FACTORS INFLUENCING ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY EDUCATION BY WOMEN IN KENYA: A CASE OF BUNGOMA SOUTH DISTRICT

BY

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DECLARATION

This research proposal is my original work and has never been presented for the award of any degree in any University.

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DEDICATION

To baby Malcolm and her mum, my mother Mary Nasimiyu, brother Shaban Shamir, sister zudia, Antoninah and Auntie Juliana simiyu. Thank you for your support.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

GPI - Gender Parity Index

HE -Higher Education

UNESCO -United Nation's Education Scientific and Cultural Organization

NCST -National council of science and technology

EFA -Education for All

ABSTRACT

University education intrinsically adds value to society, serving as both a public and Private good, public because it contributes to society and private because it has potential to benefit the individual (Morley, Leach, &Lugg, 2009). The importance of higher education on society cannot be understated; it becomes an economic booster to the community while providing individuals with personal benefits, it should be provided equally to all for it to benefit the community and the nation fully, but as things stand women have had only a limited role in society with restricted opportunities (Vanderslice and litsch, 1998). The researcher investigated the factors influencing access to university education by women in Kenya. To realize this, the researcher came up with four objectives to guide the study: socio-cultural practices, education policies, academic performance and socio-economic status. Descriptive survey method was used as the study intended to collect data from members of a given population to determine the status of that particular population with respect to one or more variables in the study. The target population for the study was 469 women representing the total number of women students in the three universities colleges, campuses and canter's in Bungoma south. A sample size of 210 was used in the study. A proportionate sampling technique was used to select respondents. The research instruments used in this study were questionnaires. A pilot study was done in the nearby University of Eldoret to establish the instruments validity. To ascertain the reliability of the instruments, split half technique was employed. Frequency tables were used to analyze the collected data. The finding was presented with the help of simple tables, frequencies and percentages. Results were interpreted and required recommendations made at the end of the study. It was found that less was less access to university education by women because of social cultural practices, educational policies, academic performance and socio-economic status. Recommendations for further research were first, influence of role models access to university education by women. Secondly, influence of classroom policies on access to university education by women and lastly influence of friends on access to university education by women.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

University education intrinsically adds value to society, serving as both a public and Private good, public because it contributes to society and private as it has potential to benefit the individual (Morley, Leach, &Lugg, 2009). The importance of university education on society cannot be understated; it becomes an economic booster to the community while providing individuals with personal benefits. University education is essential to generate and establish a productive citizenry (Giroux, 2002). Further, higher education provides paths for individual and communal development; it raises individual awareness of societal issues and often serves as a strong source of research used to address relevant issues of nation-states. This study sought to determine factors influencing access to university education by women access in Kenya.

Throughout history, women have had only a limited role in society with restricted opportunities (Vanderslice and litsch, 1998). This is a fact that prevails in both generations up to this new era, where we found that that gender inequalities continue to primarily disadvantaging this group (ESU, 2008). A number of international conventions as a human right and a development imperative has recognized education nowadays, is one of the spheres that have suffered this women's issue. UNESCO (2012) pointed out that there is a preference to males over females in education, which has been a marked feature since ancient societies, practice that has shaped today,'s gender disparities in this sector in virtually all countries. There seem to be a glass ceiling that remains frustratingly unbroken in academia and elsewhere for women. An analysis by Thomson Reuters in association with Times Higher Education shows startling levels of gender

inequality in research-intensive universities across the world. The gap persists not just in emerging nations but also in some of the world's most highly developed countries where the fight for women's rights and equality has gone on for decades.

In the United Kingdom, It is well documented that girls and boys receive different schooling, and there has been much research looking at the different nature of the education girls receive (Deem, 1987; Delamont, 1996; Spender, 1982). Historically, girls have been educated for their future role as mothers and homemakers, with the emphasis on nurturing and caring (Oakley, 1974). With the advent of comprehensive education in the 1960s, the situation began to change for girls and there were more opportunities to access other less traditional subjects, and to go on to higher education (Weinreich-Haste, 1984). However, many continued to choose typical female occupations, and often gave up their jobs when they married and started their families, perhaps returning to work part-time once their children were of school age. This research is set is the experience of mature women students in higher education in the late 1990s and early 2000s. It was realized that most of the women interviewed as part of the study had their school education in the 1960s and 1970s, and experienced the gendered education outlined above. It is questionable whether the type of skills fostered and developed therein are sufficient to equip them to return to the modern day workforce.

In china, a study by Xie et al. (2010) analyzed women's access to higher education in rural and urban China and evaluated the disparities between urban and rural women college students' access, as well as urban–rural variation across different types of institutions. The research assessed the overall distribution of urban and rural female students at state-run and private institutions. The analysis revealed disparities between urban and rural women's access to higher

education. New increases in educational opportunities for women in China primarily benefited urban women. In addition, the greatest difference in urban–rural access occurred in private institutions. Researchers concluded that the urban–rural disparity in women's higher education access is tied to two main factors: private institutions have relatively high fees and family income and parents education levels are low in rural areas.

In India, Sahni and Shankar (2012) conducted a study where they used secondary data to examine higher education inclusiveness for women. Their results showed an increase in female enrolment in higher education at the national level. Some of this increase was due to a rise in the number of higher education institutions in southern India, where males still outnumber female students. In addition, while the number of female professional students increased in the south, in the rest of India women were predominantly enrolled only in general education studies. Sahni and Shankar (2012) also focused specifically on Maharashtra, a leading state in girls' education in India. They found that participation by women in higher education in Mumbai had doubled and had increased twelve-fold in emerging centers in the outskirts, like the city of Nanded. Despite these increases, enrolment had been skewed away from the sciences and towards general education. They also noted significant variance among different regions in Maharashtra.

In Nigeria, Ayodele et al. (2006) examined the enrolment of female students at Ado-Ekiti University, Nigeria, using secondary data analysis. They found that the gender distribution of undergraduates between 1994/95 and 2002/03 varied between 29.9 percent to 37.84 percent females, respectively. Evidence also revealed an unequal distribution of female undergraduates between arts and humanities relative to science and technology–based disciplines. For example, percentage female enrolment was 48.46 percent in the arts, 47.03% in education and 37.23% in

management sciences. On the other hand, female enrolment was 10.25 percent in engineering and 15.15% in the College of Medicine.

In Ghana, Daddieh (2003) explored the access of female students in Ghana, with a focus on public institutions of higher education. Overall, there appeared to be an increase in enrolment between both men and women, but male students still significantly outnumbered female students. The researcher found that despite gains in elementary school, female enrolment declined, such that by college, less than a quarter of all students were women. Moreover, women seemed to be overrepresented in the humanities and social sciences in all the universities studied. Few (approximately 19 percent) enrolled in the sciences.

In Uganda, Kwesiga (2002) identified that factors which had an impact on women's access to higher education in sub-Saharan Africa. She talks of, The Influence of the Family, reveals, for example that most questionnaire respondents (including parents) believe parental attitudes are the biggest obstacle to women gaining education in Uganda. One of the most startling findings shows that most parents surveyed believe that their daughters' future families (in-laws) would derive most benefit from their education, an attitude underlying many parents' decision to withdraw daughters from school at a young age. He also noted that socio-economic status of a family is a strong indicator of the level of education a girl is likely to achieve which is seen as the main reason why girls are more likely to drop out of school. In the same study, Kwesiga (2002) also noted that the Society got influence on women access to education shedding shocking light on the way societal structures and institutions such as the family and marriage entrench gender oppression. Kwesiga analyses systems like universal marriage and its contribution to high dropout rates amongst women in secondary and higher education. She is

particularly critical of the practice of bride wealth payment and how it mitigates against women going on to higher education. A young bride is more marketable and will attract a higher bride wealth payment; thus, parents facing financial hardship are more likely to sell off their daughters than struggle to find the money for higher education. Because boys are intrinsically more valued than girls as human beings they are more likely to be privileged when choices have to be made about who gets an education. Kwesiga shows how the human capital theory of education further mitigates against girls and women's access. She also looks at the role educational institutions play in limiting access for women. It is impossible to analyze women's access to higher education without looking at the preceding phases of education, and, to Kwesiga credit, she views the entire educational system as a whole. She shows that women are not suddenly denied access when they reach the tertiary level, but that educational systems are structured in such a way, which filters girls out at every stage of the educational process.

A study conducted in Kenya showed that at the university level, women remain underrepresented, forming about 40 percent of the total student population in 2007 (Republic of Kenya 2008). Women’s low rates of attendance at the university level reflect the cumulative effect of factors hindering their progression in education from the time they enter school at the preprimary level. Women’s representation remains low despite the fact that the government has lowered girls’ required university entry points (calculated based on grades and difficulty of courses taken at the secondary level) by one point to improve women’s access to university education (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 2006). The effects of this low representation in education are reflected in the labor market, where women represent only 30 percent of all wage employees in the modern sector (Republic of Kenya 2008). In Bungoma south district, Bungoma County, the figures obtained from the joint admission board

still reflect the said disparities between men and women in university education as per the admissions of 2013 in Kibabii University College, while student's record from other two universities in the district shows men enrolment is higher as compared to women that is 636 against 469 as per September intake in the three universities. .

1.2 statement of the problem

The importance of women's participation in education is critical (UNESCO, 1998c). Dundar and Haworth (1993) cited that education of women is important not only from the angle of equal education opportunity between the sexes, but also for the substantial social and economic returns to female education that can be achieved by raising women's productivity and income level, producing better educated and healthier children, and reducing fertility rates. Vanderslice and Litsch (1998), in turn, expressed that women who have increased education are more aware about opportunities for themselves. They are more self-confident, open minded and more competitive. Moreover, Kelly and Slaughther (1991), point out that through qualifications and credentials secured through the higher learning, women would equip themselves for all manners of professional positions, entering the market place and political arena with the same advantages as men. Taking into account these perspectives and context, Bonilla et al. (2005) concluded that women, through their participation in education, are becoming then agents of change**.**

At present, 469 women have enrolled for University education in Bungoma south, of which 20 per cent enrolled in faculty of sciences, 14 per cent in commerce, 4 per cent in agriculture and management. This data threw light on poor representation of women in higher education, particularly lucrative professional courses like engineering and management. Moreover, several bright achievers at school levels lost their journey towards higher education. Still, several women

achieved in many fields like IT, science, and technology. However, the number of women at top was few because of parallel profession of their home where several women are not willing to take on more or they compromise on their careers.

Education is recognized by UNESCO (2012) as a fundamental human right one that all individuals are entitled to enjoy whatever the circumstances in which they live that also brings important benefits to human society as a whole. To achieve faster these benefits, it is necessary the participation of men and women be on an equal basis. In that sense, keeping women away in all aspects of the development process only because of gender is a waste of valuable resources, even more when they constitute half of the population. In this regard, women have the right to the same opportunities as their male counterparts; therefore, they also have to be seen as part of the essential human resource base of every nation.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors influencing access to university education by women in Kenya, a case of Bungoma South.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To investigate the influence of social cultural practices on access to university education by women in Kenya.
2. To examine the influence of education policies on access to university education by women in Kenya.
3. To assess the influence of academic performance on access to university education by Women in Kenya.
4. To investigate the influence of socio-economic status on access to university education by

Women in Kenya.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How does a socio-cultural practice influence access to university education by women in Kenya?
2. How does education policy influence access to university education by women in Kenya?
3. How does academic performance influence access to university education by women in Kenya?
4. How does socio-economic status influence access to university education by women in Kenya?

1.6 Significance of the study

This study generated information on the factors influencing access to university education by women, it assisted the government and relevant agencies formulate policies that ensured a drive towards ensuring gender parity in access to higher education. The researcher also benefitted from the research as he/she was able to access firsthand information on the outcome of the research and it enhanced his/her knowledge in research work. It was the researcher's belief that, this work added to anybody of knowledge and was also be the genesis of studies and research on women's university education in Bungoma south and Kenya as a whole. It was a researcher's hope that the research findings enabled women with the urge to pursue university education, identify the main obstacles and develop strategies to defeat the said barriers.

1.7 Delimitation of the study

The study focused on factors influencing access to university education by women; a case of Bungoma south. The respondents included: women with secondary education who managed to join university in Bungoma south district.

1.8. Limitations of the study

This study faced a number of challenges. First, the researcher faced difficulty in access to data for students' enrolment from the universities but sought help from friends in administration office. The researcher had a shortage of funds to carry out the study in good time, to mitigate these, the researcher sought assistance from friends for their contribution to help in financing the study.

1.9. Basic assumptions of the study

The study assumed that the respondents were available and gave required information without fear. The findings of the study were generalized for access to university education by women in Kenya.

1.10 Definition of significant term as used in the study

Access to university education	ability to join and learn at the university
University education	level of education after O-level
Socio-economic status	refers to the financial position of an individual
Education policies	refers to a course of action adopted to guide the education sector
Socio-cultural practices	refer to things that people believe in that they guide their behavior.
Academic performance	refers to the grade one scores in a given test or exam

1.11 Organization of the study

This study was organized in that chapter one (introduction) which includes; background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, limitation and delimitations of the study and definitions of significant terms. Chapter two (literature review) includes; socio-cultural practices**,** education policies, academic performance, socio-economic status, theoretical framework and conceptual

framework. Chapter three (research methodology) which includes; research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data collection procedure, validity of instruments, data analysis techniques, ethical considerations and operational definition of variables. Chapter four presents the data analysis, interpretation, presentation and discussions of the findings. Chapter five presents the summary, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research in the area of study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1Introduction

This chapter presents the relevant literature reviewed on factors influencing women access to higher education in Kenya. Its focus is on education policies, social-cultural practices, academic performance and financial status. This chapter will also look at theoretical and conceptual framework, knowledge gap and summary of the main factors.

2.2 Concept access to university education

Access to university education is one's ability to advance to the third level of education after his/her O-level for the case of Kenya. Widening participation has been a priority for colleges and universities in recent years. Recruiting students from all lifestyles who demonstrate the ability, motivation and potential to succeed at third level will, over time, draw outstanding talent from a broad pool of applicants. This will make sure that our colleges and universities remain diverse, vibrant places in which to study and become more representative of the society that they serve. School leavers who have completed the Leaving Certificate Examination have dominated entry to colleges and universities. Many colleges and universities have made significant strides in providing programmes aimed at achieving equity of access for learners of all backgrounds, identities and abilities.

2.3 Socio-cultural practices and access to university education by women

In a study done by Megan (2011) focused on factors influencing access to university education by women. The objectives were to find out why the women's access to higher education was not equal to that of their male peers and sought to answer how first-generation female students explain the personal, cultural, social, and policy factors that influenced their ability to pursue a college degree. Women were educationally disadvantaged. The purpose of the study was to

reveal the ways in which first-generation women in Tanzania explained their success in pursuing a university education despite cultural and social obstacles. Such obstacles included social policies, socio-cultural factors, and academic factors. The researcher used Ethnography to capture a deep slice of the women's background and educational experiences. The findings of this research revealed that women describe their ability to pursue education by identifying strategies for success, such as avoiding the social pressures of getting pregnant or becoming married while in primary or secondary school. Moreover, they also shared the strength it took to stay focused on their academics through discipline while balancing their studies with the societal roles they were expected to play in their homes. The women explained the difference between the emotional encouragement they received and the financial support that was imperative in their ability to stay in school. They also discussed the importance of role models but the lack of role models for young girls in rural areas. Along these lines, the women felt compelled to give back to their hometown communities for future generations of female students. Finally, the notion of investing in education surfaced as a major reason that these women believed they were able to pursue tertiary education. They stated that someone had used resources to invest in their education and as a result, they continued with their educational trajectories.

However, the study conducted by Brock and Cammish (1997) on factors affecting female participation in education whose objective was to examine the Social, economic, religious and other factors influencing the degree of female Participation in formal education institutions in six carefully selected developing Countries but used documentary research and field visit planning to collect the required information to support the study. The findings were that in almost all countries and communities there is a fundamental cultural bias in favour of males. In those cases

where female participation in education was found to be very limited, this factor operated very strongly through decisions about childcare, nutrition, physical work, freedom of movement and marriage. Almost all the societies visited were patriarchal, with the status, power and particularly attitude of fathers being a key factor in encouraging or restricting the schooling of their daughters. Even in Jamaica, where matriarchal patterns are almost universal, the exercise of male control over the career prospects of often better educated and qualified women was evident.

Consequently, for all of the cases we see the need to engender greater male awareness of the disadvantages faced by females in respect of education, and greater willingness on the part of influential males, such as religious and political leaders to provide a strong advocacy of the female cause in this regard. In trying to encourage the education of girls in developing countries, One is confronted not only by widespread poverty, but also by also deeply rooted social and cultural attitudes that fail to perceive the crucial significance of involving the talents of females in the process of development. Consequently, if a girl is to be educated, there are often severe cultural costs to be met; a price to pay for going against established social norms and, in particular, challenging the traditional authority of males. Such problems tend to be more severe in rural areas, but even in towns and cities where prospects of paid employment for educated girls may exist, many parents still fear the possibility of their daughters being alienated from traditional life-styles by contact with essentially 'western' education with its associated values.

In a similar study done by Kamau (2006) noted that most African cultures define women in terms of what they should be or do for men. For instance, a married woman’s major role is to enhance her husband’s career goals by providing him with moral and emotional support. She was

left with all the family responsibilities and chores while the husband is away either studying or working. Women can pursue their professional dreams only after fulfilling their culturally accepted roles, which mostly prove to be an expectation, nearly impossible considering at what age this would be happening.

Not ending there, Bhalalusesa, (2000) acknowledged that historical oppression of women by stating that girls remain victims of circumstance just as their mothers and their grandmothers, generations before them. These circumstances do not allow young girls the opportunity to invest in their education; the cultural responsibility of caring for families and preparing to become a spouse and mother is inconsistent with educational attainment. These domestic responsibilities continue to limit women's opportunities. His arguments were supported by Beoku-Betts, 1998 who observed that primary role of women is to participate in agricultural production and to take responsibility for domestic labor and care giving. In another study by Sutton, 1998realized similar findings where the culture bides young girls to playing certain roles such as the burden of cooking, tending to the needs of children, gathering water, and engaging in farm work; thus their academic studies become a lower priority.

A study done by Kwesiga (2002) supported the earlier findings by noting that the odd is put against women based on their gender and gender-determined roles. Although the role of women varies from one country to another, more often than not, the duties women play suggests their inferiority to men. whereby family structure helps determine the role of women and their general status, his arguments were supported by (Bloch, 1998) who in his study noted that parents worry about their educated daughters finding husbands, bearing children, and upholding community values, which undeniably impedes women's educational paths.

In a study conducted by Kwesiga (2002)whose objective was to establish how religion as part of socio-cultural practice influenced access to university education by women noted that various religious practices that provide their own line of thinking and although religion is not always a barrier to girls' education, it can be. Her arguments are supported by, (Beoku-Betts, 1998) who stated that while variations exist; Muslim regions and countries in Sub-Saharan Africa tend to have more rigidly defined gender role, norms and practices. Which affect access and attainment rates for girls in the educational system? With observation of the said norms, schooling becomes difficult because the practice of Islam does not allow women and men to interact in an educational setting, potentially reducing women's participation in education (Kwesiga, 2002). Religious ideology influences how the family views women's education and their duties. Islam, Hinduism and Catholicism all pose restrictions on women's roles. These belief-systems subsequently influence access to education and women's treatment (Kwesiga, 2000).

In a study done by Alao, 1998 showed that culture and traditions of major ethnic groups in Nigeria are full of obvious signs of gender stereotyping. The contents of traditional education for most Nigerian ethnic groups maintained a rigid division between masculine and feminine subjects. Education for girl's right from the very beginning was designed to make them primarily effective mothers and homemakers. Men designed all policies in traditional societies, and the supremacy of men was firmly rooted in most traditional norms and practices. Gender stereotyping in traditional education is therefore firmly accepted in most traditional settings.

Nigerian women are often in congruence with the traditional stereotype of the complete homemaker. This is perhaps why women are not adequately represented in the Nigerian

educational system. Program of Study: Traditional vs. Non-Traditional Curriculum Nigerian society believes primarily in the role model of women as perfect homemakers. The worth of a woman is often measured in terms of her success in family life matters. Most women therefore, struggle to be successful homemakers. In some situations, such struggles keep women out of the school system. Many women, in their bid to play multiple roles such as homemakers, mothers, providing household labour, worker, often have little time for educational advancement. Even those who struggle to be enrolled for tertiary education, the types of programs available to them also seem to affect their enrolment. The existence of an imperfect link between education and the labour market is also cited as one of the obstacles affecting women's participation in tertiary education. Often women are channeled into traditional fields of study irrespective of market conditions. Lack of marketability of women with post secondary education can then act as deterrent, discouraging women from seeking higher education.

In Kenya, its observed that causes of girls' low participation rates include cultural practices that favor the education of boys to that of girls, such as early marriages, childbearing, and attendant parental responsibilities. Extreme poverty also plays a role (Institute of Economic Affairs 2008).This study will seek to show how socio-cultural factors influence access to university education by women in Kenya, Bungoma south district in particular, where data acquired from several universities shows disparity between the numbers of men, which is higher as compared to that of women.

2.3 Education policies and access to university education by women

Educational policies continue to dictate who has the ability to pursue education. Men are more advantaged than their female peers and policies play a role in perpetuating Systemic gender

imbalances (Beoku-Betts, 1998). Policy factors include direct and indirect government initiatives (Beoku-Betts, 1998). UNICEF further identified three areas of policy focus including mainstreaming gender concerns, promoting gender specific programme activities, and giving special attention to the girl child (Swainson, Bendera, Gordon, &Kadzamira, 1998,). Policy implementation is cumbersome to navigate because it is introduced on several levels, often at the national level but not always by the state government. Frequently, non-governmental organizations and external organizations also attempt to wield power and to direct policies. This presents a potential source of conflict for how the targeted group received these policy changes.

South Asia remains the most gender-unequal and insensitive region in the world (UNICEF, 2005a). Cultural and social beliefs and practices interface with each other to form multiple and overlapping disparities that exclude girls from their right to education. Patriarchy and a preference for sons, combined with parental perceptions of the opportunity costs of investing in girls' education, often seen as 'watering a neighbour's tree', have become risk factors for girls' education.

Although not always overt, the notion of patriarchy embedded in society influences women's educational patterns. Neither capitalist nor socialist perspectives tackle the entrenched patriarchal attitudes that permeate Tanzanian society (Hood, 1988). The decision making process, which begins at the household level and extends through business and government, frequently ignores women's voices (Kwesiga, 2002). Women continue to be distanced from legislative and decision-making bodies and other positions of power which prevents them from creating social policies (Egbo, 2000).Women frequently bear the responsibility for cultivating crops but their

ability to make decisions is minimized, if not completely removed, if they do not own property (Kwesiga, 2002). Further, men often dominate the cash economy but women are generally the ones responsible for school fees, children's clothes and household items, which all require cash payments (Kwesiga, 2002). Gender discrimination exists at multiple levels, especially because women tend to be underemployed or employed only at the lowest levels (Kilva-ndunda, 2001). Women continue to become educated but due to notions of hegemony, they are unable to exert their influence in areas that result in increased power and recognition.

According to Kiluva-ndunda (2001) gender determines how power, property, prestige, and educational and employment opportunities are organized, regulated, and distributed. Again, this begins at the smallest unit, the household and extends to larger societal patterns. Although literacy helps provide opportunities for women, it does not necessarily enhance their social standing (Egbo, 2000). The problem then becomes Patriarchal norms that create a hegemony restricting educational access. Patriarchal hegemony then directly influences women's social spheres including education.

Gender relations play an important role regarding economic subordination and Women's gender stratification (Kiluva-ndunda, 2001). Even when women control the domestic domain, it is not common knowledge because patriarchal rule dictates that men are in charge (Kwesiga, 2002). Within the family, men are traditionally viewed as the head of the household who makes the decisions. This extends from the family unit to local communities and creates issues related to gender parity in education and policy creation. Egbo (2000) states that literate women often become indoctrinated and acculturated into prevailing male based systems rather than

transforming them. As women enter these male dominated spheres they succumb to the social norms instead of trying to change them, and serve in subordinate positions to men. A lack of female role models affects young women who are not able to find their voice, which further affects the creation of policy (Bendera, 1999). As the national government empowers local communities to enhance gender parity on regional and local levels women have more opportunities to get involved in administering education (Swainson et al., 1998).

In addition to patriarchy and hegemony, the location of schools inhibits women from pursuing primary or secondary education (Bloch et al., 1998). Kwesiga (2002) boldly claims that the single most important determinant of primary school enrolment is the presence, or absence, or a school within easy reach of primary school age children. Children who do not live near a school are subject to greater absenteeism (Kwesiga, 2002). Generally, girls are responsible for more of the domestic workload than their male peers and their duties require a higher investment of time (Bendera, 1999). School proximity is especially important for rural schoolchildren where the school day generally runs from 8:00a.m. Until 4:30p.m., (Bendera, 1999). After these long days, the assumption is that young women will prepare the evening meal, take care of the cleaning, and care for younger family members. Their cumulative household duties result in increased fatigue at the end of the day. In rural areas, girls may travel for an hour each direction to get to school limiting the time and focus they have to study. Additionally, some families do not feel safe allowing their daughters to travel great distances to school, resulting in heightened levels of absenteeism (Bendera, 1999). Reducing the distance to school encourages girl's enrollment and attendance, by alleviating concerns for safety and reputation (Grown, Gupta, &Kesh, 2005). This is especially important in rural areas where schools may be rundown and the children travel a

farther distance to reach a better facility (Kwesiga, 2002). Parents are less likely to invest in their daughter's education if she has to travel a long distance and the quality of education is poor (Sutton, 1998). Thus, distance and quality serve to impact female attendance in education throughout much of Tanzania.

Unequal access to secondary education and poor quality of secondary education received by girls has resulted in a limited pool of qualified female candidates for university education. Unfortunately, the disadvantage women have in university entrance examinations, due to lower quality of secondary education and girls' lower access rates to secondary education, and often go unnoticed. In fact, the low representation of women in science and mathematics related disciplines at the secondary education level are the main factor of the low participation of female students in science and technology related fields at the tertiary level. Another problem is the paucity of our school curricula. The school curricula are such that girls leave school only with the required academic qualification but without some vocational training in some trade or profession in which they may wish to make a career. This situation presents a one-sided system of education, which obviously deprives our women/girls of their rights to meaningful education.

In study done by Kwesiga (2002) found out that teenage pregnancy is another important policy factor affecting access to university education by women, in University of Dar es Salaam, expulsion due to pregnancy violates fundamental rights to education and contradicts Tanzania's Constitution (Bhalalusesa, 2000) . Article 11, section 3 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania clearly articulates the Government's stance on ensuring equal opportunities for all individuals who want to pursue education. However, the current practice is

to expel pregnant girls from school at both the primary and secondary school levels. The ideology is not aligned with the current practice regarding pregnancy. The removal of pregnant girls from school limits their potential contribution to society and often results in their poverty. Bhalalusesa claims that female students suffer because the circumstances leading to pregnancy, consideration of the impact of expulsion, or the views of the pregnant schoolchildren are not taken into account (Bhalalusesa, 2000). Pregnant girls assume responsibility for the situation while the men who impregnate them suffer no consequences. Frequently, these girls suffer doubly because they shoulder the burden of child-care at a young age and their social status becomes lowered (Bhalalusesa, 2000).

Moreover, a study done by Kiluva-ndunda's (2001) supported the above argument by suggesting that mothers find it difficult to address issues of sexuality in the modern context, yet mothers are held responsible for teaching their daughters morals around sexuality and the consequences. In fact, some parents become so anxious about a potential teen pregnancy that they remove their daughters from school once they reach puberty (Kwesiga, 2002). Bendera, (1999) estimates that approximately 3000 Tanzanian girls in primary school become pregnant annually. Beoku-Betts (1998) notes that about 18 percent of women from the ages of 15 –19 give birth annually compared with 8 percent of their Latin peers and 3 percent of Asian women.

Specifically, the implication of women bearing the responsibility of teenage pregnancy reinforces the traditional and subservient role that women play in Tanzania. Frequently, when a woman becomes pregnant the young father meets with the woman's family to negotiate a bride price. In this sense, the Tanzanian cultural norms in concert with the patriarchal system thwart women's intellectual capacity and development (Kerner, 1986). Although additional policy

factors exist, including inadequate teacher training and corporal punishment, the aforementioned issues highlight the most significant limitations on women and their access to or completion of educational achievements at the primary and secondary school level. This web of policy factors directly affects young girls in Tanzania and their ability to pursue university education.

2.4 Academic performance and access to university education by women

In a study conducted by Dayand Türüt (2004) on gender, differences on academic performance whose objective was to determine whether there are significant gender differences find out that gender of the student may be a factor in determining student performance. Childhood training and experience, gender differences in attitudes, parental and teacher expectations and behaviors, differential course taking and biological differences between the sexes may all be instrumental in giving rise to gender differences in achievement (Feingold, 1988). The rather high gender disparity in various spheres of public life and the patriarchal social structure in Turkey may also lead to poorer academic performance among female university students. The methodology used to see whether females have an advantage over males, we use a multivariate analysis and thereby, control all other possible predictors of enrolments. The study found out that there is a gender gap in favor of male students in terms of university entrance scores. The cumulative distribution of female scores lies above the distribution for males indicating the existence of a gender gap in favor of the latter. The observed difference in scores may originate from two sources; Female students are less successful in the placement exam so that they enter their respective departments with lower scores, Female students prefer less competitive departments that admits students with lower scores, which reduces their motivation to do well in the entrance exam or that due to their lower scores they get placed into departments with lower entrance requirements.

His findings were supported by a study done by (Bloch, Beoku-Betts, &Tabachnick, 1998) as they noted that academic factors impact on how men and women perform in an educational setting and also account for how well students are equipped to meet the demands of their country after graduation, in Tanzania students take several rounds of national exams and the results are used for placement purposes at the next level of education. Another study done by ((Bendera, 1999; Swainson, Bendera, Gordon, &Kadzamira, 1998)observed that, Women's test scores on these exams are considerably lower than their male counterparts although the Tanzanian government enacted a quota system to enhance girls' acceptance rates from primary school to secondary school, the girls who benefited from this program arrived with lowest scores. In many instances, these girls are never fully able to catch up to their male peers (Bendera, 1999). They begin secondary school at a disadvantage and the pressure to succeed is exacerbated by the highly selective hierarchy of secondary schools (Bendera, 1999). Gender equity extends beyond gender parity regarding access. Gender equity means creating conditions which enable girls to remain in school, to participate in a positive learning environment and to perform to the best of their natural abilities (Swainson, et al., 1998).Even when women make strides in education, they often enter fields of study that are likely to compliment their expected roles as caregivers in the household (Beoku-Betts, 1998). These societal patterns continue to stifle women.

Even though women consistently increase their presence in education, they still trail men in disciplines such as the sciences. Educating students in math, science, and technology is imperative to the future development of a nation (Bloch, Beoku-Betts, &Tabachnick, 1998; Bendera, 1999; Swainson, Bendera, Gordon, &Kadzamira, 1998). Due to the economic importance of science and math in securing a job, strengthening science and technical education

for women provides a way to further their social mobility. Unfortunately, the current system of boys taking science creates an environment of fear for girls and inferiority for boys who have girls in their classes (Bendera, 1999). Bendera's (1999) findings suggest that although some girls felt empowered when taking science classes, others experienced feelings of inferiority when around their male peers. Frequently, in Sub-Saharan Africa gender discrimination in schools exists, this is particularly relevant in the science arena (Egbo, 2000). This is significant because a science or technology background is highly valued and it lets women break out of their roles in jobs that perpetuate female roles in society.

Moreover, in study done by Odhiambo (2006) supported the argument as it observed that, in Nyanza province out of the top a hundred students in the year 2005 Kenya certificate of primary education (KCPE) results only one was a girl. This kind of imbalance in primary education results to imbalance in advanced education like admissions to university education.

Because communities in arid climates lack water and energy sources, many girls must trek long distances to fetch water and firewood before going to school. This takes away crucial time that they would otherwise spend on their studies and is ultimately detrimental to their academic performance. Their poor performance affects their educational progression and their parents' support of their education, as parents who do not see the value added will not send their girls to school. The result is a vicious cycle where girls attending school under difficult circumstances perform poorly, discouraging their parents from further supporting their educations.

2.5 Socio- economic status and access to university education by women

According to UNESCO global education, digest 2010noted that East Asia and the Pacific**,** noted that access to higher education had many disparities as more women were marginalized as

compared to their male counterparts. There is wide variation in GERs, which range from as low as 7% in Cambodia to 58% in Japan, 77% in Australia and 98% in the Republic of Korea in 2008.However, it should be noted that even in the poorest quintile some countries such as Brazil, Thailand, Uganda and Uzbekistan have reached gender parity, while in other countries including Benin, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger and Togo gender disparity against girls persists even in the richest quintile. The poor are more likely to cite lack of money as the main reason for not enrolling their children in school (Hallman et al., 2007). While it is difficult to make generalizations, there is a tendency for poor families who cannot afford education for all of their children to invest their limited resources in boys rather than girls i.e. in poor rural areas in Peru, girls must often work for the good of the household and forego their education, which represents an option that would bear a significant cost in the form of loss of income from their labour in addition to direct expenses for school supplies (Alfonso, 2008). Poor rural girls living in the Lao PDR spend on average more than twice as much time as boys on household chores and are more likely to be out of school (UNESCO, 2010b). In Nicaragua, household wealth is an important predictor of secondary school attendance and of being at the appropriate grade level (Parker, 2008). In Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda, poor girls face considerable barriers to enter school and those that do begin classes are more likely to drop out than children from other groups (Lewin, 2009).

In a study done by Kwesiga (2002), identified that factors which had an impact on women's access to higher education in sub-Saharan Africa. She identified socio-economic status of a family is a strong indicator of the level of education a girl is likely to achieve. Respondents perceive this as the most likely cause of girls dropping out of school. In the same study, Kwesiga

(2002) also notes that the Society got influence on women access to education shedding shocking light on the way societal structures and institutions such as the family and marriage entrench gender oppression. Kwesiga analyses systems like universal marriage and its contribution to high dropout rates amongst women in secondary and higher education. She is particularly critical of the practice of bride wealth payment and how it mitigates against women going on with higher education. A young bride is more marketable and will attract a higher bride wealth payment; thus, parents facing financial hardship are more likely to sell off their daughters than struggle to find the money for higher education. Because boys are intrinsically more valued than girls as human beings they are more likely to be privileged when choices have to be made about who gets an education.

From the economic point of view, many parents in Nigeria consider women's education as a waste of funds. Such parents believe that money spent on a girl's education is a waste, since she will soon marry into her husband's family, thus leaving only boys in their original family to cater for their parents. Therefore, when families were faced with the option of choosing between sons and daughters' education, the daughters are always the victims. This was reinforced by discriminatory employment practices, which restrict women to low paying jobs, thus discouraging parents further, from investing heavily on girls' education (Aluko, 2005b). From the demand side, the low level of manufacturing and service activities in the country may discourage parents from sending their girls for university education, as they do not see prospects for absorption in the formal labour market.

In a study done in Kenya(Institute of Economic Affairs 2008) supported this argument as it noted that, extreme poverty also plays a role in women and girls access to higher education, at the secondary and tertiary level, financial constraints affect women's participation. The government subsidizes secondary education, but access to the tertiary level was made possible through higher education loans. Although these loans were meant to ensure equitable access, they have serious limitations. Students are not guaranteed access to the loans, and access for students in private universities is particularly limited despite the fact that many of these students are from low-income groups.

2.6 Summary of literature review

The chapter looked at factors influencing access to university education by women such as socio-economic status, education policies, academic performance and socio-economic status.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

This study adopted human capital theory of education by Marx Webber; it has proven that this theory and education works hand in hand. it sees education as an investment that should be supported by all cost due to its beneficial impact that it has to the society in future as it impart knowledge and skills to individuals, impart values, ideas, attitudes and aspirations which may be in the nation's best developmental interest and a society as a whole. Hence, the need to invest in education without posing any discrimination due to ones gender as the whole individuals belong to the society and the returns does not benefit just one individual but the whole society and a nation.

The study therefore embarked on the theory as it looked at access to university education within the genders. University education should be all gendered hence need to understand the

importance of human capital theory to ensure higher economic, social returns by promoting gender parity in university education access.

2.8 The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was provided in figure 1. Through this model which independent variables comprises influence of social cultural practices on women access to higher education, education policies and women access to higher education, academic performance and women access to higher education and social economic status influence on dependent variable; women access to higher education, is shown.

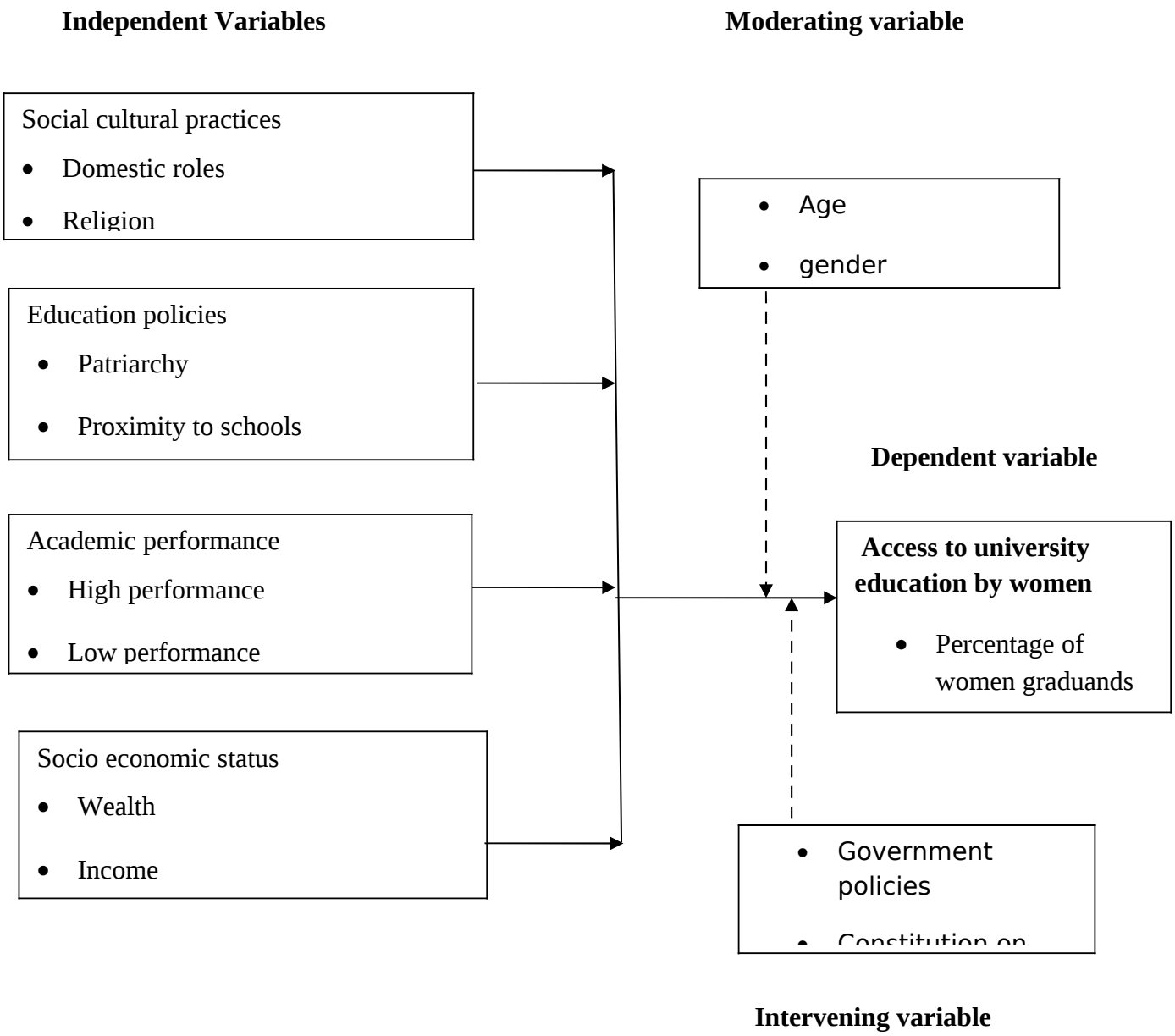

Figure 1 conceptual framework

The whole literature review was summarized in the above conceptual framework. Establish a relationship between factors influencing access to university education by women was. The figure showed the problem of access to university education by women including how socio-cultural practices, education policies, academic performance and socio-economic status. It also

showed how various indicators that provided platform on which assessment and solutions were based on.

2.8 Knowledge Gap

Access to university education by women is well documented in literature but little literature is found about how socio-cultural practices, academic performance, education policies and socio-economic status influence women access to university education by women in Bungoma south district. Statistics from the three universities are available to ascertain the extent to which women access to such institutions, yet very little literature exists on what and how these women feel about university education. Dialogue with them needed be opened and they needed to be engaged in the issues and changes so that meaningful amendments are made. Understanding of how these women feel and think may help to provide increased knowledge of the needs that women have in accessing university education and in this way, the relevant structures in society can be informed and mobilized to make the changes necessary to make access to university education free and fair to all in Kenya.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises of the methodology that was used in this study which included research design, target population, sample size, sampling procedure, research instruments, data analysis techniques, ethical issues and operational definitions of variables.

3.2 Research Design

This study employed the use of descriptive survey research design to obtain information both quantitative and qualitative that described the existing phenomena. Mugenda and Mugenda, (1999) says descriptive research does not have to have a direct control of independent variable as their manifestation have already occurred or because the inherently cannot be manipulated. Thus, the design collected data from members of a given population to determine the status of that particular population with respect to one or more variables. Hence, design was selected to satisfy the aspect of the study where a sample population was used to get characteristics of the population too large to observe directly (Mugenda&Mugenda 1999).

3.3 Target population

The target population in this study was 469 female students from the three universities that is Kibabii University College, university of Nairobi-Bungoma sub Centre and Masinde Muliro university-Bungoma campus as per September 2013 intake. The researcher obtained the list of women student from joint admission board website for Kibabii University College while for university of Nairobi and Masinde Muliro University, office admission records was used.

3.4 sample size and sampling procedure

In this section, the researcher discussed the sample size and sampling procedures used in the study.

3.4.1 Sample Size Selection

In this study, the researcher having a population of 469, used a sample of 210 respondents who are women students from three universities that is Kibabii university college, university of Nairobi Bungoma centre and Masinde Muliro university Bungoma campus as per September 2013 intake in Bungoma south district. The researcher used Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table to determine the sample size (see appendix 8). This was suitable for the study.

3.4.2 Sampling Procedures

The researcher put the three universities into strata; proportionate sampling was used to select the sample size in each university. Finally, systematic random sampling was used to select individuals using university admission lists.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN BUNGOMA SOUTH DISTRICT AS PER 2013 INTAKE

NAME OF INSTITUTION IN BUNGOMA SOUTH	**MEN AS PER 2013 INTAKE**	**WOMEN AS PER 2013 INTAKE**	**TOTAL**
Kibabii university college	437	324	**761**
University of Nairobi-Bungoma sub centre	112	84	**196**
Masinde Muliro university-Bungoma campus	85	61	**146**
TOTAL	634	469	**1103**
DIFFERENCE	**165**		

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

This study used closed ended questions, where five sections were created. Section A, contained questions on general information of the respondents, section B, contained questions on socio-cultural practices that discriminate against women. Section C, contained questions on education policies that disadvantage women, and section D, which contained questions academic performance of women while section E, contained questions on influence of socio-economic status of women on access to university education.

3.6 Validity And Reliability

The research instruments were piloted in order to standardize them before the actual study. The pilot study was done in the neighboring University of Eldoret to determine if the items in the research instruments would yield the required data for the final study.

3.6.1 Validity of the Instruments

The researcher used university lecturers and the supervisor to determine the validity of the instruments.

3.6.2 Reliability of the instruments

The researcher used split half method; this happened during the pilot study that was carried out at the neighboring university of Eldoret before the actual research was done. The researcher used spearman correlation formula to calculate the coefficient of correlation (See appendix 5).The co-efficient of correlation was found to be above 0.8 then the instrument was reliable.

SPEARMAN CORRELATION FORMULA

$$r = \frac{n\sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{(n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2)(n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2)}}$$

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

For this study, the researcher followed the right procedure in obtaining relevant documents for the study. The researcher sought research permit from the national council of science and technology (NCST) then proceeded to the three universities for appointments with women students for data collection. The researcher attached a cover letter to the questionnaire requesting the respondents to participate in the study. The women students filled the questionnaires and the researcher collected completed questionnaires after distribution.

3.8 Data Analysis Techniques

This study used descriptive statistical methods in order to analyse the data that was collected. Questionnaires were crosschecked to ensure the questions were answered well. Coding of answered questions was done, and organization of the whole information done before the

analysis of the data. Frequency and percentages was used in the analysis, presented in tabular form to enhance interpretation of the data.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher assured respondents of the confidentiality of the information they provided, including their own personal information. The respondents were informed the purpose of the study, which was for academic reasons. This enabled them provide the required information without any fear.

3.10 Operational definitions of variables

There were two variables are independent and dependant variables. The independent variables were socio-cultural practices, education policies, academic performance and socio-economic status of women. The dependant variable is access to university education by women.

Table 3.2 Operational definition of variables

Research objective	Variables	Indicators	Measurement scale

To investigate how socio-cultural practices influence women access to higher education in Bungoma South.	**Independent V** socio-cultural practices **Dependent V** University education	• Domestic roles • Religion	Nominal Ordinal
To examine how education policies influence women access to higher education in Bungoma South.	**Independent V** education policies **Dependent V** University education	• Patriarchy • Proximity to schools • pregnancy	Nominal Ordinal
To assess how academic performance influence women access to higher education in Bungoma South.	**Independent V** academic performance **Dependent V** University education	• High performance • Low performance	Nominal ordinal
To investigate how socio-economic status influence women access to higher education in Bungoma South.	**Independent V** socio-economic status **Dependent V** University education	• Wealth • income • Education levels	Nominal ordinal

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the findings, presentations and discussions of the results for the study on factors influencing access to university education by women in Kenya; a case of Bungoma south district. The main sub headings are instrument return rate, demographic characteristics of the respondents and the analysis as per objective.

4.2Questionnaire return rate

This study targeted women able to access university education in Bungoma south district. Universities under investigation were: Masinde Muliro University, Kibabii University College and university of Nairobi-Bungoma sub-centre.

The table shows the distribution of respondents for this study.

Target Category	Number Targeted	Number Responded	Return Rate (%)
Kibabii university College	90	82	39.05
Masinde muliro Campus	60	41	19.52
University of Nairobi-Bungoma	60	57	27.14
Total	**210**	**180**	**85.71**

Table 4.1: Return Rate

Out of 210 questionnaire administered to the women university students, 180 were filled and returned representing a return rate of 85.71% (180/210*100). All respondents for this study were women.

Some students were not available to participate due other engagements; some were out of university to attend to their personal issues while others just refused to register their response.

4.3 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondent with the aim of establishing the general background of the respondents that participated in the study. The areas covered included: gender, age, residence area, whom students live with and level of parents education.

4.3.1 Respondents by gender

An item was included in the questionnaire, which sought information on the gender of the students. The findings are shown in table 4.2

Table 4.2: Gender of students

Gender	Frequency	percent
Female	180	100.00
Male	0	0.00
Total	**180**	**100.00**

Out of 180 respondents, all were women, which represent 100%.

From the study, it was revealed that all of the respondents were women.

4.3.2 Respondents by Age

The study sought to estimate the range of age of the women university students. The response was as follows:

Table 4.3: Age of students

Age bracket	Frequency	percent
18-20	50	27.78
21-30	80	44.44
31-40	44	24.44
41-50	6	3.33
Total	180	100.00

It was found that (50) 27.78% were between 18-20 years old, (80) 44.44% were between 21-30 years old,(44) 24.44% were 31-40 years old and (6) 3.33% were between 41-50 years old.

The majority of students were between 21 to 30 years of age.

4.3.3 Respondents by area of residency

Table 4.4 Area of Residence.

Area of residence	Frequency	Percentage
Within Bungoma	170	94.44
Outside Bungoma	10	5.56
Total	**180**	**100.00**

The table shows that (170) 94.44% of students reside within Bungoma and (10) 5.56% of the students at the universities in Bungoma south reside outside Bungoma County. This indicates that these universities have a catchment of students from within the locality. Seemingly no much marketing has been done to get more students enroll in the universities from the entire county and country.

4.4 Data analysis per objective

Data was analyzed as per each objective.

4.4.1 Influence of socio-cultural practices on access to university education by women

This section attempts to look at the extent to which socio-cultural practices influence access to university education by women. The question items were geared towards eliciting responses that would indicate how the socio-cultural practices affects access to university education by women. Table 4.3 presents the responses to various items, their frequency and percentages.

4.4.1.1 Social cultural awareness

Respondents were asked to state if they knew any socio-cultural practices practiced at their areas. The responses were as shown below:

Table 4.6: The students' awareness to social cultural practices in their community.

The students' awareness to social cultural practices in their community	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Yes	123	68.33
No	43	23.89
No answer	14	7.78
Total	**180**	**100.00**

From table 4.6, the study revealed 123, which represent 68.33% of respondents were aware of social cultural practices in their community, (43) 23.89% were not aware while 14 (7.78) never responded to the item.

4.4.1.2 Extent of effects of domestic roles on women academics

This section sought to find out the extent to which domestic roles that women play affect their academics. The responses were given as in table 4.7 below

Table 4.7 Extent of effects of domestic roles on women academics

Extent of effects of domestic roles on women academics	Frequencies	Percent
Much	17	9.44
Very much	147	86.67
Little	11	6.11
Very little	5	2.78
Total	**180**	**100.00**

From table 4.7, 17(9.44%) thought that domestic roles they play affect their academics much, 147 (86.67%) thought it affects their academics very much, 11(6.11%) thought it does affect their academics little while 5(2.785) felt domestic roles they play had very little effect on their academics.

From this table, it was found that most women academics were affected by domestic roles they play. This agrees with the study done by Kamau (2006) which noted that most African cultures define women in terms of what they should be or do for men. For instance, a married woman's

major role is to enhance her husband's career goals by providing him with moral and emotional support. The woman was left with all the family responsibilities and chores while the husband is away either studying or working. Women can pursue their professional dreams only after fulfilling their culturally accepted roles, which mostly prove to be an expectation, nearly impossible considering at what age this would be happening.

4.4.1.3 Religion of respondents

This section sought to find out the religion that the students prescribed to. Their responses were as follows:

Table 4.8: Religion of respondents

Religion of respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Christian	99	55.00
Islam	70	33.89
Buddhism	5	2.78
African	3	1.67
None	3	1.67
Total	**180**	**100.00**

Majority of the students which was 99 (55%) were Christians, 70 (33.89%) were Muslims, 5 (2.78%) were Buddhists, 3 (1.67%) said were African while 3 (1.67%) said belonged to none of the stated religion.

4.4.1.4 Does religion affect women academics?

This section sought to find out whether the religion they prescribe to affected women in their pursuit of academics. Their responses were summarized in the table below:

Table 4.8: Does religion affect women academics?

Does religion affect women academics?	Frequency	percentage
Yes	130	72.22
No	46	25.56
No response	4	2.22
Total	**180**	**100.00**

On whether religion affects respondent's studies, 130 (72.22%) of the respondents agreed that religion does affect their academics, 46 (25.56%) said religion does not affect their academics while 4 (2.22%) did not respond to the item.

Majority of the respondents think religion affected their academics. Kwesiga (2002) whose objective was to establish how religion as part of socio-cultural practice influenced access to university education by women seemed to agree with this and noted that various religious practices that provide their own line of thinking and although religion is not always a barrier to girls' education, it can be. Kwesiga (2002) arguments are supported by (Beoku-Betts, 1998) who stated that while variations exist; Muslim regions and countries in Sub-Saharan Africa tend to have more rigidly defined gender role, norms and practices affect access and attainment rates for girls in the educational system. With observation of the said norms, schooling becomes difficult because the practice of Islam does not allow women and men to interact in an educational setting, potentially reducing women's participation in education (Kwesiga, 2002). Religious ideology influences how the family views women's education and their duties. Islam, Hinduism and Catholicism all pose restrictions on women's roles. These belief-systems subsequently influence access to education and women's treatment (Kwesiga, 2000).

4.4.2 Influence of education policies on access to university education by women

This section attempted to find out whether students were aware of education policies that affect access to university education by women.

4.4.2.1 Awareness of Education policies

Respondents were requested to state if they were aware of education policies. They responded as follows:

Table 4.10: Awareness of education policies

Awareness of education policies	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Yes	150	83.33
No	27	15.00
No response	3	1.67
Total	**180**	**100.00**

From table 4.10, 150(83.33%) of students representing highest number of students were aware of education policies affecting access to university education by women, 27 (15%) said they are not aware of any education policy affecting their access to university education while 1.67% representing 3 students never responded to the question.

4.4.2.2 Between men and women, who is affected most by education policies

This section presents the students views about who was affected most by education policies between men and women. This item gave the following responses:

Table 4.10 : Gender most affected most (men or women) by education policies.

Gender affected by		
Education policies	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Men	7	3.89
Women	171	95.00
No response	2	1.11
Total	180	100.00

From the table 4.10, 171(95%) of students believe women are the most affected by education policies, 7 (3.89%) believe that men are affected by education policies, while 2 (1.11%) did not respond to the question.

Most education policies seem to affect or be directed to welfare of women because Educational policies continue to dictate who has the ability to pursue education and it is evident that Men are more advantaged than their female peers and so policies play a role in perpetuating Systemic gender imbalances (Beoku-Betts, 1998). Policy factors include direct and indirect government initiatives (Beoku-Betts, 1998). UNICEF further identified three areas of policy focus including mainstreaming gender concerns, promoting gender specific programme activities, and giving special attention to the girl child (Swainson, Bendera, Gordon, &Kadzamira, 1998).

4.4.2.3. Distance to university and motivation to pursue university education

The respondents were asked if distance does affect students' motivation to pursue university education. They responded as follows in the table 4.11 below:

Table 4.11: Distance to university and motivation to study at the university

Does distance affect study?	Frequency	percent
Yes	176	97.78
No	4	2.22
No response	0	0.00
Total	**180**	**100.00**

From table 4.11, 176(97.78%) believe that distance affects their motivation to pursue university education while 4 (2.22%) believe distance does not affect their motivation.

Majority of the respondents felt distance played part in their motivation to pursue university education. This is true for the girl child's education from as early as universal primary education to tertiary education .Bendera (1999) agrees with this and says that school proximity is especially important for rural schoolchildren where the school day generally runs from 8:00a.m until 4:30p.m. Bendera (1999) further urges that after these long days, the assumption is that young women will prepare the evening meal, take care of the cleaning, and care for younger family members. Their cumulative household duties result in increased fatigue at the end of the day. In rural areas, girls may travel for an hour each direction to get to school limiting the time and focus they have to study. Additionally, some families do not feel safe allowing their daughters to travel great distances to school, resulting in heightened levels of absenteeism (Bendera, 1999).

Reducing the distance to school encourages girl's enrollment and attendance, by alleviating concerns for safety and reputation (Grown, Gupta, &Kesh, 2005). This is especially important in rural areas where schools may be rundown and the children travel a farther distance to reach a better facility (Kwesiga, 2002). Parents are less likely to invest in their daughter's education if she has to travel a long distance and the quality of education is poor (Sutton, 1998). Thus, distance and quality serve to impact female attendance in education.

4.4.2.4. Instances of pregnancy at University

This section tried to find out if the students have had any instance of pregnancy in their university. The responses were as follows:

Table 4.12 Pregnancy at University

Instances of pregnancy	Frequency	percent
Yes	180	100.00
No	0	0.00
No response	0	0.00
Total	**180**	**100.00**

From table 4.12, 180, (100%) agree they have had instances of pregnancy in their university. This is because at University level, everybody is an adult and can have a leeway in decision-making including getting pregnant at a particular point.

4.4.2.5 How pregnancy was handled by the university administration?

This section looked at how the university administration handled the pregnancy situation at their university.

Table 4.13, if yes, how was it handled?

How the university administration handled the pregnancy situation	**Frequency**	**percent**
Both student sent away	0	0.00
Women sent away	128	71.11
Man sent away	0	0.00
No response	52	28.89
Total	**180**	**100.00**

From table 4.13, 128 (71.11%) said that in case of pregnancy, women was sent away, no said that both men and women were sent away and same for man sent away while 52 (28.89%) never responded to the item.

This is in line with many studies done earlier on. For instance, the cultural norms in many African countries in concert with the patriarchal system thwart women's intellectual capacity and development (Kerner, 1986) when they get pregnant. Although additional policy factors exist, including inadequate teacher training and corporal punishment, the aforementioned issues highlight the most significant limitations on women and their access to or completion of educational achievements at the primary and secondary school level. This web of policy factors too directly affects young girls and their ability to pursue university education.

4.4.2.6. Effect of education policies on motivation of women pursuing university education?

The respondents were investigated on if education policies affected their motivation in pursuing university education. They responded as follows:

Table 4.14: education policies and motivation to pursue university education

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	160	88.89
No	12	6.67
No response	8	4.44
Total	**180**	**100.00**

160 (88.89%) believed education policies affected motivation of women to pursue university education, 12 (6.67%) said it does not while 8 (4.44%) gave no response to the item.

Table 4.14 showed that majority of respondents felt that education policies influenced their motivation to pursue university education. This is true considering some policies for example Republic of Tanzania clearly articulates the Government's stance on ensuring equal opportunities for all individuals who want to pursue education. However, the current practice is to expel pregnant girls from school at both the primary and secondary school levels. The ideology is not aligned with the current practice regarding pregnancy. The removal of pregnant girls from school limits their potential contribution to society and often results in their poverty because it thwarts women's intellectual capacity and development (Kerner, 1986).

To add on this, although additional policy factors exist, including inadequate teacher training and corporal punishment, the aforementioned issues highlight the most significant limitations on women and their access to or completion of educational achievements at the primary and secondary school level. This web of policy factors directly affects young girls and their ability to pursue university education (Kerner, 1986; Bhalalusesa, 2000).

4.4.3 influence Academic performances on access to university education by women.

This section looked at women's academic performance and how it affects access to university education by women.

4.4.3.1 Performance at O-level

The respondents were asked to state how they performed at O-level. This shows how they responded:

Table 4.15 : Performance at O-level

Score	Frequency	Percent
A	0	0.00
A-	2	1.11
B+	8	4.44
B	14	7.78
B-	15	8.33
C+	26	14.44
C	42	23.33
C-	43	23.89
D+	30	16.67
D	-	-
D-	-	-
TOTAL	**180**	**100.00**

Table 4.15 shows that majority of the respondents scored C+ and below in their O- level exams and this is the university entry grade in Kenya.

4.4.3.2 O- level performance and access to university education?

This section sought to find out if performance at O-level affected students decision to pursue university education. Responses were as follows in the table below:

Table 4.16: O-level performance and access to University education

Does Your O-level Performance affect your decision to pursue university education?	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Yes	143	79.44
No	11	6.12
No response	26	14.44
Total	**180**	**100.00**

From table 4.16, 143(79.44%) believed that their o-level performance affected their decision to pursue university education, 11, (6.12%) believed their o-level performance never influenced their decision to pursue university education while 26, (14.44%) did not respond to the item.

Table 4.16 shows that majority of the respondents 79.44% were affected by their O-level performance in their urge to pursue university education.

4.4.3.3 How O-level Performance affect decision to pursue university education

This section looked at how O-level performance influenced women's decision to pursue university education. The following was how respondents said responded to the question:

Table 4.17: How O-level Performance affect decision to pursue university education

How O-level performance Influenced women's decision to pursue university education	Frequency	Percent
Type of course you doing	47	26.11
Level of study	102	56.67
Period of study	31	17.22
Total	**180**	**100.00**

From table 4.17, 47(26.11%) said their O-level performance made them to do the course they were doing at the university, 102 (56.67%) said it had influenced their level of study at the university while 31, (17.22%) said it had influence on their period of study.

Respondents seemed to agree with other prior studies for example, Bloch, Beoku-Betts, &Tabachnick (1998) noted that academic factors affect how men and women perform in an educational setting and account for how well students are equipped to meet the demands of their country after graduation. For instance, in Tanzania, students take several rounds of national exams and the results are used for placement purposes at the next level of education. Moreover, the imbalance in primary and secondary education results to imbalance in advanced education like admissions to university education (Odhiambo, 2006).

4.4.4 influence of Socio-economic status and access to university education by women

This section looks at how socio-economic status influence access to university education by women.

4.4.4.1 Hindrance studying at the university education

This section summarized the responses given by respondents on things that might hinder their access to university education in terms of frequencies and percentages.

Table 4.18: hindrance to university education

Factors that hinder

Women access

University education	Frequency	Percent
Poverty	178	98.89
Wealth	0	0.00
No response	2	1.11
Total	**180**	**100.00**

From table 4.18, 178 (98.89%) said that poverty was a great hindrance for them to pursue university education, none thought being wealthy would hinder them accessing university education while 2 (1.11%) gave no response. A study done in Kenya(Institute of Economic Affairs 2008) supported this scenario and noted that extreme poverty plays a role in women and girls access to higher education, at the secondary and tertiary level and that financial constraints affect women's participation in society. The government subsidizes secondary education, but access to the tertiary level was made possible through higher education loans. Although these loans were meant to ensure equitable access, they have serious limitations. Students are not guaranteed access to the loans, and access for students in private universities is particularly limited despite the fact that many of these students are from low-income groups.

4.4.4.2 Poverty and access to university education between men and women

This section attempted to find out the most affected gender by poverty levels in society in relation to access to university education.

Table 4.19 poverty and access to university education by gender

Affected gender in terms of poverty and access to university education	**Frequency**	**percent**
Women	180	100.00
Both	0	0.00
Men	0	0.00
Total	**180**	**100.00**

From table 4.19, all (100%) female students said that women are most affected with poverty levels when it comes to accessing university education. This agrees with Kenya's institute of Economic Affairs (2008) that noted that extreme poverty plays a role in women and girls access to higher education, at the secondary and tertiary level.

4.4.4.3 Affording school fees

Respondents were asked if they afforded their school fees at the university. Their responses were tabulated in the table below.

Table 4.20: School Fees

Affording school fees	Frequency	Percentage
No	168	93.33
Yes	4	2.22
No response	8	4.45
Total	**180**	**100.00**

From table 4.20, 168(93.33%) indicated that they do not afford their school fees, 4 representing (2.22%) indicated that they can afford fees while 8 (4.45%) never responded to the item.

4.4.4.4 Sponsors you of female students' university education

This section looked at the sponsors of women students' education if they did not afford to pay their fees. Their responses were as follows:

Table 4.21: Sponsors of women students' education

Sponsors of women

Students' education	Frequency	Percentage
Parents	22	12.22
Self	54	30.00
Helb	32	17.78
Bursary	42	23.33
Well wishers	30	16.67
Total	**180**	**100**

From table 4.21, 12.22% said parents sponsored their studies, 30% said they sponsor themselves, 17.78% said they are sponsored by HELB, 23.33% said they given bursaries' while 16.67% said they were sponsored by well-wishers. Discriminatory employment practices, which restrict women to low paying jobs, discourage parents from investing heavily on girls' education (Aluko, 2005b). From the demand side, the low level of manufacturing and service activities in the country may discourage parents from sending their girls for university education, as they do not see prospects for absorption in the formal labour market. This could be the reason why only 12.22 % of the students are sponsored by their parents. Kenya's Institute of Economic Affairs (2008) also identified that the government subsidizes secondary education, but access to the tertiary level was made possible through higher education loans. Although these loans were meant to ensure equitable access, they have serious limitations. Students are not guaranteed access to the loans. This could be the reason for the low percentage (17.78%).

4.4.4.5 Respondents parents' educational level

This item was included to gauge the level of education the student's parents had attained.

Table 4.22: Educational level of students' parents

Educational level of Students' parents	Frequency	Percent
None	10	5.56
Primary	40	22.22
Secondary	80	44.44
University	50	27.78
Total	180	100.00

The table shows that 10 (5.56%) of parents of the students had no education, 40 (22.22%) had primary education, 80 (44.44%) had secondary education while 50 (27.78%) had attained

university education. The study revealed that majority of the student's parents had attained basic education. This was sufficient, as they were able to read and write and therefore should understand the need for education for women thus sponsor them for higher education.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter covers summary of the findings, conclusions drawn from the study as well as recommendations based on the study findings and suggestions for further studies.

5.2 Summary of findings

This study sought to find out factors influencing access to university education by women in Kenya; a case of Bungoma south district. The problem of low number of women accessing university education in Kenya is very common despite government effort to ensure equality in education to all people despite their genders. According to vision 2030, one of its key pillars is education for all.

In summary, the major reason for low access to university education by women is socio-cultural practices, which takes many forms. 55.56% and 22.22% attributing low levels of access to university education to lack of and less support from their parents respectively. 72.22%

agreeing that domestic role affect their studies and a majority of 61.11% saying they receive levels of encouragement ranging from medium, low and very low towards their university education. Education policies were discovered to be contributing to low access to university education by women. With 95% attributing low access to education policies such as distance from school, pregnancy said to affect their motivation towards university education, represented by 97.78% and 100% respectively agreeing that such policies affected level of access to university education by women in Kenya. Academic performance at O-level played a major contribution towards low access to university education by women. Majority of 79.44% respondents saying their performance at O-level affected their decision to pursue university education. Lastly, women also noted socio-economic status to be contributing to low access to university education. With 98.89% agreeing, that poverty played a big part to their low level of access to university education.

5.3 Conclusion

It was established that access to university education by women was a function of complex interaction of many factors. The researcher has suggested some measures that if implemented may help improve or completely enhance women access to university education.

In conclusion, the availability of reliable data, particularly of women at the university, low access by women is an exception. In most part of Kenya, there is need to strengthen data collection units of university education, to know how much it costs the community to send their children or how much it costs them not to sent them to university education. The estimates of the cost of low access to university education by women in Bungoma south and the

country at large need to be known so that budgetary provision can be made for the same. The ministry of education needs to ensure that women establish proper policies to check the problem of low access to university education. Taking into account the benefit of access to all to university education, private returns to education are higher than any other investment.

5.4 Recommendation of the Study

Some of the recommendations made out of the findings of the study so as to increase access to university education by women include the following;

On socio-cultural practices, the government through the ministry of education should come up with measures that will ensure some cultural practices that seem to interfere with academic advancement of women to university education are done away with, to increase the level of access to university education by women.

The education policies should be structured in a way that they provide equal opportunity for all genders to advance academically to higher levels without any form discrimination; this will ensure equal access to education at all levels.

On academic performance, the ministry of education should ensure that the academic ground is equal for both gender and come up with measures that will ensure there is a balance in academic performance at O-level between men and women to ensure both genders have equal opportunity to advance to university education.

Lastly, on socio-economic status, the higher education's board should come up with policies that will see those women students who have excelled at O-level and qualify for university education are provided with financial assistance to ensure they complete their studies at the university; this will ensure increased access to university education by women.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Future research should try to uncover the following as the current study never looked at them;

Factors influencing access to university education by men in Kenya.

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APPENDIX 1

LETTER OF TRANSIMITAL

SHAMIR ISSA NDUKUYU

P.O BOX 728,

BUNGOMA.

Dear respondent,

REF: FILLING OF THE QUESTIONAIRE

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Nairobi, school of continuing and distance education, currently undertaking a master's degree in project planning and management. You have been identified as a respondent to this questionnaire. Please find the attached questionnaire, which is designed to gather information on factors influencing women access to higher education in Bungoma south district. All answers are confidential and will only be used for academic purposes.

This research will be carried out in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Masters of Arts in Project Planning and Management of the University of Nairobi. I will be glad if you fill and return the completed questionnaire at a suitable time.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Shamir Issa Ndukuyu

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE LEARNERS

I am a student of Master of Arts in project planning and management at the University of Nairobi. I am currently doing a research on factors influencing women access to higher education in Bungoma south district, Bungoma County. You have been identified as a potential respondent in this research. The information you provide are expected to help enhance women access to higher education in Bungoma south district. The information will help both the government and higher learning institutions in checking gender parity in the education sector. The information you give will be treated as confidential. Kindly provide the information that is well known to you. DO **NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS QUESTIONAIRE.** Your support and cooperation is very important and will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.

SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS

a. Gender;

i. Male [ ]

ii. Female [ ]

b. Age in years;

i. 18-20 [ ]

ii. 21-30 [ ]

iii. 31-40 [ ]

iv. 41-50 [ ]

c. Area of residence;

i. Within Bungoma [ ]

ii. Out of Bungoma [ ]

d. parents education level;

i. Primary [ ]

ii. Secondary [ ]

iii. Post secondary [ ]

iv. None [ ]

SECTION B: SOCIO-CULTURAL PRACTICES

1. Do you know any socio-cultural practices practiced at your area?

   i. Yes [ ]

   ii. No [ ]

2. How much do domestic roles you play affect your academics?

   i. much [ ]

   ii. very much [ ]

   iii. little [ ]

   iv. very little [ ]

3. What is your religion?

   i. Christian [ ]

   ii. Islam [ ]

   iii. Buddhism [ ]

   iv. African [ ]

   v. None [ ]

4. Does your religious practices have any affect your decision to study at the university?

   i. Yes [ ]

   ii. No [ ]

4. If yes, how did you overcome them…….

SECTION C: EDUCATION POLICIES

1. Are you aware of any education policies at your university?

i. Yes [ ]
ii. No [ ]

2. Between men and women, whom do you think the education policies affect most and why?

i. Men [ ]
ii. Women [ ]

Why?.....
.....

3. Have you had any instance of pregnancy of women in your university?

i. Yes [ ]
ii. No [ ]

4. If yes, how are they handled by the university administration?

i. Expelling the woman [ ]
ii. Expelling the man [ ]
iii. Expelling both [ ]
iv. None of the above [ ]

5. Do you think this education policies have any effect on the motivation of women pursuing university education.

i. Yes [ ]
ii. No [ ]

Explain……
……

SECTION D: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

1. How was your performance at your O level?

i. High [ ]
ii. Average [ ]
iii. Low [ ]
iv. Very low [ ]

2. Did your o-level academic performance affect your decision to pursue university education?

i. Yes [ ]
ii. No [ ]

If yes, explain how.....

3. Do you think your o level prepared you for further education and for choosing a suitable career course?

i. Yes [ ]
ii. No [ ]

Explain……

SECTION E: SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

1**.** How wealthy are your parents?

i. Extremely wealthy [ ]
ii. Wealthy [ ]
iii. Poor [ ]
iv. Extremely poor [ ]

2**.** Did your wealth play part in you advancing your studies?

i. Yes [ ]
ii. No [ ]

If yes, state how…….

3. What is your parent's level of income?

i. Low [ ]
ii. Very low [ ]
iii. High [ ]
iv. Very high [ ]
v. Average [ ]
vi. Below average [ ]

4. Did it play part in your effort to pursue university education?

i. Yes [ ]

ii. No [ ]

Please explain if this affects your motivation to continue with university education

……

……..

APPENDIX 8

DETERMINING THE SAMPLE SIZE FOR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

N	**S**	**N**	**S**	**N**	**S**
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	140	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368

140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	382	75000
210	136	1100	285	1000000	384