

# EFFECT OF SOCIAL ROLES ON GIRLS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KIPKOMO SUB COUNTY, KENYA

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## Abstract

Education despite facing several challenges has brought social order around the world, even in addressing the challenges of people, and in particular women and the disadvantaged. Increasing female education is a catalyst for bringing equality among the women and men as all of them are given equal opportunity to chase their dreams. The aim of the study was to assess the effect of social roles on girls' academic achievement in public primary school in Kipkomo sub County, West Pokot County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design where both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Data was collected through questionnaires for class teachers and teacher counsellors, and focused group discussions for girls in regular school and girls in rescue centres. The study targeted 1615 persons comprising of 1201 girls, 101 head teachers, 202 girls in rescue centres and 101 teachers counselors all public schools in Kipkomo Sub County. Using Krejcie and Morgan Table for determining sample sizes, the study used a sample size of 306 persons. Purposive sampling and proportion to size sampling techniques were used to arrive at the number of sampled persons per each category of the targeted group; hence 89 girls in regular schools, 101 academic masters teachers, 15 girls in rescue centres and 101 teacher counsellors. The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics and presented in tables. The study established that girls are generally socialized into domestic roles such as care giving, cooking, cleaning and caring for other siblings and manual work with no focus on their schooling. The study also revealed that most of the girls skip school to look after goats and calves in addition to considering themselves as the weaker sex and hence put less effort in their academics.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Saul Macleod (2009) gave the definition of social roles as to what people in the larger society do as compared to the expectation of the society. He argued that anything that an individual or social group does or the activities they carry out affects the way they relate with others and their behavior; as they try to adjust and fit into norms and traditions of a particular group which changes with time as they gradually fit into the group. According to Dlabay and Schoch, (2011), culture has been the biggest factor that has bound people together as it provides a platform where the indigenous people easily identifies with one another. They further agree that there is need to bring to end cultural norms that affect the well-being and growth of an individual, these include cultures that research has proven to be harmful like domestic violence, girl child being viewed as a family's source of wealth, female genital mutilation and social roles stratification. They emphasized on schooling as its products relates in one way or another with culture; for instance social sciences, religious studies, history and languages where positive aspects of culture can be administered to the younger generation, and through this a permanent change in behaviour can be achieved. According to Anastas (2012), education has been able to shape social norms that even encourage women being looked at as a weaker gender.

Kumar (2010) advocates that culture can be adapted in different forms in the different setups where children find themselves exposed to, a perfect example is the school where the learners will always want to copy and emulate what the significant adult does and do as they carry out their normal functions, for schools and the larger society. Therefore to achieve the accepted morals, norms and good behaviours; we need to incorporate socially desired behaviours, values and attributes that are found within our communities into the school curriculum, and administrators tasked to ensure that all tutors facilitate the learner to be acquainted with them through daily teaching and learning. The larger society's members to be provided with a platform that will enable them ensure that the rights of all the children and especially the girl child are respected; and condemn cultural practices that violate these fundamental rights.

Kumar (2010), further postulates that in India, there is a variety of cultures that includes beauty concept, artefact exhibitions, customs and traditions, religious practices and norms that gives the difference of one ethnicity and the other, people and their families have different ways of lifestyle and the social status of each family differs from the other which has made it quite important for developing plans as far as their businesses and organizations are concerned. The Constitution of India on cultural rights (article 29-30) tasks every individual and state the need to respect the citizen, family and the societal religious belief and cultural practises. This has proven to be difficult for the Indian authorities and government to ensure that values like justice and equity are put into the school curricula because most learners believe in the cultural practices as it is really well elaborated in the Indian constitution.

According to Matwetwe (2017), the Pokots are people found in Kenya and have rich, varied and distinct cultural practices, norms, traditions and shared values. Chai (2018), reports that social cultural practices have been part and parcel of the Pokot community and they have done it since time immemorial. This community has high regard to a shared communal life with a high maintenance of relationship with others. Their life and well-being is majorly centred on grouping rather than individual where egocentricity was highly discouraged, sharing is a key pillar in this community. Activities such as farming, herding of animals, religious activities and other ceremonies like circumcision were done communally. Every individual in the community is required to have absolute respect to parents, the elders, significant others and their siblings. Those who violated other individual rights a full repercussion would follow and punishment has to be administered to such person by the elders of the community. In this community women and especially girls were not allowed to question the decision of the elders even if it concern them in either way women were considered children meaning therefore that the men will always dictate to them.

Matwetwe (2017) also notes that the roles for both women and men are well defined in this community and each member of different sex is expected to carry their own roles without interfering with others. The boy child is expected to look after animals, go hunting, get education, provide for their families with assistance from their fathers; whereas on the other hand the girl child was expected to look after the babies, perform all household chores with the help of their mothers. In general the kitchen was the place where they spent most of their time and the girl child therefore found themselves performing many house hold cores than the boy child resulting to them not getting adequate time for studies and other school related duties; and hence these roles disadvantaged them from getting quality education for their holistic development.

### Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey is an approach of collecting data by administering questionnaires and interviewing respondents. It can be used to gauge people's attitudes and opinions (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The researcher preferred the use of descriptive survey research design over other research designs because it allows for generalizations from a sample to a population. This enables one to make inferences about some characteristics of a population (Orodho, 2005). For this study, the descriptive survey research design enabled the researcher to analyze and describe the effect of social cultural practices on education of girls. The study was carried out in Kipkomo Sub County in West Pokot County, Kenya. Kipkomo Sub County was identified because of the lamentation of leaders on the many social roles undertaken by the girl child at the expense of their education in the sub-county.

The study targeted all 101 schools in Kipkomo Sub County, all girls in upper primary (1201), academic masters (101), girls in rescue centres (202) and teacher counselors (101) in Kipkomo Sub County, making a total of 1615 persons. A summary of target population is as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Target population**

Category	Target population
Academic masters	101
Teacher Counsellors	101
Girls in rescue centres	212
Girls in regular schools	1201
Total	1615

Source: Kipkomo Sub County Director of Education Office (2021)

This study employed two techniques of sampling, namely: censors (for Academic masters and Teacher Counsellors) and proportional to size sampling techniques (PPSST) - for girls in school and rescue centres. The sampling frame was the selected schools while the sampling unit was the various cadres of targeted respondents. This included academic masters, guidance and counselling teachers, girls in regular school and girls in rescue centres.

The study, therefore, used the Krejcie and Morgan’s (1970) Table for determining sample sizes to come up with a sample. Thus for a targeted population of 1615, the corresponding sample size is 306. Hence, a sample of 306 respondents was used in the study. Probability proportional to size sampling technique (PPSST) was then be used to determine the sub-sample size per each cadre of respondents.

$$S = pS/P$$

Where;

- s = Sub sample for the county;
- p = Sub- population for each county;
- S= Total sample of study (306 Sampled schools);
- P = Total target population (1615).

Thus the sub-sample proportion for the respondents is as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Sample size**

Categories	Target Population	sample size	Sampling techniques
Academic masters	101	101	Censors
Teacher Counsellors	101	101	Censors
Pupils (girls)	1201	89	PPSST
Girls in rescue centres	202	15	PPSST
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1615</b>	<b>306</b>	

Simple random sampling technique was then used to determine those who were to take part in the study during data collection.

The study utilized questionnaires for class teachers and teacher counsellors, and focused group discussions for girls in regular school and girls in rescue centres. The researcher visited the sampled schools to explain the purpose of the study to principals of schools and managers of the rescue centres. Focused group discussions were carried out by the researcher for uniformity and to avoid discrepancies. The study collected both qualitative and quantitative data. The data collected from respondents was coded, entered and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies and percentages and chi-square. The inferential statistics were carried out at a confidence level of 95% and a margin error of 5% (alpha = 0.05). The findings were presented using textual presentation, frequency and tables. Qualitative data was summarized into themes and reported using verbatim reports. Table 3 shows the summary of data analysis tools.

**Findings of the study**

The study was to investigate the effect of social roles on academic achievement of girls in public primary schools in Kipkomo sub county, Kenya. The respondents targeted were academic masters, girls in public schools, girls in rescue centres and teacher counselors. The instruments used for this objective were questionnaires and focused group discussions. The responses given are indicated for each item in Table 3.

Table 3: Effect of social roles on academic achievement of girls

Statements	Academic master		Teacher Counsellors	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Girls are generally socialized into domestic roles such as care giving, cooking, cleaning and caring for other siblings and manual work; and not academics	92 (91.09%)	9 (8.91%)	77 (76.24%)	24 (23.76%)
Most of the role models among girls are biased towards their social roles	96 (95.05%)	5 (4.99%)	87 (86.00%)	14 (14.00%)
Girls skip school to look after goats and calves	86 (85.15%)	15 (14.85%)	77 (76.24%)	24 (23.76%)
Girls consider themselves as the weaker sex due to their social roles and hence put less efforts in academics	83 (82.18%)	18 (17.82%)	82 (81.19%)	19 (18.81%)
Girls perform better in subjects related to their social roles	86 (85.15%)	15 (14.85%)	81 (80.20%)	20 (19.80%)

Source: Field data, 2022

According to the findings in Table 3, majority of the academic masters (92.09%) and teacher counsellors (76.24%) agreed that girls are generally socialized into domestic roles such as care giving, cooking, cleaning and caring for other siblings and manual work at the expense of their academics. Only a few academic masters (8.91%) and teacher counsellors (23.76%) disagreed that girls who are generally socialized into domestic roles such as care giving, cooking, cleaning and caring for other siblings and manual work at the expense of their academics. This finding was supported by what one of the girls in the focused group said:

*“...our parents always ensure that, right from childhood, girls unlike boys are socialized into domestic roles such as care giving, and manual work. This makes us sometimes to miss school. Excess work at home also totally affects our concentration in school as at times we start thinking of our days chores while at school....”* (Focussed group discussant 20-25 group)

Another school girl had the following to say:

*“... “...because of the household chores assigned to girls, some of us are perpetually late for school because we have to complete morning tasks before we can leave for school. We must also leave for home the earliest because similar duties await us after school.....”* (Focussed group discussant 20-25 group)

This implies that most of the girls are generally socialized into domestic roles such as care giving, cooking, cleaning and caring for other siblings and manual work at the expense of their academics. It also shows that girls are overburdened at home with daily chores. This leaves them no time for studies in the evening hence hampering their studies. It is therefore advisable that both boys and girls should be treated equally, through equitable allocation of chores. This will help alleviate girls’ workload and accord them adequate time for study.

The findings in Table 3 also reveal that majority of the academic masters (95.05%) and teacher counsellors (86.00%) were in agreement that most of the role models among girls are biased towards their social roles and hence hinder them into pursuing subjects that are male dominated. Only a few of them, 4.99% academic masters and 14.00% teacher counsellors agreed that most of the role models among girls are biased towards their social roles and hence hinder them into pursuing subjects that are male dominated. This implies that girls within the Pokot community have very few role models that can encourage them work hard in academics to compete in male dominated courses.

The findings in Table 3 further show that majority of the academic masters (85.15%) and teacher counsellors (76.24%) agreed that girls skip school to look after goats and calves. Only a few of them, 14.85% academic masters and 23.76% teacher counsellors disagreed that girls skip school to look after goats and calves. This implies that girls within the Pokot community herding of goats and calves are a preserve for young girls who are teenagers or approaching their teen age.

The findings in Table 3 also reveal that girls consider themselves as the weaker sex and hence put less effort in academics. This finding was supported by 82.18% academic masters and 81.19% teacher counsellors who agreed that most consider themselves as the weaker sex and hence put less efforts in academics. Only a few of them, 17.82% Academic masters and 18.81% teacher counsellors disagreed that most consider themselves as the weaker sex and hence put less efforts in academics. This implies that girls in the Pokot community consider themselves as the weaker sex and hence lack the drive to work hard in academics since they will be provided for in life by their husbands.

The findings in Table 3 also established that girls perform better in subjects related to their social roles. From the data obtained, 76.24% Academic masters and 66.34% teacher counsellors agreed that most of girls perform better in subjects related to their social roles. Only a few of them, 23.76% Academic masters and 33.66% teacher counsellors disagreed that most of the girls perform better in subjects related to their social roles. This implies that girls perform better in subjects related to their social roles because they have been made to believe that their role in the community is care giving, cooking, cleaning and caring for other siblings and manual work; and not academics. They therefore have to perfect their roles to fit well in the society.

The chi-square test was used to establish whether the social roles had an effect on girls' academic achievement in public primary schools. The social roles examined in this study were as indicated in Table 4. Thus, the chi-square tests depicting the relationship between the social roles and girls academic achievement are as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Chi-square results for the social roles and academic achievement

Association between the following factors and academic achievement of girls	variable	Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) results	df	P value	Cramers V
Girls are generally socialized into domestic roles such as care giving, cooking, cleaning and caring for other siblings and manual work; and not academics	m.12	131.76	9	.001	.72
Most of the role models among girls are biased towards their social roles	m.13	74.24	9	.611	.44
Girls skip school to look after goats and calves	m.14	112.23	9	.001	.61
Girls consider themselves as the weaker sex due to their social roles and hence put less efforts in academics	m.15	78.18	9	.008	.51
Girls perform better in subjects related to their social roles	m.16	148.23	9	.162	.48

Source: Field data, 2022

A chi square on the association between the variable m12 and pupils academic achievement in public primary schools in Kipkomo Sub County, was significant  $\{\chi^2 (1, N=202) = 131.76, p<.001\}$  with the magnitude of the effect being modest (Cramer's  $V=.72$ ). This implies that girls are generally socialized into domestic roles such as care giving, cooking, cleaning and caring for other siblings and manual work; and not academics which significantly affects pupils academic achievement.

According to Table 4 a chi-square test was conducted to determine if there is any significant relationship between variable m13 and pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools in Kipkomo Sub County. The results showed that there was no significant relationship between the two variables,  $\{\chi^2 (1, N=202) = 74.24, p<.611\}$  with the magnitude of the effect being moderate (Cramer's  $V=.44$ ). This implies that not all role models among girls are biased towards the social roles for women in the community. This is good for the Pokot community as it will expose the women in the community that they can compete with men in some of the male dominated activities.

A chi square on the association between variable m14 and pupils academic achievement in public primary schools in Kipkomo Sub County obtained a significant relationship  $\{\chi^2 (1, N=202) = 112.23, p<.001\}$  with the magnitude of the effect being strong (Cramer's  $V=.61$ ). This implies that in Kapkomo Sub-County girls skip school to look after goats and calves which significantly affects their academic achievement.

The results in Table 4 further show a chi-square test conducted between variable m15 and pupils' academic achievement. The results showed that there was no significant relationship between the two variables,  $\{\chi^2 (1, N=202) = 78.18, p<.008\}$  with the magnitude of the effect being moderate (Cramer's  $V=.51$ ). This implies that girls consider themselves as the weaker sex due to their social roles and hence put less effort in academics.

The results in Table 4 also show that a chi-square test conducted to between variable m16 and pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools in Kipkomo Sub County. The results showed that there was no significant relationship between the two variables,  $\{\chi^2 (1, N=202) = 148.23, p<.162\}$  with the magnitude of the effect being moderate (Cramer's  $V=.48$ ). This implies that not all girls perform better in subjects related to their social roles. This is also implies that not all girls are keen on taking their social roles in the society and hence there is a probability that some of them might be interested in venturing in to male dominated subjects.

This findings are in tandem with those of Ozen (2012) who found that student's social responsibility is not only a valued result but it is influential in acquiring knowledge and advancement of cognitive abilities. The impression of school is

potentially high on children's minds. Social responsibility is important for students and pupils. Schools changed the pupil's self concept goals, beliefs about success etc. In other studies by Joussemet, Koestner, Lekes, and Landry (2005) and Mulder (2007) it was found that many factors such as family environment, School environment, etc. contribute a lot in the overall development of social competency of children. The development process is versatile and linked through fine tuning of children with respective communities for scholastic achievement. Clark, Goyder and Bissel (2007) also agreed that positive domestic environment is the prominent indicator of students' success in their academics. They further added that teaching learning process carried out at school is incomplete without the support of home environment.

### Conclusions

The study concluded that girls are generally socialized into domestic roles such as care giving, cooking, cleaning and caring for other siblings and manual work; and not academics. The study also reveals that most of the girls skip school to look after goats and calves; which implies that herding of goats and calves in the Pokot community is a preserve for young girls who are teenagers or approaching their teen age. The findings further revealed that girls consider themselves as the weaker sex and hence put less effort in academics.

### Recommendations

The West Pokot county government should embark on a series of barazas and sensitize the community on how the girls' social roles and are impacting on the community in terms of girl child education. The government should also come up with more boarding schools for girls to protect them from the social roles at home. Girl child education should also be emphasized among the Kenyan masses, more so in the marginalized communities like the Pokots.

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