

**FACTORS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF GIRLS IN
KENYA CERTIFICATE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION (K.C.P.E) IN PUBLIC
SCHOOLS IN KENYA: A CASE OF LAARE DIVISION, MERU COUNTY.**

By

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR
DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION IN EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATIONS OF UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.**

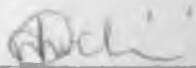
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DECLARATION

(a) Declaration by the student

This research report is my original work and has not been presented for any academic award in any other University.

Signed



Ruito Idah Nkuene

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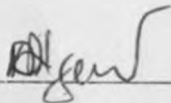
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(b) Declaration by the supervisor

This research report has been submitted to the university with my approval as University supervisor.

Signed



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28/11/2012

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my husband Micah Ruito and my children Martin Munene, Dennis Mutwiri, Ronny Mwenda and Norah Kendi for their love and encouragement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to my supervisor Dr. Lewis Ngesu for intellectual guidance, counsel and encouragement to the completion of this study. I also acknowledge the efforts of my lecturers at the Department of Educational Foundations in the University of Nairobi. Thank you Prof. Samson Gunga, Dr. Daniel Gakunga, Madam Lydia Njoki, Madam Christine Kahigi, Mr. Isaac Muasya and Fr. Wachira Kanja. Your lectures formed the basis for enlightenment within which this research falls.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	viii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
ABBREVIATION	xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background to the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.3 Objectives of the Study.....	4
1.4 Research Questions.....	5
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	5
1.6 Limitations of the Study.....	6
1.7 Delimitations of the Study	6
1.8 Definition of operational terms.....	6
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
2.1 Girl child education from a global perspective.....	8
2.1.1 Girl child education performance in Africa	9
2.1.2 Girl child and education performance in Kenya	11
2.2 Factors influencing girl child education performance at primary school	13
2.2.1 Social Factors.....	13
2.2.2 Gender roles and influence on girl child academic performance	15

2.2.3 Influence of reward and punishment on girl child performance.....	15
2.2.4 Influence of women academic role models on academic performance of girls	17
2.2.5 Influence of adolescence pregnancy on academic performance of girls.....	21
2.3 Summary of the literature	24
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	26
3.1 Research Design.....	26
3.2 Location of the Study.....	26
3.3 Target Population.....	27
3.4 Sampling Procedure	27
3.5 Research Instruments	27
3.6 Validity	28
3.7 Reliability.....	28
3.8 Ethical Issues	29
3.9 Data Analysis	29
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION 30	
4.1 Demographic factors	30
4.1.1: Gender of respondents	30
4.2: Factors that influence girls' academic performance.	31
4.2.1 Economic status of parents and academic performance of girls.....	31
4.2.2: Reward and punishment.....	32
4.2.5: Social factors and academic performance.	35
4.3 Measures to improve girls' academic performance	36

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND

RECOMMENDATIONS 38

5.1 Summary of the study 38

5.2 Summary of the major findings..... 38

5.3 Conclusion..... 39

5.4 Recommendations 40

5.5 Suggestions for further study..... 40

REFERENCES. 41

APPENDICES. 44

Appendix I: Letter of introduction 44

Appendix II: Questionnaire for teachers 45

Appendix III: Questionnaire for pupils..... 49

Appendix IV: Research permit.....

ABSTRACT

Education for Girl child is facing a major challenge in primary schools even at backdrop of massive enrolment in primary following free primary education. This has obvious implications on progressive welfare of a girl child. This study sought to investigate factors affecting academic performance of girls in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in public schools in Laare Division, Meru County. The respondents were randomly selected and they comprised of teachers and pupils. Data was gathered through questionnaires and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software programme. The findings were presented in form of graphs, charts and tables. It was found that rewards, economic wellbeing of parents and women role models had positive influence on academic performance of girls. It was recommended that there is need to educate girls on dangers of pre-marital sex and early marriage. The study recommends that punitive action be taken by law enforcers on members of society who sexually offend minors leading to pregnancies. Regarding women role models, it is recommended that schools should invite academically successful women as motivational speakers in schools to inspire young learners. Schools should reward girls for good performance to motivate them. Light punishment as behavioural correction strategy is important to keep the girls in track with their academic goal. The study concludes that women academic role models and rewards have positive impact on girls' academic performance while punishments and teenage pregnancies have adverse effects.

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1. Gender of respondents.....	29
Table 4.2: Influence of parents' economic background on academic performance.....	30
Table 4.3: Influence of reward and punishment on girls' academic performance.....	31
Table 4.4: Influence of adolescence pregnancies on girls' academic performance.....	33
Table 4.5: Influence of women academic role models on education performance.....	34
Table 4.6: Influence of social factors on academic performance.....	35

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework	23
Figure 4.1: Gender of respondents.....	29
Figure 4.2: Influence of reward and punishment on girls' academic performance	32
Figure 4.3: Influence of women academic role models on girls' academic Performance	34
Figure 4.4: Influence of social factors on girls' academic performance.....	35

ABBREVIATION

ACSE	:	Advanced Certificate of Secondary Examination
EFA	:	Education for All
GOK	:	Government of Kenya
KCPE	:	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KCSE	:	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
MDG	:	Millennium Development Goals
MOEST	:	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
MST	:	Motivational System Theory
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UDHR	:	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNDP	:	United Nation Development Programme
UPE	:	Universal Primary Education
USA	:	United States of America

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives and significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of the Study and definition of operational terms.

1.1 Background to the Study

Primary school education is no doubt the foundation of education and it has prominently been regarded as a fundamental human right. It is an essential component of human capital; the primary education plays a crucial role in the economic growth and development of a country. A study conducted by Kitetu and Sunderland (2000) found out that five or more years of a farmer's education lead to increased farm productivity, reduced use of farm labour, and increased use of yield augmenting inputs. This is collaborated by another study by Beneria and Feldman (1992) who reported a significant relationship between the number of years of schooling and increase in farm output due to increased technical efficiency. This means that by acquiring primary education one can increase one's earnings (Kitetu, 1998).

Since Kenya attained independence in 1963, the government has spurred the efforts and commitment towards educational development. This has been in response to a number of concerns to improve access of education to the vast Kenyan population, combat ignorance, disease and poverty (MOEST, 2003). Also, the belief that every Kenyan child has the right of access to basic welfare provisions, including education, and finally the government obligation to provide its citizens with the opportunity to

take part fully in the economic development and realization of a decent standard of living.

The Kenya government effort to achieve Universal Primary Education is seen in the light of the millennium development goals and other international declarations, for example, Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 declared that every Kenyan citizen has a right to education. This was followed by the World Conference on Education for All (EFA), held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1995 which noted that to provide the basic needs for all, requires greater commitment to provide basic education. To achieve this, what is required is a strong vision that surpasses resource levels, institutional structures, curricula and conventional service delivery systems while adopting the best in the practices (Swann and Graddol, 1998).

According to Swann and Graddol (1998), educators in 1997 reiterated their commitment in education. This was informed by Jomtien resolutions. It observed that access of basic education, particularly by girl child, had remained elusive for many years in developing countries particularly in Africa, where ethnic animosity and tribal clashes have displaced many families, thus denying children opportunities of formal education. A conference held in Dakar in 2001 examined developments in achieving primary education in the African context. Goals were set including eliminating gender inequality in primary education by 2006, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015. Targets to ensure both girls and boys complete primary schooling by 2015 were set.

The government of Kenya has made notable progress in expanding access to primary education largely by instituting a comprehensive network of schools throughout the country and providing learning resources such as stationery. As a result of this, both boys and girls have been able to join primary school. However, there is evidence in gender disparity in K.C.P.E performance where girls fail to perform well compared to boys. For the last five years the performance of boys in KCPE has been observed being better than that of girls. Analysis of K.C.P.E from the office of the Quality Assurance and Standards Office showed that girls performance in Laare division public schools were declining over the last five years (Mwema, 2010).

According to research conducted by Mukindia in 2005 on the causes of decline in performance at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in the Division, it was found out that boys' performed better than girls. Another study by Mutuma in 2007 established that more boys who managed to complete primary education performed better than girls. On the basis of the available literature, this study was carried out to investigate factors influencing academic performance of girls in Kenya Certificate of primary education (KCPE) in Laare division, Meru County. This is because this is an area where girls' performance in KCPE has constantly declined over years (Mwema, 2010).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

A major deterrence to girl child education is universal fundamental cultural bias in favour of boy child. The widespread operation of patriarchal systems of social organization, customary based early marriages, incidences of early pregnancy (in and out of marriage), heavier domestic and subsistence duties of females have combined

to frustrate the girl child at school. Generally lower regard for the value of female life all combined adversely influence the participation of girls and women in formal education.

The government of Kenya has taken several measures to reduce gender disparities in education like expanding girls' boarding facilities, appointing qualified female educational managers and teachers. Despite all these efforts, girls persistently perform poorly in K.C.P.E at national and division level compared to the male counterparts. It is against this background that the researcher carried out research on factors influencing academic performance of girls in KCPE in public primary schools in Laare division in Meru County.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To establish whether there is any relationship between adolescence pregnancies and academic performance.
2. To establish whether there is any relationship between academic role models and academic performance.
3. To establish whether there is any relationship between reward and punishment and academic performance.
4. To determine whether there is any relationship between parents' economic status and academic performance.

1.4 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do adolescence pregnancies influence academic performance of girls in Kenya?
2. To what extent do women academic role models influence academic performance of girls?
3. Is there a relationship between reward and punishment and girls' academic performance?
4. To what extent do economic status of parents influence academic performance of girls?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study will help the government, policy makers and other stakeholders since it will contribute in designing relevant government policies that will help in improving girls' academic performance. It will also help the Ministry of Education to understand more about gender disparities in education. The information will help in the formulation of policies which are likely to eliminate gender biasness in education. The teachers will understand that they have a role to play to ensure that all the students irrespective of gender are facilitated to perform well in education. It will also help the media to understand the role it plays in creating stereotypes which further influence academic performance and how it can correct such perception.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The study was constrained by time. Respondents took more than a week to fill the questionnaires due to the teachers' strike which happened at the time of data collection. The pupils were unwilling to give information regarding their schools due to fear of victimisation by school authorities. To overcome this; the researcher assured them that confidentiality would be maintained.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The study covered all the primary schools in Laare Division, Meru County. The neighbouring divisions are Mutuati in the north, Kangeta in the south, Ntunene in the east and Ndoleli in the west. There are 34 public primary schools in this division and the researcher was of the opinion that a sample of 10 schools represented other schools in the same division.

1.8 Definition of operational terms

Academic achievement: In this research, academic achievement is defined as the results gained by the pupil in national examination. For example; in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education or Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education.

Performance: This term was used in this study to refer to the act of doing something successfully; using knowledge as distinguished from merely possessing it, for example; distinction, excellent, credit, pass and fail.

Primary education: In this study, this referred to the initial stage of formal academic learning. It is preceded by nursery education, and is followed by secondary education.

Role model: For the purpose of this study, this refers to someone worthy of imitation in the society, for example successful teachers, business people and leaders.

Social Factors: In this research social factor is defined as the factors that influence our lifestyle, for instance: family, education, religion, ethnicity and gender among others. Such factors influence girl child education and academic performance in one way or the other.

Women academic role models: In this study, women academic role models refers to women who have managed to pursue and achieved their education goals and live a successful life owing to their education.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter introduces and discusses in detail literature related to the study. The sections of the chapter corresponds with the research questions as highlighted in Chapter One. The literature explored girl child education from a global perspective, girl child education in Africa, girl child performance in Kenya. The chapter also discusses the conceptual framework of the study.

2.1 Girl child education from a global perspective

Many factors come at play regarding girls' academic performance. Early pregnancies and early marriages are some of these factors (Sills, 1999). For instance, many adolescence girls get unwanted pregnancies in the Indian subcontinent. In Malaysia and Indonesia the rate of adolescence pregnancies and early marriages is on rise (Jope, 2000). Since early 70's in Europe; the overall trend has been a decreasing total fertility rate and an increase in the age at which women experience their first birth and a decrease in the number of births among adolescents. Very low adolescence birth rates have been recorded in most continental Western countries over the last three decades (Sills, 1999). This trend has been attributed to widened sex education and high level of contraceptives use (in the case of the Netherlands), traditional values and social stigmatization (in the case of Spain). This has caused obvious effects, for example school drop outs and girls' who continue with studies do not perform well because of dual responsibilities (Jope,2000).

Among the developed Nations, the United States (US) ranks the highest in adolescence birth rate and abortions. The U.S adolescence pregnancy rate was high in the 1960s and has gone down since. Although there has been an increase in pre-marital births; the trend of adolescence pregnancy has however gone down significantly since the 1990's. This decrease has been observed among all the racial groups that constitute the United States of America, but the Hispanic racial group and the African-American ranks higher as compared to other racial groups. The Guttmacher Institute attributed about 24% of the decline to abstinence and 76% to the effective use of contraceptives. However, in 2007 the adolescence birth rate rose for the first time in fifteen years. This suggests that teen pregnancy rates are rising, although the rise could also be due to other causes: a possible decrease in the number of abortions or a decrease in the number of miscarriages, to name a few. The Canadian adolescence birth has also shown a trend towards a steady decline for both younger and older teens in the period between 1993 and 2003. A study by Raj and Krishnan (2004) showed that 75% of the girls who become pregnant at an early age come from poor families. In the Middle East, attitude towards girls' education and early marriages are the main causes of poor performance among girls.

2.1.1 Girl child education performance in Africa

In Tanzania, a pilot analysis of the Certificate of Primary School Education (CPSE) between 1983 to 2005. The Tanzania Bureau of statistics, 2006 revealed a significant gender difference in performance in science. The average percentage of girl failures was in Maths and Sciences. The authors gauge the primary school girl child performance as "being continuously lower than that of boys in all subjects including

languages." On enrolment, data from primary schools between 1998 and 2000 revealed that boys had an average enrolment of 1% higher than that of the corresponding girls in the 13 years (Tanzania Bureau of Statistics, 2006).

According to Government of Tanzania (2006), the enrolment of girls and boys has significantly gone up but comparatively, the academic performance for girls is significantly lower than that of boys (21.6% for girls, 36.4% for boys). After the age of 13, the girls are less likely to continue with learning. In science disciplines, girls' records low performance and shy from careers based on these subjects. The gender stereotype in subject choices by girls is spurred by school environment. At the vocational training institutions, it was observed that only 7% were women. At the universities, the enrolment for women was still lower as compared to that of men. It is further found that women are more inclined to receive trainings in arts. They also constitute a higher percentage of those trained but remain unemployed. Low numbers of women receive training in engineering, accounting and finance courses (Government of Tanzania, 2006).

Gender discrimination at household and community level has adversely influenced girl child education in Uganda. A girl child in rural areas of Uganda is more vulnerable because of wanting traditions and prevalence of poverty as well as infrastructure. These conditions have not only influenced a girl child but also boys. Generally in most African societies a girl child is disadvantaged by the many unfavourable gender and socio-economic factors (Government of Uganda, 2008). The gender disparities in African context calls for urgent action if the status quo has to change and promote education for girl child. Uganda has established the goal geared

to achieving the milestone of Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2015.

In South Africa, adolescence pregnancy has taken a high toll and the educational success of girls is at risk. Statistics show that four out of ten girls drop out of school due to adolescence pregnancies generally at least once before age 20. Education is crucial for these girls in order to break the trap of poverty cycle. Though the girls are allowed to resume their formal learning after becoming young mothers, they face myriad of challenges in trying to balance motherhood and the demands of education.. A study by Kenway (2005) showed that teen mothers in Cape Town receive insufficient support and the effect is that many do not perform well in academics while others quit school altogether

2.1.2 Girl child and education performance in Kenya

Mwema (2010) says that in Kenya, girls have underperformed in the last few years in the Kenya Certificate of Primary School Examinations (KCPE). Those interviewed by Capital News Agency attributed the reduced performance to the stigma surrounding girl child education. They feel there is a pressing need for girls to change their attitude towards education. Mwema (2010) holds that some of girls' negative attitude towards education comes as a result of the belief that they will get married to well-to do men and therefore they need not work hard after all. He also stated that many girls face a lot of distractions while in school. He holds that some girls are given everything by their parents so when they are in school they do not concentrate. According to capital news agency, in 2009 K.C.P.E, the top 10 positions in the country were taken by boys with the first girl coming in at number 11. In the year 2011 KCPE girls performed

poorer than boys nationally, for instance among the top 10 candidates only three were girls (Capital News Agency,2011).

According to then Minister of education Sam Ongeri; the number of female candidates sitting the examination from hospitals had increased from 80 to 114 in 2009 with most of the cases being as a result of girls being sexually molested mostly by their teachers (Mwema, 2010). He also pointed out that the gender disparity between boys and girls who sat for the KCPE examination was 45.3 to 54.7 percent respectively, a fact he blamed on early marriages especially in North Eastern province which recorded the highest gap of 47.2 between boys and girls. Prof Ongeri urged parents and guardians to promote girl education to help create equal opportunities for both boys and girls. Central Province had the smallest gender difference with boys at 51 percent and girls 49 percent. A businessman in the Nairobi Central Business District, Mr.Onyango said that girls needed to be encouraged to be more focused and to look at their future critically. “Many girls always concentrate on fashion and similar things but this needs to change drastically,” Mr Onyango went on to say. “It does not mean that when girls do not perform well, it is as a result of other problems, since the overall education system is sometimes at an all time low,”

In the districts that United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) works, the girl-child has inexplicably lower attendance, retention and performance in primary school. To better understand the root causes of this situation, UNDP conducted a study in 2006 with pupils of primary schools in Coast and North Eastern Province (Barbara, 2007). In recognition that pupils were not getting information or even discussing issues of growing up or sexual maturation. UNDP included an analysis on the impact

of these issues on pupils' educational attainment. The study findings showed that adolescence girls and the boys counterparts had challenges during transition to adulthood and this had negative implication in regard to education. It was observed that the girl child was the most influenced due to the following factors: namely; a) lack of accurate information on how to deal with adolescence, b) unaffordable sanitary pads, c) lack of proper sanitation facilities in schools, d) heavy domestic chores; e) early marriages d) adolescence pregnancies e) negative societal attitudes towards the significance of educating the girl child (Braun, 2003).

2.2 Factors influencing girl child education performance at primary school

There are various factors that influence girl child education at primary school level. These are social factors, gender roles, rewards, punishments, women academic role models and teenage pregnancies. This section discusses these factors in detail.

2.2.1 Social Factors

In the society we live, there are many factors that influence or direct our life style. These factors are called social factors. Some social factors are considered to be biased or unacceptable like treating people based on their religion or colour etc. Social factors include family, education, religion, ethnicity and gender among others. Such factors influence girl child education and academic performance in one way or the other (Sifuna, 1990).

In 1995, a major Baltimore study conducted on first graders at Chicago concluded that by the time children first enter school, they have begun to recognize that different skills are generally considered important or unimportant based upon a person's gender

(Zastrow, 1995). The study showed that boys were more concerned with learning quickly while girls were more concerned with adhering to the rules and honesty. Boys saw the ability to solve Maths problems as a vital skill and girls saw the aptitude to solve maths problems as immaterial. The study also concluded that opinions about which traits are seen as significant eventually originate, at least to a large degree, in parental expectations, and for girls, these expectations focus more on "being good" than on academic achievement (Zastrow, 1995).

Another study explored the implications of parents' traditional versus modern marital roles for girls and boys and patterns of Math and Science achievement in 68 families among young adolescents (Kenway, 2005). The findings of the study showed that girls from modern family set ups maintained a high level of achievement up to the seventh grade, whereas girls from traditional families declined in Math and Science performance. For boys, no significant patterns emerged. Additional analyses revealed that modern and traditional families differed in terms of absolute levels of paternal involvement, parents' sex-role attitudes, and indices of marital power (Finn and Dulberg, 2003).

Duncan, (2004) did a study on family and school factors that influence the academic achievement of residential school children. The sample consisted of 120 children of Hyderabad city. An interview schedule was developed by the investigator to study the family factors. The questionnaire administered to the teachers was developed by the second author to study school factors. The result indicated that girls were inferior to boys. Family factors like parental aspirations and socio economic status significantly

contributed to academic achievement. Thus, the studies pointed out that the better socio economic status is, the better the academic achievement (Price& Kim, 1996).

2.2.2 Gender roles and influence on girl child academic performance

Gender roles are the expected behaviours, attitudes, obligations, and privileges that a society allocates to each sex, and interestingly in almost every culture, gender roles are structured in such a way that those skills and traits considered masculine are more highly valued than those considered feminine (Calhoun, 2005). According to a Gallup Poll (2004) people were asked to identify characteristics of the two sexes and they invariably described men in such terms as these; aggressive, strong, proud, courageous, confident, independent, ambitious, logical, easy-going and level headed. Respondents, however, described women in terms such as; emotional, talkative, sensitive, affectionate, illogical, romantic, moody, cautious, manipulative and possessive (Schultz, 1994).

2.2.3 Influence of reward and punishment on girl child performance

It has been observed that majority of teachers prefer to rely on their students' inherent motivation to encourage them to come to school, do their homework, and focus on classroom activities, but many supplement the internal drive to succeed with external rewards. The teachers say rewards namely; free time, gift such as pens and books, or educational trips can help children master the expectations of acceptable classroom behaviour and scholastic achievement (Prammanick, 1996). At the same breadth,

punishment is important in deterring unacceptable behavior and consequently would help pupils focus on studies.

According to Schultz (1994), there have been children with severe behavioural problems at our schools; kids who act out because they are so mad at the world. This is collaborated by MoEST (2003) who reported that by offering rewards, we are trying to show them that by attending school and getting an education, they would be rewarded. These rewards can be immediate such as prizes and treats, and long-term rewards, such as a job, college, and a future (Mikell, 1997).

Scholars claim that by using rewards, teachers encourage the students to put aside some of their home problems and find a reason to apply themselves in school. Barbara and Loxely (2005) stated, "As we progress through the year, the educator should increase the amount of work needed to earn the rewards, progressively phasing them out altogether as the students begin to show responsibility for their own behaviour and work ethic. It is important for conditioning and association of good behaviour, completing learning tasks and better grades. However, scholars recommend that rewards should be used changeably since when they are of value, and when they are given for showing responsibility, they can have a very positive implication (Sills & Caryl, 1999).

Learners should be punished for deviant behaviour just as they are rewarded for good discipline. Failure to punish unbecoming behaviour would encourage the students misbehaving to continue doing so (Schultz, 1994). This might lead to negative repercussions like lesson interruptions which influence even the students who have

good behaviour. Other students might also start misbehaving since they know that they would not be punished. This would give the concerned teacher a hard time and the lessons might not be conducted the way they are supposed to be. With the ban on caning in Kenya, students have grown to disrespect teachers and on the other hand, the teachers are running out of options. This is making indiscipline in schools always feature as among the reasons for poor performance (Finn, 2003). However, researchers warn that no management system can be based on rewards and punishment alone. They propose that a system should start with a definite idea of what the classroom should look like when all students are actively engaged in the learning process (Chalmers, 2002). Teachers should develop a system that would help the students reach that goal. If the system is something that is going to take a huge amount of time and effort to keep track of, chances are that it will not work. If instead it is used as a catalyst to appropriate behaviour, then that would work much better and would improve academic performance for girls (Schultz, 1994).

2.2.4 Influence of women academic role models on academic performance of girls

Girls, especially during adolescence are at most vulnerable and they need role models to take them through areas that are close at hand, whether mass media, parents and family, or their teachers. Role model education is concerned with exposing its target groups to specific attitudes, lifestyles and outlooks and in particular to individuals in which these attitudes and lifestyles are embodied (Pintrich, 1992).

This educational instrument is stressed in informal education settings such as youth movements, where the sometimes charismatic educational youth leader embodies the

values that he or she is espousing, and therefore provides a frame of reference for the children (Swann & Gradol, 1998).

Beneria and Feldman, (1992) provides an example of this from the home environment. He asserted that the mother has an incredibly important role to play in the education of her child simply because she embodies the values that he or she is learning about. He or she has a chance to experience the ideals that he or she learns about in school. For instance “the child “begins to learn the importance of cleanliness when he sees that the mother always does the same. Parents who are interested in reading whether they read motivational books, newspapers, novels and any other kind of literature are likely to set a reading culture for their children (Calhoun, 2005).

In the rural areas of Kenya, parents are busy doing their farm activities hence have limited time to read. In the evening, they are too tired to start thinking about books. Again, most of them have very low educational levels hence they may not be in a position to read. The most concerned ones just ask their children whether they have done their assignment, which they do not even check (Butcher, 1997). This makes the pupils lack academic role models. If such parent is successful despite not having gone to school, it may indicate to the child that one does not have to go to school in order to succeed in life. This is called negative role modelling (Pulsen and Gentry, 1995).

There is no reason for teachers not to utilise these ideas, but rather the teacher has a responsibility to use them, and to be wary of the power behind this concept. Children of this age, are incredibly perceptive, and will automatically see through a teacher

who tries to convince them of something they are not convinced of themselves (Obasi, 2007).

Scholars claim that role model education is effective because it bridges the gap between the ideal and reality. Education becomes experiential as students learn a little about their teachers' lives, and how they exemplify the values they are trying to pass on and discover. The gap between theory and practice is bridged as ideological concepts become realities before the eyes of the students. Once they have truly understood an idea because they have seen it at first hand through teacher's expression of it in the way they conduct themselves, they are then in a true position to judge its validity to their life and make relevant lifestyle decision (Patel, 1997).

Butcher, (1997) holds that role models are vital educational agents in education. He goes ahead to say that young people would imitate their behaviour, values and attitudes. Ganakis (2003) suggests that over the centuries educators have been sensitive to the need for good role models in order to shape desirable moral attitudes in young people.

Bucher (1997) conducted a research study among 1150 pupils between the ages of 10 and 18 from Austria and Germany. The sampled respondents comprised 53% female pupils. The data on preferred models was collected in the form of a questionnaire. This included an open-ended question (What persons are your personal models? Why?), as well as a list of 40 persons (musicians, movie stars, sports Figure, intellectuals, politicians, religious persons, as well as persons of social nearness such as parents and siblings). The participants were asked to rate each personality on a

scale of 1 (“no model whatever”) to 4 (“a very important model for me”). The results from both types of questions contained in the questionnaire were clear. Those personalities of social nearness to the participants had the greatest “model effect” for them. Mothers, fathers, and relatives were mentioned with the greatest frequency. After that came religious models, and only then mass media personalities such as movie and television stars, and sports Figure (Bucher, 1997).

For many people who work in educational fields these results were surprising. Most of them had assumed that well-known stars and not parents would be more influential to youth. In his analysis of these results, Bucher, (1997) referred to Mitscherlich who explains that it is “a psychoanalytic commonplace that identification with first referenced persons is more imprinting (also with respect to the moral values and attitudes) than the identification with the television personalities”. This enlightens the educators tremendously to our capacity to influence our students. Educators can be considered to have near or the same status of social proximity to the children as their own parents. Children, when faced with worthy models will be encouraged by them and their ideals (Swann & Gradol, 1998).

The notion of mentoring as a tool in the development of young people is becoming more and more popular and commonplace. Mentoring is classically defined as a practice where a young person is inducted into the world of adulthood with the help of a voluntarily accepted older more experienced guide who can help ease the young person through that transition via a mixture of support and challenge (Panda and Jena, 2000).

It could be argued that fundamental to this process is the younger person learning not just from the experiences of the older person but also learning and being inspired by the older person. The intimacy and dynamics caused by the interaction of two persons giving the mutual respect necessary in the context of mentoring, will more often than not lead to the younger person relating not just to the information and experiences transmitted by the older person, but the actual essence of the older person, and this can be a potent ingredient for the development of the younger person, according to research (Chalmers, 2002).

As it has been argued earlier, children can be very sensitive, sometimes far more than adults, and will detect lack of integrity of educator or parents (Cain, 2000). This places a remarkable pressure on an educator to live up to the values and ethos of their school, subject, or educational message. If a particular teacher does not live up to this, their authority as a role model is significantly reduced especially if young learners see slight inconsistencies in their character. To the prospective teachers, this would discourage them choosing the profession. Therefore, teachers should be careful in their personal lives to ensure it is not openly inconsistent with their professionalism (Eshiwani, 1985).

2.2.5 Influence of adolescence pregnancy on academic performance of girls.

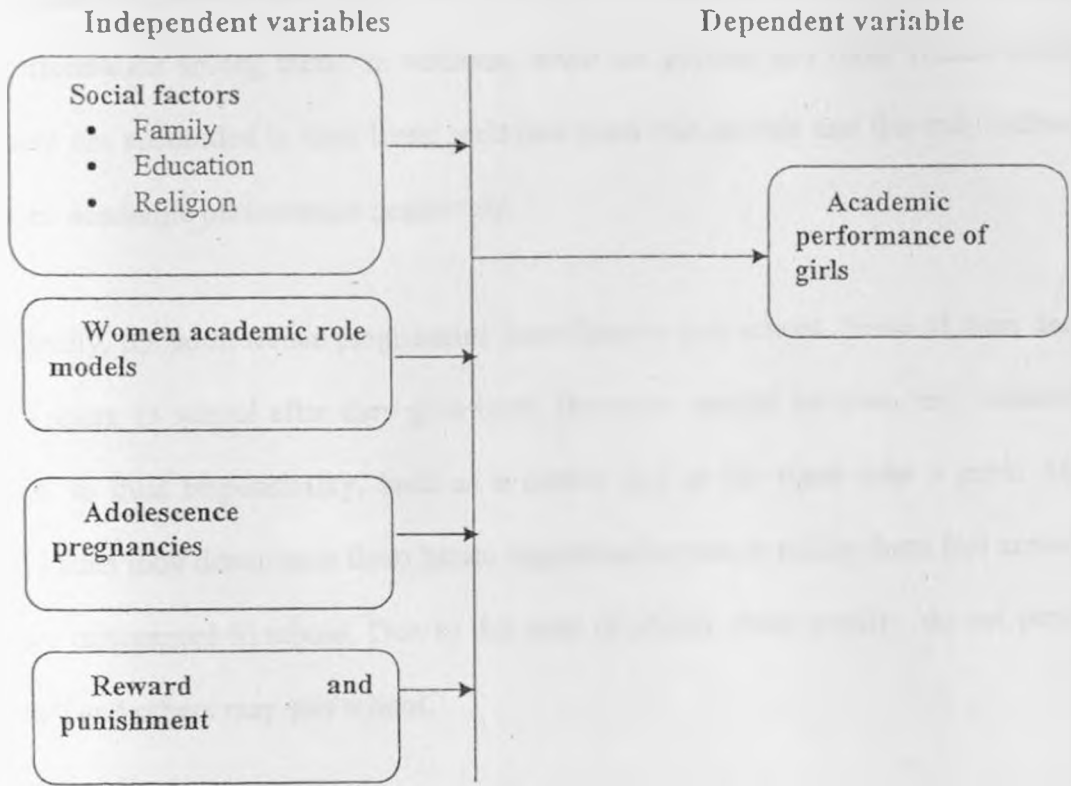
According to Barbara (1999), Africa has been ranked as the continent with the highest levels of adolescence pregnancies. In spite of that, there is scarcity of experiential research on causes of adolescence pregnancies in African countries. The findings of survey conducted in 1999/2000 by Kenyan government found out that young girls have high susceptibility of early pregnancies while schooling. The same study showed

that young girls who do not attend school are even more vulnerable to adolescence pregnancies. Churches and social workshops were identified as the suitable forums for sex education for adolescent girls.

There is a strong correlation between adolescent pregnancies and age with older adolescents being more susceptible to pregnancies. Studies have shown that the use of contraceptives has positive effect but only a small proportion of adolescents were using contraceptives; however the quality and accessibility of the contraceptives was not accounted for (Barbara, 1999). Other key factors cited include peer pressure and social environment-related factors like unfit forms of recreation, which act as meeting point for pre-marital sex. Chief among the contributing factors was lack of parental guidance and counselling due to absent parents or parents shying from discussing sexuality issues with the children (Barbara et al., 2005).

Generally, lack of access to education opportunities, sex education and information regarding use of contraceptives, as well as wide prevalence of poverty exposed adolescence girls to pregnancies. The problem of adolescence pregnancies should thus be examined within the wider socio-economic and socio-cultural environment (Myers, 2007). For example, lack of parental guidance on issues of sexuality and sex education was reinforced by cultural taboos that hold back such discussions. Adolescents should be equipped with the pertinent knowledge to enable them make informed choices regarding sexual relationships. This should be collaborated with broader programmes aimed at promoting girl education and poverty mitigation and alleviation (Myers, 2007).

Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework showing factors influencing girl's performance at KCPE



This conceptual framework (Figure 2.1) shows that there are several factors influencing academic performance of girls at KCPE in public primary schools. These factors include economic status of family, gender roles and religious background of pupils among others. Such factors influence girl child academic performance in one way or the other. A large family needs more finances to educate all the children. If the finances are not enough, the girl child may lack the basic needs namely; food, shelter and clothing. Some societies do not regard the girl child's education highly. The girl child is given many domestic chores unlike the boy child and this limits the time left for studies. These may influence the girl child's KCPE performance negatively.

Secondly, women academic role model may as well influence the girl child academic performance. Female teachers and mothers who have succeeded in their lives because of education act as good role models to the girls and this may promote good academic performance among them. In addition, when the parents and older female siblings have not succeeded in their lives, girls lack good role models and this may influence their academic performance negatively.

Thirdly, the adolescence pregnancies force them to quit school. Some of them decide to return to school after they give birth. However, studies become very demanding due to dual responsibility, both as a mother and at the same time a pupil. Other students look down upon them hence stigmatisation which makes them feel unworthy and unaccepted in school. Due to this state of affairs, these pupils do not perform well and others may quit school.

Fourthly is reward and punishment which has either negative or positive effect to the pupils. When a child is rewarded for work well done they feel motivated to learn hence perform well. On the other hand, a child who is regularly punished may develop feelings of unworthiness and unaccepted hence lack concentration in class which may lead to poor performance in the exam.

2.3 Summary of the literature

This chapter provided literature on girl child education at primary school level from a global perspective and in African context. It further discussed factors influencing girl child academic performance in Kenya namely; punishments, economic background of parents, women academic role models and teenage pregnancies as major factors

influencing girls' academic performance. This chapter set the stage for chapter three which focused on research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used in the research in order to achieve the study objectives. The chapter explains the research design adopted in the study and the target population. It explains the sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection and analysis procedures.

3.1 Research Design

This survey used descriptive research design. A descriptive survey design is the collection of information from a common group through interviews or the application of questionnaires to a representative sample of that group. This design was preferred because very large samples are feasible, making the results statistically significant even when analyzing multiple variables. Surveys are important in description of a large population. Additionally, high reliability is easy to obtain by presenting all subjects with a standardized stimulus which ensures that observer subjectivity is greatly eliminated (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

3.2 Location of the Study

This study was carried out in primary schools in Laare division. The region is highly populated and there is high-drop out of pupils in primary schools due to social-economic factors. Miraa growing is the major economic activity. The division has 34 public primary schools (DEO, 2011). The division was selected because of its large population of pupils in primary schools and the fact that girls have consistently performed poorly in the national examination compared to boys.

3.3 Target Population

The study targeted public primary schools. There are 34 public primary schools in Laare division. The division has population of 476 teachers and 13158 pupils.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

Out of the 34 public schools, 10 schools were purposively sampled for this study and a sample of 1 class from every school was randomly selected. Random sampling technique was used to select teachers and pupils who participated in the study. Random selection is choosing a sample where every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected.

Teachers were sampled for this study because they determine learning outcome. Pupils were sampled because their performance in national exams is a reflection of the factors that influence academic performance. Teachers both male and female were purposively sampled from each of the 10 public school giving a sample of 20 teachers. In each school 2 girls and one boy were sampled from class 8 giving a total of 30 pupils. The total number of respondents for the study was 50.

3.5 Research Instruments

The study used questionnaires designed using open and closed ended questions. A questionnaire is a research tool composed of set questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The researcher used a questionnaire because the responses are gathered in a standardised way and are more objective compared to other tools of data collection. It is also relatively quick to

collect information using a questionnaire. Additionally, potential information can be collected from a large portion of a group. The questionnaires were self-administered.

3.6 Validity

Validity is the extent to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study (Joppe, 2000). To ensure validity of the research instruments, the researcher ensured that the questionnaires are prepared and submitted to the respondents and audited for validity and reference of the content used in questionnaires from the objectives of the study. The researcher also ensured that the questionnaires were pruned without any ambiguity. Content validity was of relevance to this study and was done by issuing the questionnaire to research experts at the University of Nairobi.

3.7 Reliability

Joppe (2000) defines reliability as the degree to which outcome of analysis is consistent over time. If the outcome of a survey can be reproduced under same methodology, then the research tool is considered to be reliable. A reliable instrument therefore, is the one that continually produces the expected results when used more than once to collect data from two samples drawn from the same population. There was pre-testing of the data from a small group of targeted respondents to monitor the effect fullness of the research instruments.

3.8 Ethical Issues

The researcher sought approval from the National Council for Science and Technology and respective schools to conduct the study. The study questionnaire contained no information linking the data to individuals. All respondents meeting study admission criteria were asked to provide informed consent in order to participate in the study. Every caution was made to protect participant confidentiality. No names appeared on the questionnaires and there was no linkage between the informed consent forms and the study data.

3.9 Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis procedures were utilised for quantitative data. The quantitative data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences software programme to make the process simpler, faster and more accurate. The information was presented in bar graphs, pie charts and tables. Thematic analysis was used for qualitative data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents analysis of data obtained from the respondents in the survey carried out in Laare division.

4.1 Demographic factors

4.1.1: Gender of respondents

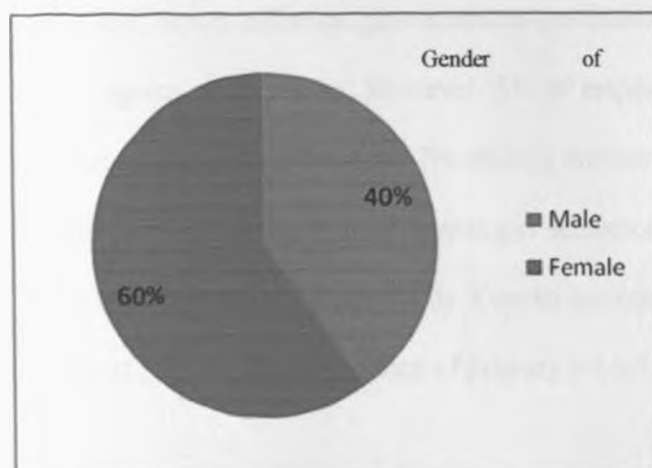
The percentage distribution of gender of respondents is presented in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1

Table 4.1: Gender of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	20	40
Female	30	60
Total	50	100

Source: Author, 2012

Figure 4.1: Gender of respondents



Source: Author, 2012

From the results in table 4.1 and figure 4.1 a total of 50 respondents participated in the study. Out of these 20 were males while 30 were females. This corresponds to 40% and 60% respectively. The results reflect the position on the ground where more boys than girls drop out of school to engage in non-educational activities namely working in Miraa farms and quarries.

4.2: Factors that influence girls' academic performance.

4.2.1 Economic status of parents and academic performance of girls.

Table 4.2 Economic status of parents and academic performance of girls.

Economic status of parents influences academic performance of girls	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly agree	20	40
Agree	10	20
Fairly agree	10	20
Disagree	5	10
Strongly disagree	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: Author, 2012

From the results in table 4.2 majority of the respondents (20%) strongly agree that economic factors influence girls academic performance, 10% agreed and another 10% fairly agrees on this view. However, 5% of respondents disagreed and another 5% strongly disagreed on the view. The finding implies that parents' economic status is a significant determinant that influences girl education. This agrees with the findings of survey conducted in 1999/2000 by Kenyan government on the effects of economic status of parents on performance of primary school children in national examinations

(Mwema, 2010) This study found out that those girls from poor families were not performing well in academics.

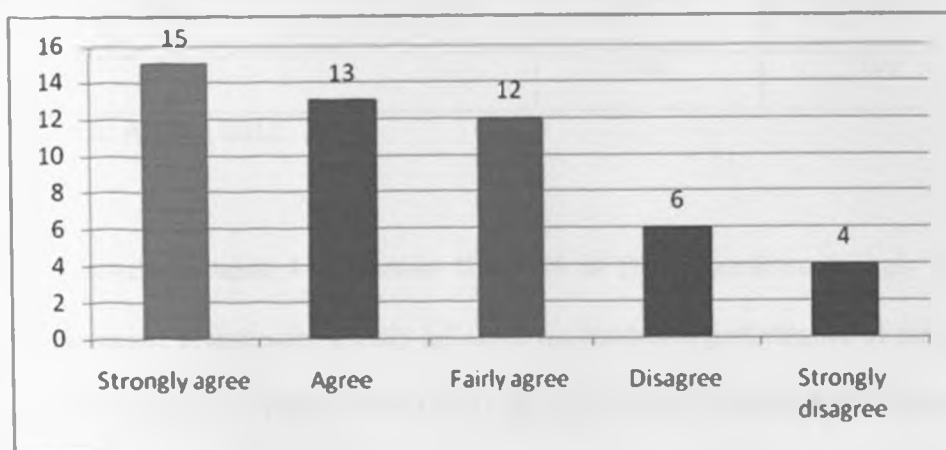
4.2.2: Reward and punishment

Table 4.3: The influence of reward and punishment on academic performance of girls.

Reward and punishment influences academic performance of the girls	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly agree	15	30
Agree	13	26
Fairly agree	12	24
Disagree	6	12
Strongly disagree	4	8
Total	50	100

Source: Author, 2012

Figure 4. 2 The influence of reward and punishment on girls' academic performance.



Source; Author, 2012

Table 4.3 and figure 4.2, show that 30% of the respondents strongly agreed that reward and punishment positively influences the academic performance of girls. 26% agreed while 24% fairly agreed with view. 12% and 8% respectively disagreed with the view. This shows that reward and punishment is major contributing factor in girls' academic performance. Reward motivates girls to perform well while punishment is likely to affect their performance in national examination. Rewards in schools include educational trips, special uniforms, badges and gifts such as stationery. These are likely to promote good teaching and learning outcome.

4.2.3 Adolescence pregnancies

Table 4.4: The influence of adolescence pregnancies on academic performance of girls.

Adolescence pregnancies influence academic performance of girls	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly agree	27	54
Agree	18	36
Fairly agree	3	6
Disagree	1	2
Strongly disagree	1	2
Total	50	100

Source: Author, 2012

The results in table 4.4 indicates that 54% of the respondents strongly agree that adolescence pregnancies greatly influence the academic performance of the girl child. A good number of respondents (36%) also agreed that academic performance of the girl is influenced by adolescence pregnancies, while 6% of the respondents fairly agreed on the view with a small portion that is 4% disagreeing. This implies that

adolescence pregnancy has significant effect on academic performance of girls. When an adolescent school girl becomes pregnant she is unable to continue with studies due to the new responsibility of being young mother and in most cases being a single parent at an early age. On the same strength, she may fear going back to school for fear of stigmatization.

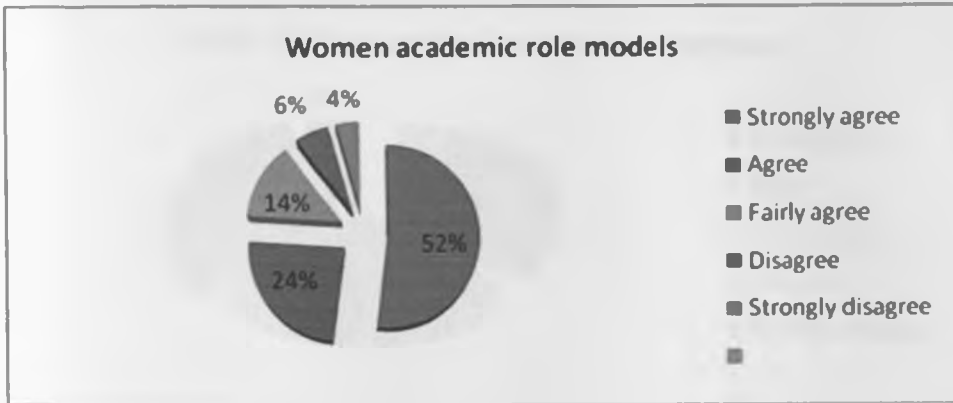
4.2.4: Women role models and academic performance of girls.

Table 4.5: Influence of Women Academic role models to girls academic performance.

Women academic role models influence academic performance of girls	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly agree	26	52
Agree	12	24
Fairly agree	7	14
Disagree	3	6
Strongly disagree	2	4
Total	50	100

Source: Author, 2012

Figure 4.3: Women Academic role models



Source: Author, 2012

From the result in figure 4.3 and table 4.5, 52 % of the respondents strongly agree that successful women role models can influence girls performance while 24% agree on this view. However, a small portion of respondents that is; 14%, 6% and 4% respectively fairly agree, disagree and strongly disagree on this view. This implies that role modelling is a significant factor that can inspire girls to good academic performance. Girls are likely to be inspired by academically successful women.

4.2.5: Social factors and academic performance.

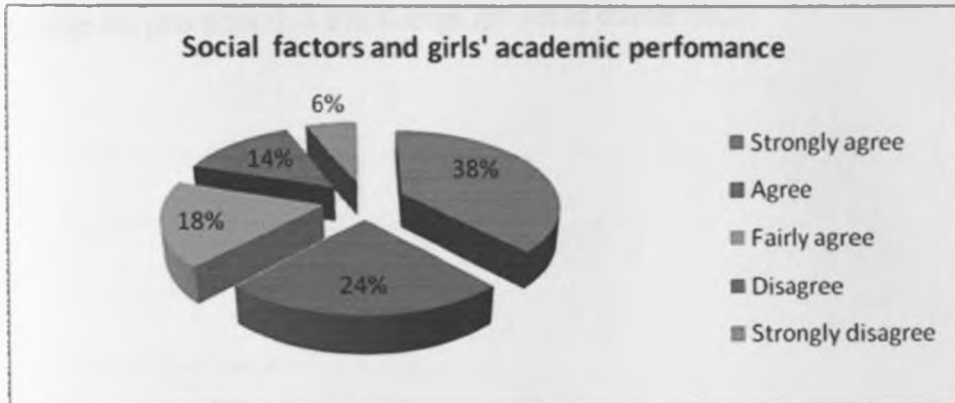
Table 4.6: Influence of social factors on academic performance of girls.

Social factors influence academic performance	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Strongly agree	19	38
Agree	12	24
Fairly agree	9	18
Disagree	7	14
Strongly disagree	3	6
Total	50	100

Source: Author, 2012

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Figure 4.4: Social factors and academic performance of girls.



Source: Author, 2012

Table 4.6 and figure 4.4 shows that 38.0% of respondents reported that social factors namely religious beliefs and gender roles have adverse effect on academic performance of girls, 24% agreed on this view; while 14% fairly agreed on the view, 14% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed. This implies that social factors like gender roles assigned to girls deny them ample time for study. Regarding religious beliefs, the study found out that some beliefs discourage formal education for girls.

4.3 Measures to improve girls' academic performance

The measures identified by students and teachers to improve academic performance of girls at primary school level included the following. Teachers and parents to motivate girls to improve academic outcome. Rewards such as academic trips, books and pens should be given to pupils who do well and those who have shown improvement in academic performance. School administrators to occasionally invite academically successful ladies to speak to students about their quest for education and to inspire the girls. Teachers and parents should come out by teaching issues of sexuality to girls. Teachers need to talk to parents so that they don't overburden their female children with household chores that deny them ample time for study. The

teachers can organize parent meetings and 'clinics' and in such gathering condemn wanting religious practices that discourage girl child education.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents summary of the study and major findings. The chapter also gives recommendations and suggestions for further research.

5.1 Summary of the study

The main objective of this study was to investigate factors influencing academic performance of girls in KCPE in public schools in Laare division, Meru County. The design of this study was descriptive survey and primary data was collected by administering structured questionnaires to a total of 50 respondents. The area was chosen because there are reported cases of declining academic performance by girls in the last five years. The data was analyzed using SPSS software program and were summarized into tables of frequencies and percentages.

5.2 Summary of the major findings

Adolescence pregnancy adversely affects girls' education. Such discontinue with studies and where they continue, they are not able to juggle between motherhood and studies thus underperforming in studies.

Regarding economic status of parents; the study found out that economic status of parents was a major factor influencing the success of girls in terms of academic performance. It was found that unemployed parents were unable to meet the educational needs of their children thus deterring their academic performance. Employed parents on the other hand were able to provide for needs of their children and as such, the pupils from well off families performed well in examinations. On

social factors it was found that some gender roles inhibit girls' academic performance. This study also found out that there is a relationship between academic performance and reward and punishment. Rewards are academic motivations that greatly enhance good performance by girls while punishment instills fear and may lead to poor performance.

5.3 Conclusion

The study investigated the factors that influence academic performance of girls in Kenya Certificate of Primary education. The study found out that adolescence pregnancy has adverse impact on girls' performance. Many girls drop out of school owing to teenage pregnancies and when they assume motherhood responsibility are unable to return to school. This scenario is widely spread in Laare division and many academically promising young girls have been rendered young mothers before realizing their academic aspirations.

Economic status of parents have great influence on girls' academic performance both negatively and positively. Most parents who are unemployed are unable to provide for educational needs of their children as opposed to the employed parents who can afford to cater for educational needs of their children.

5.4 Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendation: Firstly, there is need to educate the girls on risky behavior such as pre-marital sex that is likely to result to adolescence pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases thus affecting their academic performance. Strong punitive action need to be taken by law enforcers against the

members of community who expose minors to pre-marital sex. This will act as a deterrent measure to would be offenders.

Schools should invite academically successful women speakers to inspire girls through motivational talks. The girls would be able to identify with them and be motivated to do well in studies.

The study also recommends that gender roles and other social factors e.g. early marriages that threaten girl child education should be discarded. Parents are urged to support girl education by not overburdening them with chores at home that consequently deny them ample time for study. In this context, the Ministry of Education should take every opportunity to inform key stakeholders about the rights of girl child.

The underlying rationale is to ensure that parents, teachers are aware of and conversant with emerging issues that includes the rights of the child and its effect on education.

5.5 Suggestions for further study

- i. Studies should be conducted on how to improve girl child education in other areas.
- ii. Comparative survey should be conducted in other districts because the case of Laare Division may not be a perfect representative of all regions in Kenya.
- iii. More research should be done to find out why girls from single parent families perform fairly well than those with both parents.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO THE RESPONDENTS

University of Nairobi

P.O BOX 30197

NAIROBI

September 2012

Dear Respondent,

RE: REOUEST TO COLLECT SURVEY DATA

I am a student at the University of Nairobi, School of Continuing and Distance Education program.

As a partial requirement in fulfilment of the master's program requirements, I am undertaking a research survey and your school has been selected to form part of this study. Therefore, I kindly request you to assist me to collect data by filling in the attached questionnaire .The information provided will absolutely be used for academic purposes and will be held in strict confidence. Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Idah Ruito

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

INSTRUCTIONS

Kindly answer the following questions by ticking (✓) in the appropriate box or filling the space provided

Name of the School _____

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. What is your designation? *(Please tick as appropriate.)*

Head teacher

Teacher

2. For how long have you been a teacher?

Less than 10 years

10-20 years

Above 20- years

3. For how long have you stayed in this school?

Less than 10 years

10-20 years

Above 20 years

4. What is the total number of teachers in the school: Please tick one

Less than 10

10-20

Above 20

5. What is the total number of pupils in your school?

Less than 200

200-400

Above 400

PART B: COMPARISON OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE BETWEEN GIRLS AND BOYS IN KCPE

6.a) How is the general academic performance in your school?

Above average Average Below average

b) Is there a difference between boys' and girl child performance?

Yes No

7. Between boys and girls, generally who perform better?

Boys Girls

SECTION C: FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF GIRLS IN KCPE

8. Below are the factors influencing academic performance of girls in KCPE .Using the scale given below kindly rate them

1 2 3 4 5

	Strongly agree	Agree	Fairly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Reward and punishment					
Adolescence pregnancies					
Social factors (Religion, gender roles)					
Economic factor of parents					
Women academic role models					

SECTION D: HOW THE FACTORS IN SECTION(C ABOVE) INFLUENCE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF GIRLS IN KCPE

9. Below are the factors that influence performance of girls in KCPE in my school.

Using the scale given below please rate them

1 2 3 4 5

	Strongly agree	Agree	Fairly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Rewards					
Punishments					
Adolescence pregnancies					
Social factors					
Economic factors					
Role models					

**SECTION E: MEASURES TO MITIGATE THE FACTORS THAT
NEGATIVELY INFLUENCE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF GIRLS**

10. a) Has the school adopted any measure to mitigate factors negatively influencing academic performance among girls in your school?

Yes

No

b) If your answer is yes please tell us the measure taken to boost girls performance in your school

Thank you!

APPENDIX III

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS

INSTRUCTIONS

Kindly answer the following questions by ticking (✓) in the appropriate box or filling the space provided

Name of the School _____

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. What is your gender?

Male

Female

2. In which class are you? (Please tick as appropriate.)

Standard 6

Standard 7

Standard 8

3.a) How is the general academic performance in your school?

Above average

Average

Below average

b) Is there a difference between boys' and girl child performance?

Yes

No

4.a) Between boys and girls, generally who perform better?

Boys

Girls

5. Below are the factors that influence performance of girls in KCPE in my school.

Using the scale given below please rate them.

1 2 3 4 5

	Strongly agree	Agree	Fairly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Rewards					
Punishments					
Adolescence pregnancies					
Social factors					
Economic factors					
Role models					

SECTION E: MEASURES TO MITIGATE THE FACTORS THAT NEGATIVELY INFLUENCE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF GIRLS

6. Has the school adopted any measure to mitigate factors negatively influencing academic performance among girls in your school?

Yes

No

7. If your answer is yes please tell us the measures taken to boost girls performance.

.....

Thank you!

CONDITIONS

You must report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit. Government Officers will not be interviewed without prior appointment. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries. You are required to submit at least two (2) / four (4) bound copies of your final report for Kenyans and non-Kenyans respectively. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice.



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT

(CONDITIONS see back page)

PK60553mt10/2011

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
MAY 11 1984

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss/Institution

Aidah Nkuere Ruito

Of (Address) University of Nairobi

P.O. BOX 30197-00100

NAIROBI

Has been permitted to conduct research in

Location: Igembe North

District: Eastern

Province: Eastern

On the topic: Factors affecting academic performance

Of girls in Kenya certificate of primary education

(KCPE) in public schools in Laate, Division, Meru

County Kenya

For a period ending 30TH November 2012



Applicant's Signature: *[Handwritten Signature]*

National Council for Science and Technology

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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NAIROBI-KENYA
Website: www.ncst.go.ke

Our Ref:

NCST/RCD/14/012/1228

Date:

3rd September, 2012

Idah Nkuene Ruito
University of Nairobi
P O BOX 30197-00100
NAIROBI

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*Factors affecting academic performance of girls in Kenya Certificate of primary education (K.C.P.E) in public schools in Laare Division, Meru County, Kenya*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Eastern Province for a period ending 30th November, 2012.

You are advised to report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer, Igembe North District before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf of the research report/thesis to our office.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. K. Rugutt'.

DR.M.K.RUGUTT, PhD, HSC
DEPUTY COUNCIL SECRETARY

Copy to:

The District Commissioner
The District Education Officer
Igembe North District