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Influence of Early Marriages on Girls' Retention in Public Secondary Schools in Isiolo County

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Abstract: Globally, all girls just like boys have a right to be educated so as to maximize their personal development and their contribution to their community and society. The purpose of this study was to find out the influence of early marriages on girls' retention in public secondary schools, The study was guided by social learning theory by Albert Bandura. Social learning theory states that learning occurs within a social context. The study adopted a mixed methods approach. In other words, the study applied both quantitative and qualitative methods and adopted the concurrent triangulation design. The study was conducted in 20 secondary schools in Isiolo County and the target population of the study comprised of 5701 respondents. The study used simple random sampling. The study sample consisted of 301 respondents. The researcher used questionnaires and interview schedules in this data collection process. Piloting of the was done in 4 schools in Neighboring Meru County where the validity of the instruments was done through the expert judgement of the supervisors while the reliability of the instruments was ascertained using test-retest method and internal consistency of the instruments will be calculated using Cronbachs Alpha where a reliability coefficient of 0.72 was established. Qualitative data was analyzed descriptively and arranged according to the themes while quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS version 23 and tables presented in form of percentages, mean and standard deviation. The study established that early marriages influence girl's retention the study concludes that indeed it has an impact girl's education to a greater extent and the community around still prefers early marriages of school going girls which has been hindrance to girls completing their education successfully.

Keywords: Girl retention, early marriages, girl's performance

INTRODUCTION

In Kenya, Girl Child Network (GCN, 2004) mentioned culture and traditions as inhibiting factors affecting girls' participation in education and the main aspects being Female Genital Mutilation (Female Genital Mutilation) and early marriages. The socio-cultural factors and its influence on the education of girls and issues on poor attitude or low participation in the system had been expressed well in Mbiti who alludes that there are four major reasons that lead to girls withdrawal from education system which include greater demand made on girls by their families in connection with household duties, pre-arranged marriages leading to drop-out of girls from school, the girls who were circumcised become rude to teachers seeing female teachers as their equals and uncircumcised teachers (female and male) as children thus affecting girls' participation in education. In North Eastern, especially in Isiolo County, the social and cultural practices have looked down the importance of educating girl child, (Kapakasa, 2011). This has caused inequality between girl child and boy child. Girls have been forced to dropout from school for social and cultural reasons. In order for the government to realize the objective of providing equal educational opportunities along gender lines, factors that hinder girl's advancement in education must be established and efforts made to minimize them and if possible eliminate them. This can be achieved through investigating the social cultural dynamics that influence dropout of girls from secondary school. This study aimed at investigating how the social cultural dynamics namely; early marriages, female genital mutilation, religious aspects and traditional aspects and how they influence girl child dropout in secondary schools in Isiolo North Sub County, Isiolo County.

Statement of the problem

While there is no dispute that education improves the living standards of the individual and economic

development in totality, education of girls in Eastern Kenya and Isiolo North Sub County in particular is becoming difficult. According to the National Development plan, the arid and semi-arid districts in particular are the most affected by poor enrolment. The enrolment rate was 32% for females against 68% for males. As such, impressive ratio 51-49 realized nationally has not eliminated gender disparities and retention of pupils in primary schools regionally.

There are twice as many boys as girls in secondary in Isiolo County. In 2014 the completion rates was 42.3% as compared to 81% nationally. More specifically 56.4% boys completed secondary schools as compared to 27.6% of girls. Ruto, Ongweni and Mugo. Despite the existence of these social cultural dynamics affecting girl child education, researchers looked on how socio-cultural dynamics were affecting education generally in North Eastern Kenya without specifically looking on their effects on girl child education. This study is therefore set to investigate the low retention of female students in secondary Schools in Isiolo North Sub County, Isiolo County.

Literature Review

Regarding the influence of early marriage on girls Holcamp found that in rural areas girls' dropout rate became higher because parents consider girls' schooling as of no benefit when they leave their own family after getting married. Mansory also found that early marriage is the foremost cause of early school dropout of girls in Afghanistan. A lot of research have highlighted on girls' age and education and found that when girls reach puberty, parents consider it is time for them to be married and tend to arrange the marriage instead of continuing schooling. Some studies argue that early marriage of girls is associated with dropouts in certain contexts. For instance, in societies where girls leave parental household after marriage, girls' dropout might be higher in that society.

The PROBE team (1999) of India reported that in that country education might give girls better preparation for marriage however, despite this, parents sometimes are reluctant to let their daughters have their education as higher education raises the cost of marriage for girls. Shahidul also found that in Bangladesh girls with lower socioeconomic backgrounds drop out from secondary school when schooling or higher education inflates dowry in the marriage market of girls. In this research, author argues that if girls have higher education but have lower parental socio-economic background, they face difficulties in getting a husband because pattern in which parents need to pay a higher amount of dowry to marry their educated daughters to similarly educated grooms thus resulting in early dropout among girls.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology and Design

The study adopted a mixed methods approach. In other words, the study applied both quantitative and qualitative methods. This is due to the fact that the researcher asked specific questions and collect quantifiable data from a large number of participants. In this case, data was collected using questionnaires.

Target population and Sample size

Category	Target population	sample	Sample size %	Sampling techniques
Schools	20	10	46	Purposive
G/C Teachers	9	9	14	Simple random
M	11	11	11	Sampling
F				Simple
Class	46	12	26	random
Teachers	34	8	24	Sampling
M				Stratified
F	1994	101	15	Sampling
Students				
TOTAL	5701	141		

The study adopted the concurrent triangulation design, to investigate the effect of early marriages on retention of girls to secondary education in Isiolo County. According to Creswell the design involves the use of a theoretical perspective reflected in the purpose or research questions of the study to guide all methodological choices.

Data Analysis Procedures

After collection of data from questionnaires, editing was done. This was by removing the responses which were out of the context and those that were not fully completed. This was done by considering similar views and responses and grouping them together. The data was then tabulated according to variables where each table represented a variable. The data was then divided into main themes so as to achieve the stated objectives. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics and presented using graphs, tables and regression respectively. Qualitative data was analyzed in themes and presented in narrative form.

CONCLUSION

On the influence of early marriages on girls retention study first sought the respondents' opinion on whether the boy child was given the first priority and if it played a major role in girls' low enrolment. The study also found that majority of the respondents that the community was still practicing female circumcision. Less than half of the Respondents agreed with the statement followed strongly agreed. lastly the study established that the traditions played a major role in girls' low retention rates.

The study noted that there are number of cultural and socio-economic activities in which secondary school students are involved in Isiolo North Sub County. The study recommends that the schools should liaise with the local community elders and provincial administration to ensure that no student abandon school to participate. Campaigns against retrogressive cultural practices such as female circumcision and early marriages should be emphasized in the division.

Students who absent themselves from school should be followed strictly to establish the cause in order to reduce the levels of wastage in the district especially in day secondary schools. Parents in the division should be

informed, through social gatherings and public barazas, on the importance of secondary education. In school's life skills should be emphasized in order to get rid of retrogressive cultural and socio-economic practices from future generations in the district.

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