

The Influence of School and Classroom Practices on Girls Participation and Achievement in Education in Public Day Primary Schools in Kyeni Division, Embu East District, Kenya

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Abstract

Declaration of education for all and universal primary education is meant to ensure that every child's right to education is protected and respected. School and practices and classroom are a key determinant to participation and achievement of girls and boys. The study aimed at investigating on the influence of school and classroom practices on girls' participation and achievement in education. The sample comprised of Two hundred and sixty six (256) girls in class seven and eight, five head teachers and one Area Education Officer (AEO). Data was collected using two questionnaires: one questionnaire for girls and the other one for the head teachers and an interview schedule for the AEO. Results obtained indicated that corporal punishment, teachers motivation, use of English during interaction, equal distribution of materials and failure to consider girls for prefecture in school had greatest impacts on girls' participation and achievement in education. These findings are expected to stimulate Government concern in provision of quality education to its young generation.

Keywords: Influence, school and classroom practices & participation and achievement

Introduction

Education is an important ingredient in a country's development progress. In this regard its development needs to be well managed so that the society can attain the desired progress in social, economic and political realms (Chiuri & Kiumi, 2005). Education can make a positive contribution to the economic and social development of a country. UNESCO (2002) contended that up to 20% of the income growth could be traced to education. Among other concerns the millennium development goals (MDGs) targets to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling (Sifuna,20003). The progress towards this goal has been hampered by a systematic failure to place quality at the heart of Education for All (EFA) Agenda. Since independence in 1963, school quality ranks high on the national agenda, with the government spending huge portion of the budget every fiscal year on education programme such as Free Primary Education, curriculum reform, teacher quality and other related concerns. The educational studies done in the developing countries have been conducted on the impact of school quality on participation and achievement.

It is not adequate to determine what school factors affects participation and achievement generally, it is also important to determine which aspects of school and classroom practices that affect girls more negatively so that the government and the stakeholders may refocus their attention to the most pressing needs. Although Kenya has made tremendous effort in enrolment in primary school, girls' participation begins to fall off by comparison with that of boys as they enter their teenage years (Republic of Kenya, 2008). Whether in the developed parts of the country like Nairobi and Central province or in less developed part like North Eastern province and Northern Kenya the school and classroom practices is critical for participation and achievement of girls (Mensch & Lloyd 1998). Kyeni division has twenty nine day primary school and majority of the pupils are girls (DEO, 2011), therefore the impact of school quality on girl's participation and achievement is highly felt.

Statement of the Problem

The quality of primary school is crucial for the participation and achievement of pupils in education system. The government of Kenya has invested a lot of resources in provision of FPE since 2003. The expected benefits of education cannot be realized if this effort does not place quality at the centre of planning in reference to school and classroom practices. There has been public concern that public day primary school quality is below par and these impact negatively to girl's participation and achievement.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was to;

- i. To determine the influence of the school and classroom practices on girls' participation and achievement.

Methodology

The study employed descriptive survey research design. The target population was made up of the head teachers, pupils and education officers in Kyeni Division, Embu District. Multi stage random sampling techniques was used to come up with a total sample of 262 respondents, made up of five head teachers, two hundred and fifty six pupils and one education officer. Head teachers questionnaire, pupil's questionnaires and an interview schedule for education officer were used to collect the data. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Findings

The following results were realized after analyzing the collected data;

Majority (53.9%) of the girl's respondent were in class eight while 46.1% are class seven. The findings also indicated that 40% of the head teachers are holders of bachelor degree, 40% are diploma holders while 20% are p₁ certificate holders. This implies that the all head teachers have minimum qualification and training. The academic and professional qualification of head teachers is expected to influence quality of service delivery at the school they head, and in implementation of reforms (MOE, 1999). Also school management skills are an important variable which affects students' achievement (Psacharopolous & woodhan, 1985)

Information obtained revealed that 80% of the head teachers had teaching experience of over 15 years while 20% had teaching experience of between 10-15 years. Teaching experience is an important determinant of education outcome. This is further adduced by Eshiwani (1983) observed that lack of teaching experience leads to poor performance. The study also revealed that all (100%) of all the Head teachers had an experience of between 1-3 years. This implies that majority of the head teachers had few years of headship experience. In a study conducted in Embu District, Kenya Murithi (2007) established similar findings this may have a negative impact on participation and achievements in education

The finding also revealed that, majority of the (80%) of the head teachers had stayed in their current station between 1-3 years, 20% had served between 4-10 years. This point to the fact that majority of the head teachers were newly posted in their current station and few were promoted from among members of the teaching staff in the same station. Similar studies have established that the length of the time spent in an organization translates to hand on experience (moley, 1999). The short period in an organization may compromise school quality hence impact negatively on girls' participation and achievement in education.

The researcher sought for information on the influence of corporal punishment on girls' achievement. The information is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Influence of Corporal Punishment on Girls' participation and Achievement

Response	Girls		Head Teachers	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	119	46.5	3	60
Great extent	43	16.8	-	-
No opinion	24	9.4	-	-
Small extent	17	6.6	1	20
No extent	49	19.1	1	20
N/A	3	1.2	-	-
Total	256	100	5	100

The study revealed that, 46.5% of girls indicated the impact of corporal punishment on their achievement to very great extent, 16.5% great extent, 9.4% no opinion, 6.6% small extent, 19.1% no extent and 1.2% of the girls did not respond to the item in the questionnaire. Similarly majority (60%) of the head teachers indicated very great extent, 20% and 20% of the head teachers indicated small extent and no extent respectively in schools. This implies that corporal punishment had great impact on girls' achievement. The researcher sought for information on the impact of teachers' motivation on girls' participation as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Impact of Teachers Motivation on Girls' Participation and Achievement

Response	Girls		Head Teachers	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	164	64.1	2	40
Great extent	36	14.1	3	60
No opinion	19	7.4	-	-
Small extent	16	6.3	-	-
No extent	20	7.8	-	-
Total	256	100	5	100

The study revealed that, majority (64.1%) of girls indicated that the impact of the teachers motivation to girls participation in education is to very great extent, 14.1% great extent, 7.4% no opinion, 6.3% small extent, 7.8% no extent and 0.4% did not respond to the item in the questionnaire. While 40% of the head teachers indicated very extend and majority (60%) of the head teachers indicated great extent. This implies that the encouragement from teachers had great impact in girls participation in school. The researcher sought the information on the influence of sexual harassment on girls' participation in education as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3: Impact of Sexual Harassment on Girls Participation and Achievement

Response	Girls		Head Teachers	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	71	27.7	1	20
Great extent	40	15.6	2	40
No opinion	21	8.2	-	-
Small extent	17	6.6	1	20
No extent	104	40.6	1	20
Total	256	100	5	100

The study revealed that, 27.7% of the girls indicated the impact of sexual harassment to girls participation in education is to very great extent, 15.6% great extent, 8.2% no opinion, 6.6% small extent and 40.6% of the girls indicated no extent. while 20% of the head teachers indicated very great extent, 40% great extent, 20% small extent and 20% no extent. This agrees with the findings of the (UNESCO, 2006) report which established that, sexual harassment and even defilement by the teachers all affects participation and achievement in education.

The study sought for information on the influence of equal distribution of materials on participation of girls in education as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4: Influence of Equal Distribution of teaching/ learning Materials

Response	Girls		Head Teachers	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	94	36.7	1	20
Great extent	79	30.9	3	60
No opinion	34	13.3	-	-
Small extent	11	4.3	1	20
No extent	38	14.8	-	-
Total	256	100	5	100

The study revealed that, 36.7% of girls indicated that the influence of equal distribution of material on girls participation in education is to very great extent, 30.9% great extent, 13.3% no opinion, 4.3% small extent and 14.8% no extent while 20% of the head teacher indicated very great extent, 60% great extent and 20% small extent.

This implies that majority of the respondents felt that equal distribution of materials in class had an impact in their participation in education. This agrees with Sutton (1999) findings, if the learning environment (within the schools and classrooms, a welcoming and non-discriminatory is critical to creating a quality learning environment) for girls is improved it may lead to real result. The influence of failure to consider girls for prefecture in participation and Achievement in education.

Table 5: Influence of Failure to Consider Girls for Prefecture on Participation and Achievement

Response	Girls		Head Teachers	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	79	30.9	1	20
Great extent	55	21.5	1	20
No opinion	39	15.2	-	-
Small extent	11	4.3	1	20
No extent	53	20.7	2	40
N/A	17	6.6	-	-
Total	256	100	5	100

The study revealed that, 30.9% of the girls indicated that failure to consider girls for prefecture as an impact on girls' participation in education to very great extent, 21.5% great extent, 20% small extent and 40% no extent. Similarly 20% of the head teacher indicated very great extent, 20% great extent, 20% small extent and 40% no extent. This implies that majority of the respondent felt that failure to consider girls for prefecture as an impact on girls' participation in education. The researcher sought information on the influence of the use of English on girls' participation. The information is presented in Table 6

Table 6: Impact of the Use of English during Interaction on Girls Participation and Achievement

Response	Girls		Head Teachers	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	171	66.8	1	20
Great extent	34	13.3	2	40
No opinion	17	6.6	-	-
Small extent	12	4.7	2	40
No extent	22	8.6	-	-
Total	256	100	5	100

The study reveals that, majority (66.8%) of the girls had an opinion that impact of use of English during interaction on girls participation is to very great extent, 13.3% great extent, 6.6% no opinion, 4.7% small extent and 8.6% no extent. Similarly 20% of the head teacher indicated very great extent, 40% great extent and 40% small extent. This implies that majority of the respondents indicated that use of English had a great impact on girls education. This is consistent with similar findings by David (2008) which established that the performance of primary school pupils was very poor due to the use of tribal language in the lower primary schools and due to teachers using mother tongue to teach and explain the concept. He recommends that English language should be used as a medium of communication within and outside the classroom. (Mc Laughlin) asserts that pupils who speak English language tend to understand it better and do well in English written examination.

The test was run to test the hypothesis which stated that there is statistically significant influence of school and classroom practices on girls' participation and achievement as indicated Table 7.

Table 7: Chi-Square Test on Influence of School and Classroom Practices and Girls participation and achievement

Items	Chi-square(a,b)	df	Asymp
Being appointed as prefects	115.3	5	.000
Teachers motivating girls	338.0	5	.000
Use of English during interaction	335.8	5	.000
Corporal punishment	34.4	5	.000

The researchers run the test to test the null hypothesis using the chi –square. The degree of freedom was 5 and the level of the significance was 0.05. The study on various items revealed that girls being appointed as prefects; chi-square value=115.3>,p-value=.000<.05, teachers motivating girls, chi-square value=338.3>, p-value=.000<.05, use of English during interaction, chi-square value=335>, p-value=.000<.05 and corporal punishment, chi-square value=34.4>, p-value=.000<.05. In all the items the actual probability of chi-square value was found to be less than the level of significant which was .05. The statistical test revealed that the influence is highly significant and as such the rejection of the hypothesis which states that there is no statistically significant influence of school and classroom practices and girls participation and achievement as such the alternative hypothesis holds that there is statistically significant influence of school and classroom practices and girls participation and achievement in education. This implies that if the school and classroom practices are favorable then girls’ participation and achievement in education is enhanced.

Conclusions

The study established that majority of the respondents indicated that the influence of school and classroom practices on girls’ participation and achievement was to great extent on corporal punishment, teachers’ motivation was to a very great extent a, use of English for interaction was at very great extent, equal distribution of materials at great extent, sexual harassment at great extent and failure to consider girls for prefecture was to great extent. The study concluded that there is statistically significant influence of the school and classroom practices on girls’ participation and achievement in education.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the current study the following recommendations were made:

- i. On the corporal punishment in school and sexual harassment children right and sexual offence bill should be implemented to the letter.
- ii. The pupils should be enlightened on their rights by the ministry of education and other government agencies so as proper investigation is done whenever such vice occurs to sustain the case in the court of law.
- iii. Teachers in-service is supposed to be offered to the teachers to refresh on the rights and freedoms of the children.

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