

Communication Technology Affecting Education Acquisition for the Girl Child: Examining the Case of Chuluni District, Kitui County

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ABSTRACT

In Kenya, various factors shape the rate of enrolment and trends in academic performance among education institutions. One of the factors concerns communication technology parity. This paper has examined some of the issues affecting the acquisition of education among girls in Chuluni District, Kitui County of Kenya. The research has been designed in such a way that qualitative and quantitative aspects regarding education for the girl child have been explored, constituting a mixed approach of conducting research. From the findings, the state of education for the girl child in Chuluni County remains dire. Some of the barriers to education for the girl child include poverty, low levels of technology, early marriage, traditions and customs, poor accessibility, poor training provisions for teachers, staff inadequacy, external interference, and hostility in the school environment. As such, it is recommended that education authorities in Chuluni District engage in infrastructural development to enhance accessibility. In addition, more schools should be developed to reduce distance from home to school. Other developments should include engaging in external; consultation through workshops, effective teacher training provision, communal sensitization on the importance of education for the girl child, and funding by external aid agencies such as donors. In so doing, Chuluni District is likely to realize reduced dropout rates, improvements in enrolment rates, and high academic performance.

Keywords: Education among girls in Chuluni consultation through workshops, effective teacher training provision, communal sensitization.

INTRODUCTION

Education is perceived to constitute a critical component responsible for the political and socio-economic development of the human society. In addition, education is associated with various improvements of human life. According to Aduda and Muito (2003), education forms a crucial source responsible for the achievement of a competitive advantage. Therefore, through education, personal development and economic growth at national level is achieved (Ahawo, 2009). From the observation, education forms a human right from which full exercising of other rights may result. The assertion is also evident in education's recognition by the United Nations, stated in policies such as the Universal Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Alowo, 2007). According to Andeweg and Van (2003), the colonial period saw the introduction of western education in Kenya. The introduction offered an eye opener to Kenyans in such a way that a good life ahead, similar to the white

people, would be projected. By introducing education alongside the money economy, the British colonial regime accounted for the eventual interest of Africans in gaining education; with the latter perceived as precedence towards economic, political and social progress. In addition, African participation in formal education was necessitated by the need to secure white-collar jobs from which living standards would improve by using the salaries and wages to purchase basic commodities (Ayodo, 2010). Therefore, the fact that higher level of education is associated with high paying jobs implies that more and more people have sought to seek education for the Kenyan child. Education has advanced through various levels and stages after independence, the Kenyan government appointed the Kenya Education Commission to review education provision. The commission was chaired by Professor Ominde. In the 1964 report, the commission emphasized on the need to offer education that promotes respects for traditions, promotes national unity, and upholds

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human dignity (Ayoo, 2002). Additionally, the commission proposed the need for curriculum revision to enhance relevance to the Kenyan child. The proposal led to the introduction of examination systems from which learners would be evaluated to monitor progress in knowledge acquisition (Bernard, 2002). Therefore, examinations in Kenya serve a significant role in creating feedback from which nation-wide playing ground for competition for various employment opportunities and, related courses has been created (Borg and Gall, 2007).

However, disparities exist regarding the provision of education in various parts of Kenya. In particular, disparities remain evident in relation to educational provision for the girl child. For instance, pastoral communities have had special needs that necessitate special measures. The extent to which government intervention has been exercised remains unclear. Regarding school district and regional enrolment statistics, areas with special needs remain under represented in the education system's respective levels. The observation implies that the Kenyan government is yet to address tribal and regional imbalances

in education provision for the girl child. The situation is perceived to be worse in semi-arid and arid areas (Caceres, 2004). It is also critical to highlight that in Kenya, educational opportunities do not solely rely on the role of regional imbalances. Rather, education in Kenya is shaped also shaped by family situations. In cases where schooling programs are characterized by terminal examination systems, the role of home environments is perceived to be significant (Campbell, 2004). For the case of Chuluni district, it becomes significant to examine some of the school-based factors, socio-cultural factors, and socio-economic factors that shape education acquisition for the girl child.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a secondary approach in which secondary data was obtained. Some of the sources of secondary data that were consulted included journals, e-books, and institutional and government reports. From the process of data analysis, a content analysis technique was employed, focusing on both qualitative and quantitative data outcomes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table One: Summary on ICT Access for Learning

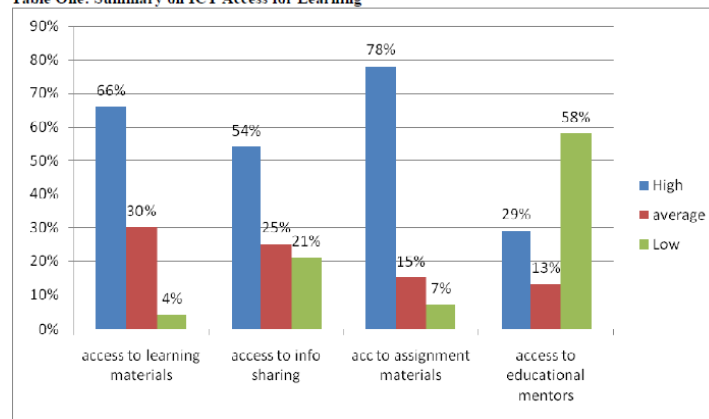


Fig:1

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Table Two: ICT and the Girl-Child Learning Interest

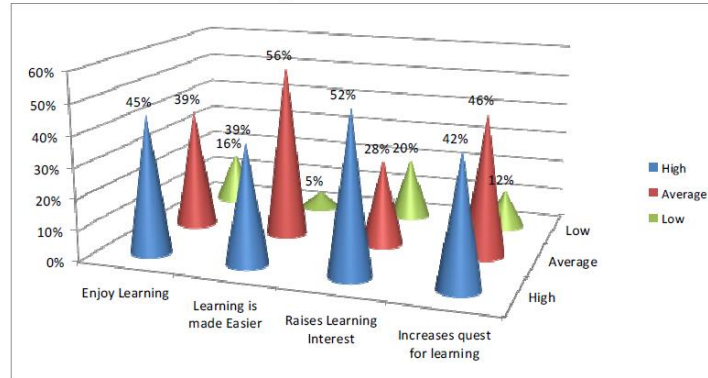


Fig:2

Table Three: ICT and Motivation to Learning

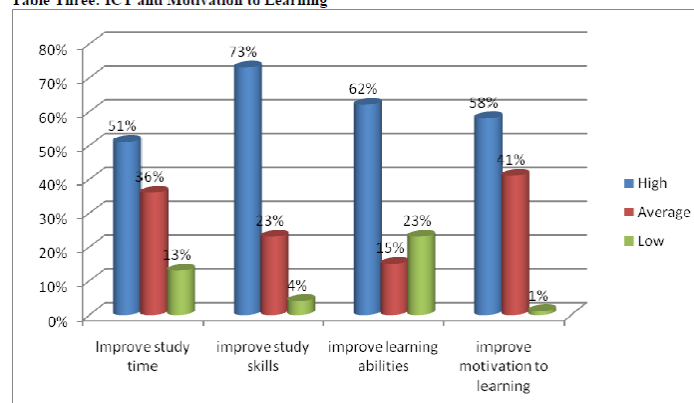


Fig:3

Table four: ICT and the Girl-Child Academic Achievement

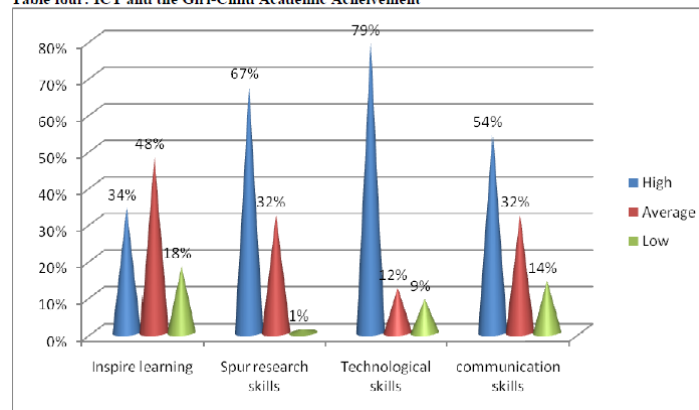


Fig:4

Communication technology disparity in education provision within Chuluni District
 (Do you think there is communication technology disparity in education provision within Chuluni District?)

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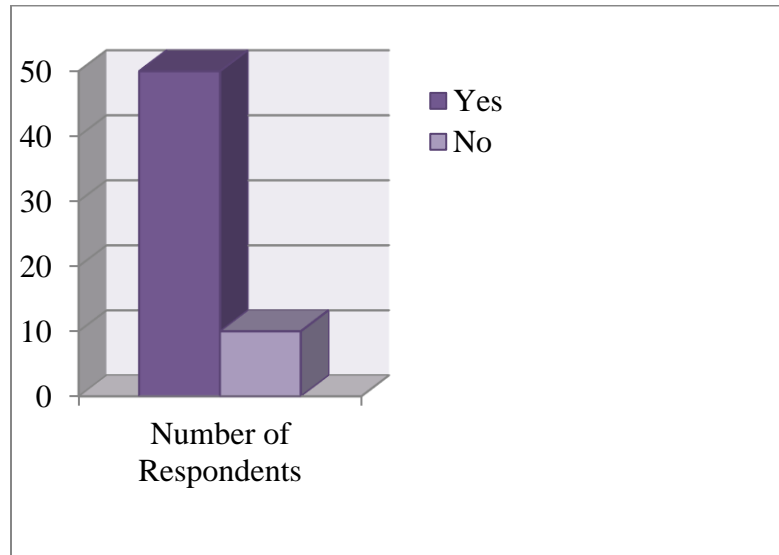


Fig:5

Most of the participants stated that communication technology parity is yet to be achieved in Chuluni District. For instance, from the study outcomes and responses received, 50 respondents stated that there was significant communication technology disparity in education within Chuluni District while 10 respondents stated that the provision of education in Chuluni District was at near-parity. Participants who stated that communication technology disparity characterizes Chuluni District's education provision indicated that the system favors boys at Status of education for the girl child in Chuluni District (What is the current status of education for the girl child in Chuluni District?)

the expense of enrolment and performance of the girl child. Individuals who stated that education in Chuluni District reveals communication technology disparity accounted for 83.33% of the respondents while individuals who argued in favor of a near-parity achievement accounted for 16.67% of the participants. As such, it is evident that education in Chuluni District favors the boy child at the expense of girls. The outcome is presented graphically in the figure above.

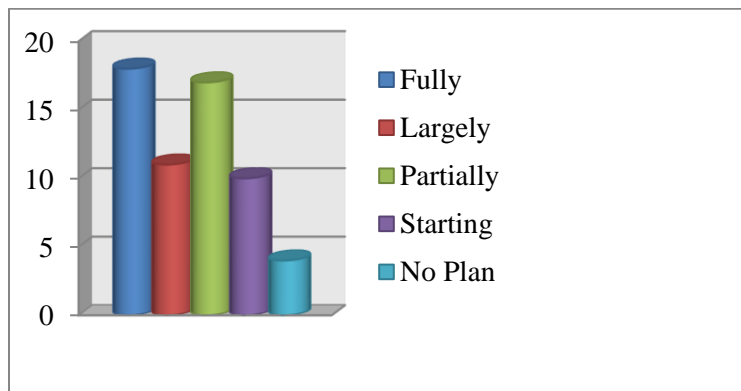


Fig:6

External consultation within and outside Kitui County

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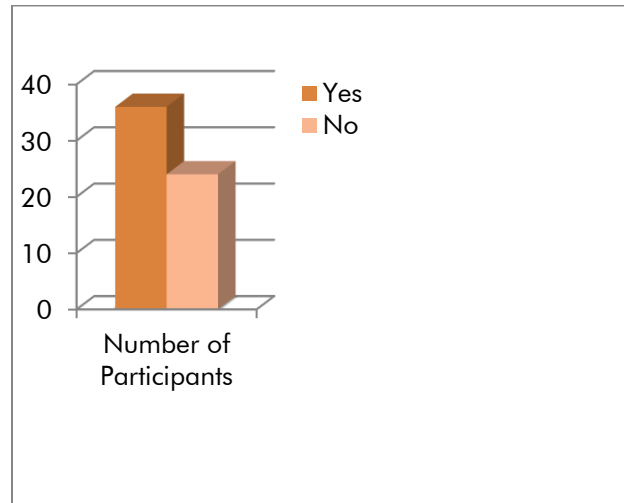


Fig:7

Some of the reasons stated to account for low enrolment, poor academic performance and high rates of dropout include poverty, traditions and customs, and poor schooling environments. In addition, aspects such as external interference from other education authorities are deemed to hinder the effectiveness of education provision for the girl child in Chuluni District. It is recommended that the county government of Kitui intervenes to address poverty-related issues, which would in turn motivate the girls to attend school. To curb poverty, parents should be involved in such a way that community initiatives aid in food production by introducing projects such as irrigation. It is also recommended that more teacher training institutions be established in Chuluni District to ensure that the challenge of staff inadequacy and, poor teacher preparation is curbed. It is also recommended that education institutions in Chuluni District engage in external consultation by sending representatives of the teaching fraternity to attend workshops beyond Kitui County to gain knowledge about education programs that support education for the girl child.

External consultation should also be approached in such a way that respective schools attend session such as academic contests to gauge the state of Chuluni District's academic performance; with girls on particular focus. The challenge of inaccessibility should be curbed by establishing more schools to ensure that girls in the primary and secondary sector reach school in a short time. This will not only account for intrinsic motivation of the girls towards education attainment to gain desirable social statuses but

also extrinsic motivation by means of accessing quality education in well-facilitated institutions. Furthermore, it is recommended that the education sector of Chuluni District, in liaison with road authorities, engages in infrastructural improvements to ensure that passable roads link homes to schools. Aspects such as early marriage, traditions and customs should be curbed by holding frequent seminars and education workshops in which teachers and other community representatives sensitize the girls and parents on the need to prioritize education for the girl child. In so doing, Chuluni District is likely to form a regional and national education powerhouse from which high rates of education of enrolment for the girls and, desirable academic performance may be achieved.

CONCLUSION

The study sought to examine some of the factors responsible for the nature of girl child acquisition of education in Chuluni District, Kitui County of Kenya. One of the most notable features is that Chuluni District is located in a multicultural region. As such, multiculturalism accounts for various traditions and customs faced by the girl child in Chuluni District. From the findings, communication technology disparity is evident. For instance, in education institutions, the rate of enrolment of girls is low. In addition, dropout rates are high while academic performance of the girls in Chuluni District remains dire.

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