene. The respondents further said that some female students decided to drop out because some schools did not have any provision for sanitary towels and facilities for disposal. They felt uncomfortable and shamed sitting besides male students in the same classrooms. They feared sudden leakage and the psychological trauma faced when students teased and embarrassed them. In addition, some of the respondents revealed that some girls missed out from school due to pain when having period.

Girl respondents 200 (78.4%) indicated that their male teachers befriended some girls and indicated that they had intentions of marrying them. The revelation by the girl respondents show girls did not have a safe learning environment and this disturbance therefore made some girls to opt out of school as a result of early pregnancy and marriage as this study findings have established. Ricardo (2010) in their study discussed that among other causes of girl child drop out from school were the girls school safety, are common causes for school dropout. Under such circumstances, the girls do not concentrate in their studies thus become uncomfortable and shy; those who reject advances from some amorous teachers, they are subjected to corporal punishment and or other forms of persecution 16 (6.3%) which made them to drop from school or transfer to other schools. These findings were in agreement with conclusions made by Francis, *et al.*, (2014). They noted that various factors which contributed to school dropout had to do with the school environment and the teachers' behaviour. That study revealed that some girls opted to drop out of school owing to the use of corporal punishment. They also cited an unfriendly school climate that was not conducive to learning.

The female girls' respondents 190 (74.5%) cited overemphasis to pass examinations resulting to repeating a form (class) many times contributed to some girls dropping out due to embarrassment. Past studies have shown that students are forced to repeat classes. This position agrees with principals, class teachers and Amadi *et al.*, (2013) whose findings had shown that repeating of classes led to drop out among school girls.

According to the girl respondents, principals were sending students home for fees. For parents who did not have enough money for school expenses such as uniforms and supplementary books their daughters dropped out of school. This finding was in agreement with Mbani's (2008) study in Awendo that revealed similar findings where girls drop out of school due to school fees. Mbani further in his study observed most parents were unable to meet their basic needs due to limited economic activities, students are always sent home to collect fees and money for other school expenses such as for buying additional class readers. Such students end up lagging behind in their class work. This resulted in them performing poorly in class, which discourages them, forcing some of them to eventually drop out of school. Munyaradzi (2012) in his study was also of the same opinion when in his findings drew the conclusion that when parents could not raise the required money for school fees, uniforms and stationery it created a situation for a girl child to opt to exit from her education. Moreover, class teachers and the female students pointed out that some degree of frustration, shyness and unworthiness develops in girls when they don't answer questions in class well

like boys and are called names, a situation past studies established. Francis (2014) in their study, it was revealed that teachers apparently attached negative labels to girls who were victims of cultural practices which encouraged school dropout. The results also did reveal that sharing classes with boys did contribute to their drop out from school. 150 girls responded on this item which represented 58.8%.

Class responses seemed to be more objective than the Principals and this may have been attributed to the fact that they did not want to portray themselves being part of the problem that saw girls exit school. Of the 255 girls who participated in the study, 190 (74.5%) cited being forced to excel in examinations made some of them to drop out of their schools. Some girls are made to repeat classes against their wish or of their parents. This makes them decide to drop because they felt inadequate, a finding corroborated with Amadi *et al.*, (2013) whose findings had shown failure to pass to next grade made students to repeat classes, a situation that that made some girls to drop out of school. Out of the sampled girls, 170 representing 66.7% reported discriminatory practices of the teachers as a factor that they disliked.

According to these girls, teachers hurled heavy abusive words to them and these actions probably made the girls to belittled and made them uncomfortable while in school. The study found out that some girls who came back to school after delivery were subjected to harassment and abuse by some teachers and would sometimes fail to secure readmission to class as stipulated in the Education Act. This findings was in corroboration with Josephine, and Aramanzan, (2011) found out that if a girl became pregnant while in a mixed secondary school, she would be expelled from school unashamedly and would be withdrawn from class in the presence of boys.

QASO's Response on role of School Administrative Practices

The responses obtained from interviews with the Sub-County Quality Assurance Standards Officer, on whether he thought the school administrators played any role towards girl child drop out, he indicated that inadequate infrastructural and insufficient sanitation facilities in schools greatly contributed to girl child dropout. He observed:

“lack of facilities and poor hygiene affect both girls and boys, lack of better sanitation facilities and indecent learning facilities in schools may make some mature girls to drop out of school.

The QASO's sentiments were in agreement with Dhirendra's (2012) study which pointed out that school related problems such as corporal punishment, poor infrastructural facilities, were main reasons for girl child drop out. The officer further revealed that some teachers befriended girls and on being discovered by their parents, they felt uncomfortable being in school and in some instances parents withdrew them and blamed school administrators who were not keen to protect and guide their girl students.

“...some teachers befriend their girl students and impregnate them and eventually these girls carry the burden and drop out while the involved teachers are never reported to any office by their principals”.

He further observed that tough school rules like reporting to school before six in the morning, repeating of classes when some girls cannot meet the minimum marks for promotion to the next form makes them to drop out of school. He observed that:

“...most girls in our secondary schools would encourage their parents to register them in schools which have not set standards to govern their performance, behavior and hate repeating classes.”

The sub- county quality assurance and standards officer revealed that implementing strict rules and regulations had a share in contributing to girls' drop out in the sub county.

On whether girls learning in the same classroom with boys had any link with girl child drop out, the Sub-County Quality Assurance Officer did not attribute it to girl child drop out but retorted that many girls enjoy the company of boys but hate being compared to boys by their teachers when they cannot perform as better as boys:

"...girls enjoy the company of boys but some feel demoralized and humiliated when they are portrayed as non-performers by their teachers in front of the class. Instead of demoralizing the girls, such teachers must guide and encourage the girls that they can do as better as boys".

According to the Sub-County Quality Assurance Officer, the officers in-charge have done very little to raise the self-esteem of the girls especially amidst challenges and thus the girls lose hope and drop out because they have no shoulder to lean to. The findings on whether administrative practices had influence on girl child drop out, all the respondents were of the opinion that the administrators had an input. However the factors were the same only the magnitude varied.

Conclusions

The study concluded that, it is not only the school administrators who play a role while executing their duties that results to girl child drop out but also no-implementation of government promises to girl students such as the provision of sanitary facilities, failure to follow up with school administrators to ensure school levies charged are as stipulated by the government, policies such as readmission to class those girls who have given birth are never implemented.

Recommendations

From the finding, principals and teachers contribute to drop out of girls. Therefore, this study recommends that a program meant to educate the school staff on effective techniques of meeting the needs of girls be developed.

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