

INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS ON GIRLS' EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NAROK EAST SUB-COUNTY, NAROK COUNTY, KENYA

^{1*}Rael Nasieku & ²Dr. Susan Macharia

^{1*}Mount Kenya University, Kenya; Email: raelnasieku4@gmail.com; ORCID ID:
<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-9708-2120>; Tel No.:0705855511

²Mount Kenya University, Kenya; Email: macharias@mku.ac.ke; ORCID ID:
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7282-8163>; Tel No.:0733783098

Publication Date: October 2023

ABSTRACT

Statement of the Problem: Principals play an important role in ensuring that girls participate in secondary school education. However, in Narok East Sub- County, girls' education in public secondary schools has been a challenge despite the launch of 100.0% transition policy by the Kenya Government.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study was to evaluate the involvement of principals in engaging stakeholders in the education of girls in public secondary schools in Narok East Sub- County, Narok County, Kenya.

Methodology: The study adopted mixed methodology and descriptive research design. Target population was 2681 respondents. The sample size was 348 respondents obtained using Yamane's Formula. Stratified sampling was applied. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically based on the objectives and presented in narrative forms. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages and inferentially using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23) and presented using tables.

Findings: The study found that the number of girls enrolled in public secondary schools has been on the increase. However, after four years upon enrollment, the number of girls who complete their secondary education is low. This is attributed to the inability of principals to effectively involve stakeholders.

Conclusion: The study shows that while there has been an increase in the enrollment of girls in public secondary schools, there is a significant dropout rate that needs to be addressed. The involvement of stakeholders like principals, teachers, and community members is crucial in

improving girls' education. Schools where principals actively involve stakeholders tend to have better outcomes for female students, supporting the idea that community and institutional support can play a vital role in encouraging girls to complete their education. Therefore, for meaningful progress in girls' education, a multi-faceted approach involving various stakeholders is essential.

Recommendations: The study recommends that secondary school principals should continue involving relevant stakeholders as a strategy of increasing the number of girls who access secondary education. School leaders and teachers can undergo training to better support female students and foster an inclusive environment. Mentorship programs could offer additional support by pairing younger girls with older students. Strengthening Parent-Teacher Associations would allow for more open discussions about gender-specific issues in education. Collaboration with local communities can help dispel stigmas against educating girls, and governmental policy changes, like scholarships or free meals, could offer further incentives for girls to stay in school.

Keywords: *Involvement of stakeholders, girls' education, public secondary schools, Narok County, Kenya*

INTRODUCTION

Education is widely acknowledged on a global scale as not only the fundamental basis for continuous learning and personal growth, but also as a crucial element in the endeavor to alleviate poverty and foster development in all facets of the lives of young girls (Christopher, 2013). In order to achieve this noble objective, it is imperative to ensure the enrollment and, more importantly, the retention of girls in educational institutions. The education of girls is significantly impacted by various factors, including their domestic surroundings, the curriculum of the secondary school they attend, and the seamless transition between secondary school and kindergarten (Lloyd, 2013). Nevertheless, there has been a lack of comprehensive investigation into the degree to which the engagement of stakeholders by principals affects the education of female students in public secondary schools. The literature on girls' education consistently highlights the notable impact of various stakeholders, including female teachers, educated students, and parents as role models, on the promotion of girls' enrollment in schools and the enhancement of learning achievements.

To corroborate these assertions, Stacki (2012), in a study conducted in the United States, found that teachers' gender had affected other measures of learner involvement, such as teacher perceptions of learner ability and learner involvement with the teacher's subject, which were even greater than the effect on achievement. Female learners were more likely to look forward to a subject, feel more comfortable asking questions and think that a subject was useful for their future if that subject was taught by a female teacher. In India, Unterhalter and Dutt (2011)

found that found differences between male and female school and classroom management strategies and attitudes toward learner ability, with stakeholders such as female teachers, educated learners and parents as role models less likely to emphasize the need for strict discipline and to use fear to maintain discipline; stakeholders such as female teachers, educated learners and parents as role models were also far more likely to agree that all children are capable of learning. With regards to gender, learners who are taught by teachers of the same gender as themselves perform better than those taught by the opposite gender (Rajagopal, 2014). In Sub-Saharan Africa, the decrease in female representation in secondary schools is even greater, with 43 per cent of stakeholders such as female teachers, educated learners and parents as role models at secondary school level but just 29 per cent at secondary level (Bellamy, 2013). Presence of stakeholders such as female teachers, educated learners and parents as role models in school has not only been positively linked with increased access to education and girls' education in school: there is also evidence of a link between stakeholders such as female teachers, educated learners and parents as role models and higher test scores (Habtamu, 2014).

For instance, according to the research conducted by Joseph and Wodon, the involvement of stakeholders, including female teachers, educated learners, and parents as role models, resulted in a notable improvement of two to three percent in test scores on Nigeria's National Education Assessment tests (Igbuzor, 2011). Research conducted in Zimbabwe examined the experiences of various stakeholders, including female teachers, educated learners, and parents as role models, in impoverished rural areas. The findings revealed that a significant barrier to educational attainment for girls was their low self-esteem. However, the study also highlighted that the presence of stakeholders, such as female teachers, educated learners, and parents as role models, played a crucial role in mitigating this issue and facilitating educational improvement (Hyde & Kadzamira, 2015).

In Kenya, statistical relationship between stakeholders and improved female achievement can be further analyzed by examining the ways in which male and stakeholders such as female teachers, educated learners and parents as role models differ in terms of their classroom teaching strategies and, in the attitudes, they have towards girls' learning ability (Chege & Sifuna, 2016). In a study conducted in Narok Central District, Ngome (2012) asserts that, with so many teachers assigned to teaching the lowest grade levels, girls in the upper grades of secondary school have few elite role models to help them aspire to academic achievement thus

lower desire for girls to enrol to schools. Ngome (2012) further assert that a female head teacher, for example, can represent an inspiring and motivating role model for girls and can demonstrate to boys, girls, teachers and the community that women can be equally professional and perform as well as men.

Despite the government initiatives in the past decades, the education sector, especially school management, still faces greater challenges and calls for urgent measures of enhancing girls' education in secondary schools. In Narok East Sub- County, despite the launch of 100.0% transition policy by the government of Kenya, the girls' education in secondary schools still remains a challenge. For example, a report by the Ministry of Education (2020) shows that participation of girls in secondary schools is low as shown in Table 1

Table 1: Girls' Education in Secondary Schools in Narok East Sub- County (2015-2019)

Year	Enrollment Rates (%)	Dropout Rates (%)	Completion Rates (%)
2015	17.9	7.2	10.7
2016	21.4	9.1	12.3
2017	22.3	12.3	10.0
2018	23.7	14.8	8.9
2019	24.1	14.9	9.2

Source: Ministry of Education (2023)

Table 1 indicates that, despite slight increase in enrollment of girls in public secondary schools, their dropout is very high. This is despite the recognition of the role of stakeholders. According to Njoka (2015), in most schools in Narok East Sub- County, gender inequality in positions of management in schools has had implications that impact on teachers and girls. In other words, stakeholders such as female teachers, educated learners and parents as role models may lose motivation if they see that there are additional barriers to their ability to develop their careers. UNICEF (2014) indicate that stakeholders help to encourage girls to enrol in school in a number of ways. However, UNICEF (2014) has failed to articulate specific characteristics which different stakeholders need to have in order to enhance girls' education in secondary schools and whether mere presence of stakeholders as role models in positions of principals' management guarantees increased girls' education in secondary schools; a research gap which this study intended to address.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Stakeholders play an important role in ensuring that girls enroll in secondary schools since these are critical steps in the academic life of a girl which entails acquiring new competencies

and knowledge. Nevertheless, the issue of girls' education in public secondary schools in Narok East Sub- County has posed as a significant obstacle. In the context of Narok East Sub- County, it is evident that the implementation of the government of Kenya's 100.0% transition policy has not effectively addressed the issue of low enrollment and participation of girls in educational institutions. According to the findings presented in Table 1, a report published by the Ministry of Education in 2020 reveals that although there has been an increase in the enrollment of female students in public secondary schools, the rates of completion remain low, with a notable prevalence of dropouts. Efforts aimed at addressing these challenges, such as raising parental awareness, decreasing instances of teenage pregnancies and early marriages, have not yielded significant advancements. Despite the availability of statistics, there is a lack of empirical research examining the impact of principals' engagement with stakeholders on girls' education in public secondary schools. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap in the literature.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To assess the status of girls' education in public secondary schools in Narok East Sub-County.
- ii. To establish the influence of principals' involvement of stakeholders on girls' education in public secondary schools in Narok East Sub- County.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was based on the systems theory which was postulated by Luhmann (2004). According to Luhmann (2004), the theory is applicable in a school set up as an organization in that the school as an open system receives inputs from the environment. This implies that students from the larger societal environment go to school with a host of their own beliefs, goals and hopes, but become changed individuals as a result of educational experiences in school which are acquired through interaction with the school administration, teachers and girls. The relevance of Luhmann's (2004) theory in this study is that to enhance enrolment of girls into schools, school managers ought to appreciate the important role played by stakeholders if they are to achieve improved girls' education in secondary schools. This study was also guided by theory of student participation by Tinto and Cullen (1973) and central idea to it is that of integration. It claims that whether a girl persists or drops out is quite strongly

predicted by their degree of academic integration and social integration. These evolve over time, as integration and commitment interact, with dropouts depending on commitment at the time of the decision. Thus, in the context of this study, girls' access to educational opportunities and eventual retention in schools depend largely on a myriad of management strategies adopted by principals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research employed a mixed methodology approach and utilized a descriptive research design. Target population was 2681 respondents which comprised 12 principals, 268 teachers, 4 Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) and 2397 girls in Forms III & IV from which a sample of 348 respondents was obtained using Yamane's Formula. Stratified sampling was applied to create four strata based on the number of zones in Narok East Sub- County. From each zone, two principals and 39 teachers were selected using purposive sampling. All the CSOs were purposively sampled. However, from each zone, 45 girls in forms III & IV will be selected using simple random sampling to avoid bias. This procedure realized a sample of eight principals, 156 teachers, 4 CSOs and 180 girls in forms III & IV. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from teachers whereas interview guides were used to gather qualitative data from principals and CSOs and focus group discussions for girls in Forms III & IV. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically based on the objectives and presented in narrative forms. The quantitative data were subjected to analysis using descriptive statistics, specifically frequencies and percentages. Additionally, inferential analysis was conducted using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis with the assistance of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23). The findings were then presented in tabular format.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings of the study based on the objective. It also outlines the methods of presentation of the study findings and discussions.

RESPONSE RATES

A total of 156 questionnaires were distributed to teachers in this study, with 148 questionnaires being completed and returned. Simultaneously, a total of 8 principals and 4 Curriculum Support Officers were subjected to interviews, while a cohort of 160 female students in Forms III and IV participated in focus group discussions. Response rates obtained are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Response Rates

Respondents	Sampled Respondents	Those Who Participated	Achieved Return Rate (%)
Principals	8	8	100.0
Teachers	156	148	94.9
Curriculum Support Officers	4	4	100.0
Girls in Forms III & IV	180	160	88.9
Total	348	320	92.0

Table 2 shows that principals registered a response rate of 100.0%, teachers registered 94.9%, CSOs registered 100.0% response rate whereas girls in Forms III & IV registered a response rate of 88.9%. On average, this yielded a response rate of 92.0%, which affirmed the assertions of Creswell (2014) that a response rate above 75.0% is adequate and of suitable levels to allow for the generalization of the outcomes to the target population.

Girls' Education in Public Secondary Schools

The study sought to assess the status of girls' education and participation in public secondary schools in Narok East Sub- County. This was measured by taking stock of the number of girls enrolled between 2018 and 2022, those who dropped out and those who were retained to complete their secondary education. Results are shown in Table 3

Table 3: Status of Girls' Education in Public Secondary Schools from 2018 to 2022

Academic Year	Status of Girls' Education in Public Secondary Schools		
	Number of Girls Enrolled	No. of Girls who Complete their Education	No. of Girls who Dropped Out of School
2018	702	433	269 (38.3%)
2019	889	532	357 (40.2%)
2020	923	492	431 (46.7%)
2021	1034	587	447 (43.2%)
2022	1106	712	394 (35.6%)
Totals	4654	2756 (59.2%)	1898 (40.8%)

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 3 shows that the number of girls enrolled in public secondary schools has been on the increase since 2018 to 2022 due to the 100.0% transition policy by the government. However, after four years upon enrollment, the number of girls who complete their secondary education is low with dropout rates standing at 40.8% compared to the national dropout rates which has gone down to 23.7%. These findings corroborate the findings of a report by the Ministry of

Education (2020) shows that, despite increase in enrollment of girls in public secondary schools, the completion rates are low characterized with high cases of dropouts. These findings underscore the fact that girls are enrolled into secondary schools, however, not all complete their secondary education.

Involvement of Stakeholders and Girls' Education in Public Secondary Schools

The study sought to examine the influence of principals' involvement of stakeholders on girls' education in public secondary schools. The findings are presented in Table 4;

Table 4: How Often Principals Involve Stakeholders in Girls' Education in Public Secondary Schools

Activities where Stakeholders are Involved	Very Often		Rarely		Never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
In role modeling/career guidance	63	42.6	32	21.6	53	35.8
In provision of learning materials	77	52.0	55	37.2	16	10.8
In provision sanitary towels	69	46.6	50	33.8	29	19.6
In promoting girlchild education	79	53.4	51	34.5	18	12.1

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 4 shows that 63(42.6%) of the teachers indicated that secondary school principals very often involve stakeholders in role modeling and career guidance of girls, 31(21.6%) indicated that principals rarely involve stakeholders whereas 53(35.8%) noted that they never do. The study found that 77 (52.09%) of the teachers noted that principals very often involve stakeholders in provision of learning materials, 55(37.2%) indicated rarely while 16(10.8%) noted they never do. Table 4 further shows that 69(46.6%) of the teachers noted that principals very often involve stakeholders in provision of sanitary towels, 50(33.8%) indicated rarely while 29(19.6%) indicated never. Slightly more than half, 79(53.4%) of the teachers indicated that principals very often involve stakeholders in promoting girlchild education, 51(34.5%) indicated that they rarely do whilst 18(12.1%) indicated never. These views were supported by girls in Forms III & IV during focus group discussions. Girls observed:

Sometimes our principals involve stakeholders such as parents and public benefits organizations to talk to us on the essence of choosing right careers.

During the interviews, principals responded on in favour of the view that stakeholders are not involved in handling issues pertaining to the girlchild. Principal, P2, noted:

I always involve parents as well as mentors to model the behaviour of our girls and help them choose viable and marketable careers.

The views of principals were echoed by the CSOs who indicated that there are very few stakeholders to act as role models to girls in secondary schools. CSO3, noted:

In my zone, stakeholders are part and parcel of school management and school heads are required to tap into their expertise and talents to attract girls to school. They help in modeling girls' behaviour patterns and choose right careers based on the strengths.

These findings are indicative of the fact that involvement of stakeholders plays a key role in encouraging girls to access secondary education. These findings corroborate the findings of a study carried out in Zimbabwe in which Hyde and Kadzamira (2015) revealed that stakeholders play a key role in boosting self-esteem of girls, which a major factor in their pursuit of education. This implies that a common motif that emerges from the literature on girls' education is the significant influence that stakeholders can have both in encouraging more girls to enrol in school and in improving learning outcomes.

Table 5: Teachers' Views on the Influence of Principals' Involvement of Stakeholders on Girls' Education in Public Secondary Schools

Test Items	Ratings				
	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
In public secondary schools, principals involve stakeholders to act as role models for girls and conduct career guidance as a way of encouraging them to attend school	80.5	8.5	1.5	5.5	4.0
Secondary school principals involve stakeholders to provide adequate learning materials for girls	78.5	14.5	2.5	3.0	1.5
In public secondary schools, girls are provided with sanitary towels as a way of motivating them to participate in academic activities	69.5	12.0	2.0	10.0	6.5
Public secondary school principals ensure that everyone participates in promoting girlchild education programmes to attract more girls	74.5	17.0	2.5	3.5	2.5

Table 5 reveals that 119(80.5%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that, in public secondary schools, principals involve stakeholders to act as role models for girls and conduct career guidance as a way of encouraging them to attend school as did 13(8.5%) who agreed, 2(1.5%) of the teachers were undecided, 8(5.5%) disagreed whereas 6(4.0%) strongly disagreed. These findings are consistent with the findings of a study conducted in Kenya in which Chege and Sifuna (2016) revealed that stakeholders act as role models as a way of motivating girls to enroll and achieve in school. These findings attest to the fact that stakeholders possess specific characteristics which enable them to encourage girls to be

motivated to go to school. The study also found out that 116(78.5%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that public secondary school principals involve stakeholders to provide adequate learning materials for girls, 21(14.5%) agreed, 4(2.5%) were undecided, 4(3.0%) disagreed whereas 2(1.5%) strongly disagreed. The findings corroborate the assertions of Habtamu (2014) that the presence of stakeholders in school has not only been positively linked with increased access and retention of girls in school, but there is also evidence of a link between stakeholders and higher test scores. These findings are indicative of the fact that roles of stakeholders such as modeling of girls' behaviour patterns and career guidance are crucial in attracting girls to school. The study also revealed that 103(69.5%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that, in public secondary schools, girls are provided with sanitary towels as a way of motivating them to participate in academic activities while 18(12.0%) agreed, 3(2.0%) were undecided, 15(10.0%) disagreed whereas 10(6.5%) strongly disagreed.

The study also revealed that 110(74.5%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that public secondary school principals ensure that everyone participates in promoting girlchild education programmes to attract more girls to school while 25(17.0%) agreed, 4(2.5%) were undecided, 5(3.5%) disagreed whereas 4(2.5%) strongly disagreed. These findings support the assertions of Njoka (2015) that stakeholders are tasked with ensuring that girls have adequate sanitary towels to avoid interruptions of class time. According to UNESCO (2014), stakeholders conduct awareness campaigns on the value of girlchild education. These findings are indicative of the fact that, to promote girlchild education, the role of stakeholders cannot be wished away. In other words, the presence of stakeholders such as female teachers, educated learners and parents as role models can aid in counteracting negative campaigns about education of girls, over-masculinization of the school environment and, especially in more conservative communities, allow parents to feel more comfortable about sending their teenage daughters to school.

Inferential Analysis

To verify the relationship between principals' involvement of stakeholders and girls' education in public secondary schools, data were collected from principals on the number of stakeholders in secondary schools and the number of girls in the sampled secondary schools. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: How Often Principals Involve Stakeholders in Promoting Girls' Education and the Number of Girls in Public Secondary Schools

How Often Principals Involve Stakeholders in Promoting Girls' Education	Number of Girls in Public Secondary Schools
1	101
4	124
2	107
4	113
2	98
1	102
2	99
5	111

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 6 shows that principals who have many stakeholders to be engaged as role models for girls have attracted many girls in their secondary schools. That is, stakeholders act as role models as a way of motivating girls to enroll and achieve in school which further points to the fact that stakeholders possess specific characteristics which enable them to encourage girls' education in public secondary schools. These results were subjected to Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis and the results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Relationship between Principals' Involvement of Stakeholders and the Number of Girls in Public Secondary Schools

		How Often Principals' Involve Stakeholders in Promoting Girls' Education	No. of Girls in Secondary Schools
How Often Principals' Involve Stakeholders in Promoting Girls' Education	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	8	
Number of Girls in Secondary Schools	Pearson Correlation	.747*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	
	N	8	8

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 7 shows that there is a strong positive correlation between principals' involvement of stakeholders and the number of girls enrolled in public secondary schools ($r(8) = 0.747$, $p = 0.033$ at $\alpha = 0.05$). These findings thus attest to the fact that there is significant relationship between involvement of stakeholders in girls' education in public secondary schools. These findings hence point to the fact that stakeholders act as role models as a way of motivating girls to enroll and achieve in school and also possess specific characteristics which enable them to encourage girls' education in public secondary schools.

Thematic Analysis

The researcher also conducted interviews among principals and CSOs and undertook focus group discussions among girls in Forms III & IV to establish the influence of their involvement of stakeholders on girls' education in public secondary schools. The interviewees also responded in favor of the view that involving stakeholders influence the number of girls enrolled in schools and determine the number of girls who drop out of schools after enrollment. Principal, P3, noted;

In my secondary school, I always ensure that stakeholders such as parents, members of public benefits organizations are involved in attracting girls to school. I always involve them in activities such as modeling behaviour and career guidance or mentorship programmes. This has seen my school enroll more girls.

These views were shared by CSOs as well as the girls during FGDs. On instructional materials and sanitary towels, the interviewees supported the stakeholders are always involved to ensure that schools have adequate supply of instructional and scholastic materials to support girls' education programmes. They also noted that stakeholders are tapped to support girls by providing sanitary towels and other sanitation services. These mixed findings point to the fact that stakeholders possess specific characteristics which enable them to encourage access of girls. Besides, it is evident that stakeholders act as role models as a way of motivating girls to enroll and achieve in school and also possess specific characteristics which enable them to encourage girls' education in public secondary schools.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From the study findings, it is evident that the number of girls enrolled in public secondary schools has been on the increase since 2018 to 2022 due to the 100.0% transition policy by the government. However, after four years upon enrollment, the number of girls who complete their secondary education is low. From the study findings, principals always involve stakeholders such as parents, members of public benefits organizations in attracting girls to schools. They often model behaviour of the girls and undertake career guidance or mentorship programmes, which has seen increased enrollment of girls into public secondary schools. Stakeholders are always involved to ensure that schools have adequate supply of instructional and scholastic materials to support girls' education programmes. However, this has realized much progress in encouraging girls to participate in secondary school education.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study shows that while there has been an increase in the enrollment of girls in public secondary schools, there is a significant dropout rate that needs to be addressed. The involvement of stakeholders like principals, teachers, and community members is crucial in improving girls' education. Schools where principals actively involve stakeholders tend to have better outcomes for female students, supporting the idea that community and institutional support can play a vital role in encouraging girls to complete their education. Therefore, for meaningful progress in girls' education, a multi-faceted approach involving various stakeholders is essential.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that principals should continue involving stakeholders to enhance girls' education. The Ministry of Education should enforce the policy which requires the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards to constantly monitor how principals are implementing affirmative action and rights of children to education in their schools. School leaders and teachers can undergo training to better support female students and foster an inclusive environment. Mentorship programs could offer additional support by pairing younger girls with older students. Strengthening Parent-Teacher Associations would allow for more open discussions about gender-specific issues in education. Collaboration with local communities can help dispel stigmas against educating girls, and governmental policy changes, like scholarships or free meals, could offer further incentives for girls to stay in school. Public awareness campaigns can amplify these messages, while partnerships with NGOs can provide more resources. Finally, practical changes like flexible school timings and safe transportation can remove some of the logistical barriers to girls' education.

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