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**EFFECT OF SELECTED SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS ON STUDENTS
MOTIVATION TO LEARN AMONG STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS
IN NYAHURURU SUB-COUNTY, LAIKIPIA COUNTY, KENYA.**

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ABSTRACT

The gap in gender enrolment and academic performance between boys and girls in secondary schools has been widening in the society. Students in public secondary schools face varied socio-cultural challenges in their academic work which affects their motivation to learn. This study sought to investigate the effect of selected socio-cultural factors (early marriage, puberty related issues and community's view on education) on students motivation to learn in public secondary schools in Nyahururu sub-county, Laikipia county. The study adopted a survey research design. The population included 5206 students in the 18 public secondary schools. A random sample of 349 students (including 194 boys and 155 girls) and 18 school principals was drawn from 18 randomly selected schools. Data was collected using two sets of self-administered questionnaires (one for the students and another for school principals). The questionnaires were pilot-tested to validate and determine their reliability. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0 for Windows. The study findings indicate that there was no difference in the level of motivation towards learning and community views on education, effect of menstrual period on girls' education and effect of parental preference of early marriages of daughters among the respondents. The study recommends that there is a need to create awareness among the

concerned stakeholders on the social as well as educational effect of withdrawal of learners from school for the purpose of early marriage.

KEY WORDS: socio-cultural factors, early marriage, puberty, and community view to education, motivation and self esteem.

INTRODUCTION

The policy of the government of Kenya on education has always been to provide education to all children at all levels of the education system. This is in agreement with the report of the World Conference on Education For All (WCEFA, 1990) which was held in Jomtien, Thailand. The major purpose of this conference was to launch a worldwide initiative which would help in meeting the needs of the basic education. This is in line with the United Nations Universal Declaration on Education (United Nations, 1985) that education is one of the basic human rights. Therefore every child is entitled to it irrespective of his or her background, gender, religion, race or tribe.

According to the Society for International Development (SID, 2010), despite an increment in secondary school enrolment, performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education has been wanting. In 2009 and 2010 examinations, only 27 per cent of the registered candidates in each year attained the minimum aggregate grade for University qualification (C Plus) and above. According to Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC, 2009) report, the Kenya Certificate Secondary Education results show a lot of disparity. For example: from grade A plain to B plain in 2008, girls accounted for 32 per cent and boys accounted for 68 percent. In 2009, girls constituted 34 per cent and boys 66 percent while in the year 2010 girls accounted for 27 per cent and boys accounted for 73 percent.

Student's poor performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education nationally is reflected in the results of Nyahururu sub-county in Laikipia County. According to the District Education Officer report (2012), out of the total 784 registered students, girls were 44 per cent and boys constituted 56 percent. In regard to their performance, boys had a better performance than girls. For example in terms of quality grades that is A plain, A minus, B plus and B plain, boys accounted for 86 percent and girls accounted for 14 percent. In the same district majority of the students who missed Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination in 2010 were girls for they accounted for 83 percent and boys accounted for 17 percent. The reasons for high

percentage of girls scoring poorly while others could not sit for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination perhaps could have been: early marriages, teenage pregnancies, involvement in menial jobs and domestic chores and also absenteeism due to lack of school fees. Boys on the other hand, performed poorly due to factors like absenteeism, lack of school fees and involvement in domestic work and casual jobs.

According to Richard and Deci (1985) students are motivated to learn if they are physically comfortable, feel safe and relaxed, and have a sense of belonging and a strong feeling for self-esteem. This seems not to be the case in Nyahururu sub-county of Laikipia County as secondary school students' motivation to learn might have been affected by learner's characteristics, school factors and socio-cultural factors. Therefore, motivation and academic aspirations of girls in Kenya Certificate Secondary Education in Nyahururu sub-county in Laikipia County needed to be investigated.

Statement of the Problem

Effect of selected socio-cultural factors such as early marriages, puberty related issues and views of the community on academic aspirations of secondary school on students motivation to learn was studied in order to bridge the academic lacuna that exist in public secondary school students' academic aspirations.

Purpose of the Study

The study sought to determine the influence of selected socio-cultural factors: Early marriages, puberty related issues and community's view on education on motivation to learn among students in public secondary schools in Nyahururu Sub-County, Laikipia County, Kenya.

Objective of the study

The objective of the study sought to investigate whether selected socio-cultural factors influenced students' motivation to learn among students in public secondary schools in Nyahururu Sub-county, Laikipia County.

Hypothesis

The study was guided by the following hypothesis:

Selected socio-cultural factors have no statistically significant effect on students' motivation to learn among students in public secondary schools in Nyahururu Sub-county, Laikipia County.

Review of Related Literature

Motivation is defined as the driving force by which human beings achieve their goals. The term is generally used for humans but it can also be used to describe the causes for animal behaviour as well. According to Maicibi (2003) it is the drive that makes people act or not to act in a particular way. It is a general term which applies to the whole class of drives, desires, needs, wishes and other like forces. Anything done to touch on these forces causes a behaviour which is interpreted as the motivation behind that behaviour.

Motivation is also defined as an internal state or condition which is sometimes described as a need, a want or a desire that serves to activate or energize behaviour and to give it direction (Beihler and Snowman, 2002). According to White (1959) motivation is an internal state which arouses behaviour, directs and maintains it. Weiner (1979) defines motivation as a process which starts with a psychological or physiological deficiency or a need that activates a drive or behaviour that is aimed at a goal or an incentive.

Motivation can either be intrinsic or extrinsic. According to Ames (1992) intrinsic motivation is the kind of motivation which has its source from factors like: student’s interest, curiosity and his enjoyment. If intrinsic motivation is to be encouraged, goals should personally be challenging, the individual should be focused on the task, has a mastery orientation and he or she should attribute his/her performance to controllable causes and should believe that ability can be improved, on the other hand, extrinsic motivation is motivation which has its source from the learners environment; this includes rewards, social pressure and punishment. Therefore students who exhibit extrinsic motivation believe that ability is out of their control and therefore they are mostly concerned with their self from the perspectives of eyes of others.

Chege and Sifuna (2006) made an observation of co-educational day schools and found that the inferior quality of most of them constrained the performance of many students as they lacked good learning resources. These learning resources includes: computers, school textbooks, science laboratories and workshops for technical subjects. This may lower their motivation to learn and in turn may affect their academic aspirations.

Early marriages amongst young girls can force them to drop out of the school system. According to Kelly and Elliot(1992) negative peer influences can make young girls to get pregnant or drop out of school in order to get married as they run away from poverty from their

homes or harsh school environment. Early marriages among girls therefore destroy their academic aspirations.

There are many aspects that link girls’ school attendance rates to their menstrual cycles during puberty. According to Society for International Development (SID, 2010), due to economic hardships in rural areas, girls are forced to attend secondary schools in their neighborhood where most of them lack comfortable toilets and running water. This may affect girls’ school attendance in their puberty which may result to poor academic results.

At community level girls can experience hindrances which can negate their focus to stay in school. According to Ajayi et al (1997), some communities have a higher preference for boys’ education which is perceived to be more prestigious and in the same or other communities girls are regarded as having lower ability compared to boys and therefore there is no need to waste money on them. Finally students may end up suffering if their families suffer poverty or shortage of finances as their education is sometimes sacrificed. If this happens it demoralizes students leading to low motivation to learn or destroying their academic aspirations fully (Kibera and Kimokoti, 2007).

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Students’ Gender

The study assessed the gender of the students and there were both male and female students respondents as summarized in Figure

1. Figure 1: Students Gender

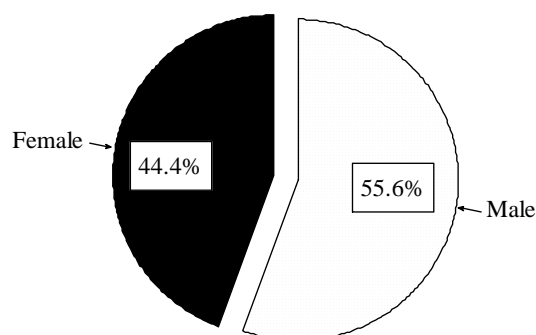


Figure 1 indicates that 55.6 percent (194) of the sampled students were males while 44.4 percent (155) were females. The gender variation conformed to the general enrollment of male and female students in secondary schools in the country and study area. In general, there were more boys than girls in the sampled secondary schools.

Reasons for Absenteeism and Students’ Motivation to Learn.

Boys and girls interviewed reported to have been absent for various reasons as was recorded in the Table 1

Table 1: Reason for Absenteeism of Students

Reasons for absenteeism	Gender	Yes		NO		NA		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Sickness	Boys	189	94	5	6	0	0	194	100
	Girls	152	100	3	2	0	0	155	100
Monthly period (girls only)	Girls	124	80	31	20	0	0	155	100
Domestic chores	Boys	23	12	171	88	0	0	194	100
	Girls	41	26	114	74	0	0	155	100
Lack of school fees	Boys	192	99	2	1	0	0	194	100
	Girls	154	99	1	1	0	0	155	100
Indiscipline	Boys	43	22	151	78	0	0	194	100
	Girls	17	11	138	89	0	0	155	100
I don’t like school	Boys	6	3	188	97	0	0	194	100
	Girls	2	1	153	99	0	0	155	100
Unfriendly teachers	Boys	3	2	152	98	0	0	194	100
	Girls	4	3	151	97	0	0	155	100

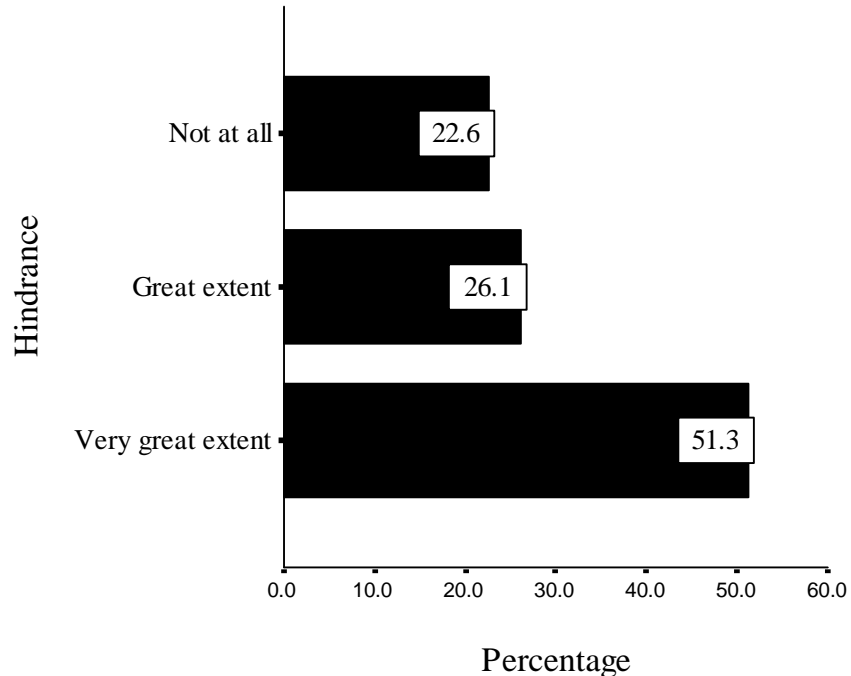
Students interviewed felt sick oftenly and therefore 97% reported that they missed school due to sickness and only 3% of them had never been absent due to sickness. Monthly periods affected girls’ attendance to school. Some 80% girls reported that they had missed school due to monthly periods. On the lack of finances, most (99%) of the respondents had missed school at one time or another. Only 1% of both girls and boys had never been sent home due to school fees. Most of the respondents were of the opinion that they liked school as 98% reported that they liked school

and 2% reported that they did not like school. This was attributed to school having friendly teachers as only 2% reported that they had been absent due to unfriendly teachers. Also only a few students (16%) had been absent from school as a result of indiscipline and 84% had never been absent due to indiscipline. Parents gave girls more domestic chores than boys. Most parents seemed to hold to the traditions that girls were more suited to perform domestic chores than boys. Thus 26% of girls reported to have been absent due to domestic chores as compared to 11% boys. Hence 74% of the girls and 98% of the boys reported to have never been absent due to domestic chores. Absenteeism could be a course for poor academic performance among students in Nyahururu sub-county in Laikipia County.

Effect of Menstrual Period on Students’ Motivation to Learn.

A girl child faces unique challenges in her quest for education. The most common is the impact of puberty stage on their academic work. The respondents were therefore asked whether menstruation period affected the girls’ school work (Figure 2). Note that the study used only girls’ respondents to establish their rating of effect of menstrual period on education.

Figure 2: Effects of Menstrual period on Girls Motivation to Learn.



The results presented in Figure 2 indicate that 51.3 percent of the respondents considered the menstrual period to have a very great effect on the school work of a girl. The remaining 26.1 percent and 22.6 percent considered the menstrual period to have no influence and great influence, respectively, on the education of a girl. This suggests that though the respondents differed on their assessment of the impact of the menstrual period on the education of a girl child, majority considered it to have a very great influence.

Effect of Community views on Students Motivation to Learn.

The attitude of a student towards education is affected by community views on motivation to learn. Communities with positive views on education are supportive of a student endeavor to learn which in turn develops a high motivation. Others have negative views on education and thus not supportive of education which in turns leads to low motivation learn. In this study, the respondents (students and principals) were asked to rate the effect of community views on motivation to learn and their responses are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Effect of Community Views on Education

Effect of Community views on education	Students		Principals	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Not at all	127	36	3	16.7
Fairly	63	18	7	38.9
Moderately	82	24	7	38.9
Very much	77	22	1	5.6
Total	349	100.0	18	100.0

The results in Table 2 show that the respondents varied in their opinion about the effect of community views on education. A greater proportion 36 percent of the students reported that the community views on education had no effect at all on girls’ education. The remaining 18 percent rated the influence of community on education as fair, 23 percent rated it as moderate while 22 percent considered it as very much. For the principals, 77 percent considered the community to have fair and moderate views on education in the study area.

Parental Preference for early Marriages and Students Motivation to Learn

Some societies in the country have given preference to marriage and therefore organize or encourage their daughters to drop out of school for early marriages which affects girls and their motivation in school. The respondents were asked whether parents prefer early marriages for their daughters (Table 3). Note that the study used only girls’ respondents in rating parents’ preference of early marriage of their daughters.

Table 3: Parental Preference of Early Marriages

Preference	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	85	55
Disagree	54	35
Agree	5	3
Strongly Agree	11	7
Total	155	100.0

Table 3 indicates that 90 percent of the respondents disagreed that parents preferred early marriages for their daughters, while only 10 percent agreed. This suggests that majority of the parents in the modern societies have realized the importance of education for the girl child and thus give priority to both boys and girls. Note that the study used only girls respondents to cross tabulate their rating of effect of parental preference of early marriages of daughters on girls’ education.

Motivation to Attain the Aspired Level of Education

Table 4 shows what motivated the respondents to aspire for the level of education each one of them was aspiring for.

Table 4: Motivation to Attain the Aspired Level of Education

Motivation to aspire to attain the aspired level of education	F	%
Start self-employment business	26	7.4
Enable me to attain salaried employment	268	76.8
Gain social status in the society	24	6.9
Please my parents	9	2.6
Become more comfortable in marriage	17	4.9
To get a good spouse in the future	5	1.4
Total	394	100

Most of the respondents were not motivated to attain their aspired level of education due to marriage as only a few 1.4% reported that they were motivated to attain their aspired level so that they could get a good spouse and also that they could be more accountable in marriage (5%). Some of the parents may be role models to their children or they may have pressurized them as 2.6% of the students’ respondents said that they were motivated to attain their aspired level of education in order to please their parents.

Students were not interested with self employment as only 7.4% of the students reported that their motivation to attain their aspired level of education was as result of starting self employment. On the other hand, gaining social status in the society was not a priority to many students as only a few of them 6.9% were in school so that they could gain social status.

The society seems to have influenced secondary school students as most of them were aspiring to attain their aspired level of education so that they could get salaried employment. Thus 76.8% aspired to attain their aspired level of education so that they could get salaried employment in future.

CONCLUSION

- i). The results showed that selected socio-cultural factors such as community views on education and menstrual period on girls’ did not have a statistically significant influence on students’ motivation to learn, however, menstruation impacted on girls’ absenteeism which may be the reason behind their poor results in exit examination such as KCSE.
- ii). Most parents, having realized the economic benefits accrued from education, did not encourage their daughters to enter into marriage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study makes the following recommendations:

School administrators and managers ought to put in place measures and mechanisms for supply of sanitary towels in schools a move that would mitigate girls’ frequent absenteeism from schools. This would make their stay in school less embarrassing, more bearable and comfortable a step that would facilitate level competitiveness with their counterparts who are boys.

Educated role models in the society should initiate programmes which can intervene thus deterring community’s negative view on education thus leading to improved performance.

“Effect of selected socio-cultural factors on students motivation to learn among students in public secondary schools in Nyahururu sub-county, Laikipia country, Kenya.”

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