Girl Child Challenges and Academic Achievement in Mixed Secondary Schools

Lazarus Ndiku Makewa[1], Elizabeth Role[2] and Winnie Muthoni Ngila[3]

Abstract

Challenges faced by girls in mixed secondary schools have been addressed by many researchers. However, disparities continue to prevail in secondary education with girls being more disadvantaged. This study, therefore, aimed at identifying if there was any relationship in girl child challenges and academic achievement in mixed secondary schools in Mbooni West District, Kenya. The study was based on Ruth Pearson's gender relations theory and the human capital theory. Descriptive-comparative, correlation and cross section survey approach were employed. Cluster sampling was done to obtain the sample comprising 468 respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires. The results indicate that the null hypothesis "there was no significant relationship between female teachers as role models as a challenge facing girls in mixed secondary schools and academic performance" is rejected, the study also observes that the perceptions of day scholars did not differ significantly with those of borders.

1. Introduction

Gender parity in formal schooling is not only a major concern for parents, educators, and policy makers, but also a basic human right, a key indicator of achievement of education for all, and a source of economic growth (Bank, Delmont, & Marshall, 2007; UNESCO ,2009 ; UNESCO, 2012). However, UNESCO (2011) exposes that out of the 61 million out-of-school children, 53 per cent are girls, and almost two-thirds of the world's illiterate adults are women.

---

[1] University of Eastern Africa, Baraton. Email: ndikul@gmail.com
[2] University of Eastern Africa, Baraton. Email: bethrole@gmail.com
[3] University of Eastern Africa, Baraton. Email: winngila@yahoo.com

Further, UNESCO (2011) reveals that Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for half of all out of school children worldwide. This demonstrates existence of a wide gap between Sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the world. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for boys exceeded that of girls by 9 per cent, because as disclosed by UIS (2011), the GER for boys is 41 per cent and that of girls is 32 per cent. As per the 2012 EFA Global Monitoring Report, Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest total secondary enrolment (UNESCO, 2012). In addition, the same report states that among the 68 countries lacking gender parity in education, girls are more disadvantaged in 60 of them. Only in a few countries, such as Rwanda, in Sub-Saharan Africa are boys more disadvantaged than girls (UNESCO, 2012).

In East Africa, where Kenya is part of, the proportion of girls in secondary schools is relatively low, with a gender parity index (GPI) of 0.84 (United Nations, 2010). Nevertheless, compared to middle and Western Africa, whose GPIs are 0.67 and 0.77 respectively, East Africa holds the highest position, showing a positive move towards equality in secondary education. World Bank (cited by Glennerster, Kremer, Mbiti, & Takavarasha, 2011) contends that secondary school access in Kenya remains low for both boys and girls with only 50 per cent of secondary school age population getting enrolled. Republic of Kenya (2012) maintains that enrolment for girls in the year 2001, which was 359,835, followed by 483,128 in 2004, then 541,577 in 2007, and 786,530 in 2010, proves an upward trend in participation for girls in secondary education. When these enrolments are compared to those of boys in the same years, the GPIs obtained were 0.89, 0.99, 0.86 and 0.83 respectively –a designation of gender disparity which demonstrates inequitable access (Republic of Kenya, 2012).

On the word of Ngesu, Wachira, Mwelu, and Nyambisi (2012), low performance and under representation in education of girls seem to spring from a combination of factors.

Such factors include preference for boy education, lack of self-esteem, gender stereotypes, sexual harassment, lack of safety at school, early marriage and pregnancy, lack of female teacher role models and lack of job aspirations and the type of school attended (UNESCO, 2009; Omwoga, 2010; Oigara, 2011).

Most girls in Mbooni West District (71.44 per cent) attend mixed secondary schools (Mbooni West DEO's Office, 2012). Mixed schools are schools in which boys and girls receive same education, in common rooms by the same teachers.

Most mixed secondary schools in Kenya are district schools (county schools) which are predominantly under resourced, and those who attend such schools do so due to lack of funds to pay in the costly single sex schools (Ndunda-Kiluva, 2001; Wasonga & Mwita, 2012; Odhiambo & Yambo, 2012). In general terms, girls in mixed schools in Kenya perform poorer than those in single-sex schools for various reasons (Oigara, 2011). In a study to investigate how school environment affects achievement, Oigara (2011) found out that girls in mixed schools feel intimidated and threatened by male teachers and boys, their ability is undermined and they are treated as feminine even when choosing career subjects.

Many studies focusing on girl child education in secondary schools and the challenges they face have been done at national and county levels. Such studies include that done by Kasomo (2009), Achoka (2009), Ohba (2009), and Kisilu, Kimani, and Kombo. (2012). Nevertheless, none has been done particularly in Mbooni West District. Therefore this research finds it vital to investigate challenges facing girl-child education in mixed secondary schools in Mbooni West District.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Girls Safety

Lack of safety is created by unsafe conditions, behavior, disasters or emergencies, which a school should otherwise be prepared for in order to maintain girls' safety in schools (Kipngeno & Kyalo, 2009). It is the responsibility of school administrators to ensure that the school environment is conducive for learning, and this can be achieved by establishing clear rules and policies (Kipngeno & Kyalo, 2009). Although institutions of learning are viewed as havens of peace world wide, they have been reported to experience serious cases of insecurity (Omolo & Simatwa, 2010).

Examples of incidents in Kenya that can cause parents concern about their girls safety in schools (especially boarding schools) are; the St. Kizito incident where 19 girls died as they tried to escape and 71 others raped (Rape and murder, 1991), the 1998 Bombolulu incident that resulted to loss of 25 lives from suspected arsons, and the Kyanguli 2001 incident that resulted to death of 68 boys from suspected arsons. These incidents cause concern about preparedness of schools in Kenya for safety.

After the 1998 incident, Kenya Rape and sexual harassment (1998) declared Kenyan schools dangerous places for girls (and boys) because no more security was guaranteed.

Republic of Kenya (2008) clearly stipulates that schools should have be safety on the grounds, in the school environment, against sexual violence, and in health and hygiene. These are important factors that if enhanced can promote girl safety in secondary schools, hence improve girl academic participation and achievement. Apart from general safety measures, there are some that are specific to girls. Herz, Subbarao, Habib, and Raney (1991) argue that girls have special needs for physical protection and tradition often demands special concern for girls' safety. Distance from school is one such a concern that contributes to girls' safety, especially those who are day scholars (Herz, 1991; Bhargava, 2006; Wainaina, 2009). All these authors proposed that schools be brought near to girls homes so as to ensure safety hence increase access. The reason, as given by Herz et al. (1991), is that the closer the school is to home, the less parents tend to worry about the girls safety since the girls are kept under closer watch. Wainaina (2009) concurs, and explains that building schools near homes and making them girl-friendly increases the feeling of safety in school girls. This agrees with World Bank (2005) which in addition contends that building secondary schools near homes reduces walking distances and brings about relief concerning girls' safety on the way to and from school. This factor is closely related to sexual harassment for the reason as exposed by Ruto (2009) in her study that considerable amount of sexual harassment occurs on the way from school.

Apart from distance to school, lack of safety is portrayed to be caused by school practices. Ruto (2009) argues that conducting very early morning tuition sessions or late evening preparations, highly predisposes girls to insecurity. This calls for measures to be taken to prevent such preps and let girls go home in good time.

2.2 Sexual Harassment

Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (2010) defines sexual harassment as any contact, gesture or act of sexual nature that is unwanted, or carried out without the consent of a person, which is imposed by physical force, threats, intimidation, or duress.

Ruto (2009) defines child sexual harassment as involving a child in sexual activity that she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared for, or that violates social taboos of society. This means that besides lack of consent, an activity which is sexual in nature is sexual harassment if the party does not understand it fully to give the consent, or is not mature for it.

Sexual harassment includes touching, verbal abuse, forced sex (rape), assault, and intimidation (Ruto, 2009). Kimani, Mugenda, Maina and Wainaina (2010), in a study done on challenges facing female learners at all levels of education in Kenya, stress that the most common forms of sexual harassment in Kenyan schools are verbal, touch of body parts, and irritating body language. Sexual harassment does not necessarily involve the opposite sexes, because as Fogarty (2012) argues, it may be female to male, male to female, female to female or even male to male. Lunenburg (2010) echoes that and adds that it is wrong and illegal. Further, the harasser can be a fellow student, teacher or any other person within the school (Lunenburg, 2010).

Studies done locally and internationally reveal that in all schools, sexual harassment is evident. Such studies include those of Prekel (n. d.), Rettner (2011), Ruto (2009), and Koskey (2011). As noted by Koskey (2011), sexual harassment is evident to both boys and girls but is more disadvantageous to girls. Further, Koskey (2011) holds that sexual harassment pose a great threat to girls' participation in education as it may discourage the victim from continuing with schooling and parents from sending girls to schools.

Although sexual offences act number 7 of 2007 of the law of Kenya and teachers code of regulation indicate clearly that sexual harassment is illegal and punishable in line with laws of Kenya, it continues to prevail in secondary schools as well as other levels of education (Ruto, 2009; Kimani et al., 2010). The study done by Kimani et al. (2010) involving first graders at university level reveals that of the 980 female students respondents involved, 30.5 per cent said that sexual harassment exist in secondary schools. 58 of the 980 translating to 5.8% of the respondents indicated that they were sexually harassed at secondary level by fellow students. A further 10% reported to have been harassed by male teachers, and only 1.1% by male workers. The same study maintains that only a few respondents from Kenyatta and University of Eastern Africa, Baraton reported to have been raped by teachers at secondary levels.

The study above has findings concurring with those by Ruto (2009) who used a sample size of 1279 respondents out of which 853 were girls. The study cut across primary and secondary schools in 10 districts of Kenya. This study found out that 512 of the 853 girls, making 60 percent of the girl respondents, had experienced sexual harassment, while boys gave a response of 55 per cent. Comparatively, although girls and boys are victims of sexual harassment, girls experience the harassment slightly more than boys.

Intimidation is defined by oxford learner's dictionary as the act of frightening or threatening somebody so that he or she can do what other person wants. In a study done by Abrahams, Mathew, and Ramela (2006), girls reported that boys used to take advantage of the girls during congestion to grab their breasts and buttocks so as to make girls release their valuables hence considering girls as an easy source of money and other valuables. This activity was so rampant that the researcher observed it when visiting some schools. Sometimes the intimidation results to sexual harassment because girls responded that such bullying was meant to communicate the boy's interest in the girl (Abrahams, Mathew, & Ramela, 2006).

As stated by Lunenburg (2010) and Abrahams, Mathew and Ramela (2006), the teacher misuses his power over the girl child. This implies that the teacher intimidates the girl then sexually harasses her. This is in line with definition of sexual harassment given by Fogarty (2012), as any act likely to or resulting in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats or acts that may lead to sexual activity.

The victims of peer sexual harassment and intimidation are mainly soft, quiet girls who cannot hit back (Abrahams, Mathew & Ramela, 2006). The reason is that girls, who have self-confidence, self-esteem and are aware of their rights, stand for them (Rani, 2010). Other common victims are girls who ask for it, and even make others who are not interested to be victims (Abrahams et al., 2006). In the same study, laboratory, computer rooms and staffrooms are mentioned to be places where teachers meet girls, while outings from the school is mentioned to be one of the most vulnerable time along with games time.

Causes of sexual harassment as outlined by Prekel (n. d.) and Lunenburg (2010) include;

- Discrimination against gender. When girls are less valued than boys, chances for misuse are high so that they become subjects of harassment.
- Unbecoming cultural beliefs. Sometimes these beliefs are expressed in proverbs which show less regard of girls. Such proverbs include "*real men pinch bottoms*", "*girls were born to hug*", and "*girls are vegetables*" (Ruto, 2009).
- Believe that women's greatest role is to please men.
- Girls' self-perception that they are lesser than men.
- Misuse of power and authority.

Ruto (2009) also suggests that distance from school, school practices (morning and night tuitions), poverty and boarding in mixed schools are causes/predisposing factors to sexual harassment. She further includes parents' ignorance of their duties, girls' conspiracy of silence, fear, shifting of blame and seductive dressing as more causes of sexual harassment.

There are many effects of sexual harassment. Rettner (2011) gives six health effects of sexual harassment as;

  i. Depression which is a feeling of self-doubt and eventually turns to self-blame.
 ii. Post-traumatic stress disorder which involves re-experiencing the trauma and avoiding people who might remind of the harassment.
iii. Blood pressure boosted by too much thinking about the harassment.
 iv. Sleep disturbances bringing about health problems.
  v. Suicide- sexual harassment leads to suicidal behavior.
 vi. Neck pain- sexually harassed people suffer from serious neck pains even in later days.

Ruto (2009) adds that sexual harassment results to psychological disturbances such as stress and painful emotions among others. The researcher further adds that it leads to disruption of normal psychological and physical development. Someone may also develop chronic self-perception of helplessness, hopelessness, and impaired trust along with anxiety and anger.

As maintained by Mabala (cited in Ruto, 2009) sexual harassment exposes girls to contracting HIV/AIDS since the main way of contracting the virus is through sexual intercourse.

Sexual harassment at school leads to dropping out of school which may be as a result of guilt or other effects (Prekel, n. d.). In a manner to explain this, Larkin (1994) contends that after sexual harassment at school, girls find the school unwelcoming. Usually they avoid the areas identified as sexual harassment zones and may end up dropping out of school. Ruto (2009) includes pregnancy and early motherhood as other results of sexual harassment either by peer or male teachers.

To avoid sexual harassment, some girls fight back because they are not as passive as they may be thought to be. According to Larkin (1994), some reduce, limit or completely avoid association with male students; others avoid participation in school activities such as sports in fear of being sexually harassed. Worse still, some girls report to avoid participation in class discussion and even drop or fail to enroll in subjects dominated by boys in fear of being sexually harassed (Larkin, 1994). This is harmful because it can greatly affect achievement in academic areas and lead to underperformance in sports and school subjects.

For the issue of sexual harassment to be adequately addressed, there should be involvement of the judiciary, parents, administrators and teachers (Kenya: Rape and sexual, 1998). The article further adds that programs to sensitize students should be introduced and girls allowed to form organizations to protect themselves. Larkin (1994) points out that the solution to sexual harassment involves implementation of sexual harassment policies which girls should be educated about. Further, Larkin (1994) advocates for use of separate places in education to allow girls to be alone.

This gives the girls a common world in which they share views, attractions and energies that are similar. Such places include all-girls schools, single-sex classes in mixed schools, young women clubs and designated rooms for female students in co-educational secondary schools (Larkin, 1994).

2.3 Sanitary Facilities

The commonest sanitary facility in rural areas is pit latrine while in urban areas the commonest is flush toilet (Tumwine, Thompson, Katua, Mujwahuzi, Johnstone, & Porras, 2003). When the sanitation facility is clean and brightly colored, girls feel comfortable and not threatened to contract any diseases, but when they are dirty, girls either avoid them or feel uncomfortable when using them (Tumwine et al., 2003).

Abrahams, Mathew and Ramela (2006) carried a study on sanitation, sexual coercion and girls' safety in school using a sample of 81 sixteen-year old girls in three schools among which only one had clean flush toilets. The study informs that girls prefer clean, bright colored toilets. In the schools where there are no water or toilet paper, menstruating girls reported to be absent, especially for the first two days of their menstruation, so as to avoid the toilets (Birch & Wachter, 2011). Further, the same study reveals that girls feel their privacy compromised when using toilets with broken doors, because they have to use them in company of friends. The study also considers location of toilets far from the main buildings scaring hence causing insecurity and can be used by intruders for selling drugs.

The main issues of school toilets are inadequate or poor hygiene, undermining toilets as a sanitary facility and faecal and blood pollution which is dangerous in this HIV/AIDS era (Abrahams et al., 2006). In Kenya, only 56 percent of schools in the country have access to adequate water and sanitation facilities, which have proved to be essential for attraction of female enrolment in secondary schools (Birch & Wachter, 2011). Birch and Wachter (2011) further contend that lack of sanitary facilities affect girls more than boys, adding that poor sanitation conditions hinder education of girls. Girls may drop out of school due to lack of safe and clean private sanitation facilities. Dawo and Simatwa (2010) maintain that the unique need for sanitary towels for use during their menstruation should be addressed by government's provision of the same, so as to improve participation of girls in education.

2.4 Household Chores

Engagement in household work as a reason for limiting participation in education is mentioned often for girls than boys (Muema & Mutegi, 2011).

In an attempt to explain this, Narayan (2005) holds that perception of gender roles in Africa makes girls to work on average two times as much as boys of the same age and this has a negative influence on girls' school participation. It is common for girls to take on a great deal of house hold chores such as care giving, cooking, cleaning, laundry, fetching water and gathering firewood (Muema & Mutegi, 2011). A research done by International Labor Organization maintains that although boys participate in household chores, they spend fewer hours on them than girls (ILO, 2009). The research further reveals that household chores increase with age and time spent increases from 14 to 28 hours per week from ages below 12 to teenage. Also, absenteeism in school for girls increases with increase in number of hours spent on domestic chores. This leads to the conclusion that household duties cause girls' school attendance to decrease faster than boys'. This can be explained on the basis that educational outcomes suffer when girls are overworked and the likelihood of dropping out of school is very high (Moyi, 2011).

The main reasons for overworking girls as stated by Moyi (2011) are; poor income that makes the mother to go for casual labor hence call for girls to do mothers' duties, assistance with household chores and parents suggestion for the girl to work. Some parents believe that girls should be trained as future wives and mothers by letting them perform household chores (Narayan, 2005). The girls also believe that they are future wives and accept to take femininity so as to be prepared as future wives and mothers.

3. Methods

The study adopted a descriptive-comparative and correlational research design. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) explain that descriptive data describes what exists in a given population at a particular time. The design involves asking questions to many people about a particular issue (Musungu & Nasongo, 2008). Descriptive research design was used to identify challenges faced by the girl child in mixed secondary schools in Mbooni West District. The design was correlational since predictions were made on effects of challenges that girls face in mixed secondary schools on their academic achievement.

A correlational research design identifies variables that relate to each other (Jackson, 2010). A comparative approach enabled to examine differences in challenges faced by girls who are day scholars against those who are boarders.

Desk research was incorporated which, according to Westwood (2005), involves collecting data from existing resources and ready-made reports. Cross-section survey was used where data was collected at a single point in time (Fink, 2006).

The population of this study was 3,183 girls in the 31 mixed schools in Mbooni West District. Form three girls were targeted as the most experienced class since the form fours were busy doing their KCSE examinations. From the population, a sample was obtained from mixed day and boarding schools. This is cluster sampling which involves selection of groups which already exist (Babbie, 2010).

Population subjects were grouped into strata and sample elements selected from each stratum. The researcher stratified the mixed day and boarding schools population according to the five educational zones; Tulimani and Kithungo zones, each with one mixed day and boarding school, Mbooni with three, Kitundu zone with two, and Kalawani zone with four. The sample constituted of all the form three girls in 10 of the 11 mixed day and boarding schools who are 374 in number. One school which harbored 58 form three girls was left out because the boarding section had girls only. 94 teachers were included in the sample. In total the sample size was made up of 468 respondents.

The main tool for data collection in this study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed from the research questions and the review of related literature and studies. Two questionnaires were used; for the girls and for the. Girls' questionnaire had six parts while teachers 'questionnaire had five, each addressing one variable. Closed-ended questions were used so as to limit variations in willingness and ability to respond to questions.

To test reliability, a pilot study was conducted in two mixed day and boarding secondary schools in Machakos District with similar environs as those in Mbooni West District. Developed instruments were served to 40 randomly selected identical subjects (form three girls), 11female teachers, 22 male teachers who were not included in the study. The questionnaires and content analysis guide were collected.

Data from the questionnaires were analyzed and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was computed.

The reliability coefficients obtained were 0.78 for sexual harassment, 0.551 for self-esteem but after deleting the eighth item, the reliability was 0.608, and 0.657 for all the school factors.

The National Council for Science and Technology issued the research permit to carry out the study. The researchers obtained permission from the D.E.O's office in Mbooni West District and made official arrangements with the school principals on the appropriate dates to conduct the research. On arrival the researchers reported to the principal's office for official permission to gather data in the school. Girls were gathered in a room to give their responses in presence of the researchers. The questionnaires were administered to girls who were advised to respond without consulting each other. To reach the teachers, the principal or deputy principal guided the researchers. Teachers responded to their questionnaires either in the staffroom or in their respective offices.

4. Results and Discussion

In this study, we tested if there was significant relationship between challenges faced by girls in mixed secondary schools and academic achievement. To test this hypothesis, a Spearman's rank order correlation was run to determine the relationship between mean scores of girls in 10 mixed secondary schools and the challenges they faced in these schools: girls' safety, sexual harassment, self-esteem, female teachers as role models, sanitary facilities, and household chores. Results were as shown in Table 1 below;

Table 1: Nonparametric Correlations

			Girls' Safety	Sexual Harassment	Self-Esteem	Female Teachers as Role Models	Sanitary Facilities	Household Chores
Spearman's rho	MEAN PERFORMANCE	Correlation Coefficient	-.134	.127	-.293	-.636[*]	-.358	-.316
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.712	.726	.412	.048	.310	.374
		N	10	10	10	10	10	10
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).								

From Table 1, it is clear that there is a moderate negative correlation between girls' performance and female teachers as role models, as indicated by the p-value of 0.048 and a correlation coefficient of -0.636. Since the p-value is less 0.05, the null hypothesis 'there is no significant relationship between female teachers as role models as a challenge facing girls in mixed secondary schools and academic performance' is rejected. This connotes that girls who perform poorly tend to look up to their female teachers as role models. Ndunda-Kiluva (2001) asserts that girls in mixed secondary schools are poor academic achievers. Due to this, the girls could be looking upon female teachers for help so as to perform better. Since this study revealed an underrepresentation of female teachers in the district, girls therefore lack adequate assistance, motivation and support for their academic excellence. The condition can be improved by increasing the number of female teachers in these schools. The findings are supported by observations made earlier in this study, where girls tended to agree that female teachers make learning easy for them.

To understand the influence of female teachers on girls' performance, there is need to understand the extent of interaction between girls and female teachers. Information in Table 2 below gives a picture of the situation in these schools

Table 2: Teacher- Student Ratio Based on Gender

School	Number of Students		Number of Teachers		Male teacher/ boy ratio	Female teacher/ girl ratio
	Boys	Girls	Males	Females		
A	222	159	11	7	1:21	1:23
B	105	120	6	3	1:18	1:40
C	188	202	11	5	1:17	1:41
D	388	212	15	5	1:26	1:43
E	266	193	8	5	1:33	1:39
F	184	142	12	3	1:15	1:48
G	323	167	16	4	1:20	1:42
H	141	164	8	4	1:18	1:41
I	198	114	6	4	1:33	1:29
J	221	119	10	7	1:23	1:29
Total	2236	1672	103	47	1:22	1:36

The total number of female teachers in the sampled schools constituted 31.33 per cent of all the teachers, showing an underrepresentation of female teachers in the mixed schools. If the female teachers are to reach girls individually, so as to encourage them and offer them appropriate levels of security and motivation, then the underrepresentation would affect academic achievement. From table 13, the ratio of female teachers to girls in the mixed schools was 1: 36, indicating that every one teacher should attend 36 girls. The boys stand advantaged since every one male teacher in the same schools is supposed to attend 14 boys less. This suggests that female teachers are not enough in mixed schools to promote girls academic achievement.

The findings above contradict those of Moor (2010) who found out that female teachers were more dominant than male teachers. However, Moor established that there was need to increase number of male teachers to promote the otherwise poor boy performance in such schools (Moor, 2010). It's therefore clear that as female teachers are role models to girls, so are male teachers to boys.

The findings in this study are in line with a good number of other studies previously done (Shadreck, 2012; Antecol, 2012, US Department of State, 2011; Amelink, 2012). A study done by Shadreck (2012) portrays the importance of increasing number of female teachers to be role models to girls, so as to improve achievement in education, by fading the impression that some subjects belong to a particular sex. On the other hand, US department of state (2011) and Amelink (2012) hold that female teachers help girls build confidence and validate girls' interests in subjects such as Mathematics, if the teachers have strong backgrounds in the subjects.

Since the values of girls safety, sexual harassment, self-esteem, sanitary facilities and household chores (0.712, 0.726, 0.412, 0.310, and 0.374 respectively) are greater than 0.05, the null hypotheses relating to these variables are accepted. Therefore there is no significant relationship between academic achievement and these variables. These challenges do not affect academic achievement of girls in mixed schools. No wonder girls tended to feel safe in school, tended to disagree that serious sexual harassment occurs, had relatively high self-esteem, were comfortable with lack of provision of sanitary towels and tended to appreciate performance of household chores.

Girls' academic achievement in mixed schools, as revealed in this study, gives a similar picture to that of girls countrywide as shown by Etlej (2011) in analysis of KCSE performance of year 2010. This suggests that, when thinking about cause of poor academic achievement of girls in mixed schools, other factors such as curriculum relevance and implementation, social economic factors, adolescence crisis should be considered. Poor academic achievement can result from other factors independent of the challenges mentioned in this study. These findings go along with those of Lindberg et al (2010) in which, it was revealed that, performance in school subjects varies as a function of many factors including ethnicity, age, quality of curriculum, school environment, home environment, and stereotyping.

The second null hypothesis tested if there was significant difference between perceptions of boarding girls and day scholars on the challenges girls face in mixed secondary schools.

Table 3: Comparison of Means of Perceptions of Day Scholars and Boarders on the Challenges Girls Face in Mixed Secondary Schools

	Day scholars		Boarders			
Statement	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	t-value	p-value
Girls' Safety	2.6281	0.47002	2.6411	0.47977	0.253	0.800
Sexual Harassment	1.8444	0.57067	1.7977	0.54751	0.768	0.443
Self esteem	3.1920	0.47226	3.1516	0.55293	0.743	0.458
Female Teacher Rol	3.3509	.59526	3.2496	0.64958	1.519	0.13
Sanitary Facilities	2.4917	0.55228	2.4328	0.56988	0.973	0.331

From Table 3 above, all the p-values of the perceived areas of challenge to girl education are greater than the set level of significance (α=0.05). This means that the perceptions of day scholars did not differ significantly with those of borders. The null hypothesis 'there is no significant difference in perceptions of boarding girls and day scholars on the challenges girls face in mixed secondary schools is accepted. Day scholars and borders held similar opinions to girls' safety, sexual harassment, self esteem, female teacher role models and sanitary facilities as challenges girls face in mixed secondary schools although day scholars scored higher. This only shows that day scholars are more affected by the challenges than borders..

5. Recommendations and Conclusions

This study suggests that there is a moderate negative correlation between girls' performance and female teachers as role models. This suggests that female teachers are not enough in mixed schools to promote girls academic achievement. Day scholars and borders held similar opinions to girls' safety, sexual harassment, self esteem, female teacher role models and sanitary facilities as challenges girls face in mixed secondary schools although day scholars scored higher.

Those who are concerned with staffing schools should consider having more female teachers in day schools so that the girls have people they can model with. The girls want someone they can identify with. In times of stress, they want to relate with someone they trust and have confidence in. Their academic advancement could be improved if they are provided with security, clean facilities, and sanitary services. The government of Kenya stipulates that schools should have be safety on the grounds, in the school environment, against sexual violence, and in health and hygiene. These are important factors that if enhanced can promote girl safety in secondary schools, hence improve girl academic participation and achievement.

Parents and community members should be educated on gender issues, and awareness created to them on legal measures taken to sexual harassers, so that they can pass the information to their children, in order to curb sexual harassment. They should also be educated on importance on girl education so as to support it. Education in mixed secondary schools should be supported and attitude towards coed schools be made more positive. Boys and girls in these schools should be trained to respect each other, and relate as social beings so as to make their schools admirable. More female teachers should be trained and posted to mixed schools, especially in mathematics and sciences, so that they can provide appropriate role modeling to girls. Young women's clubs should be established in mixed schools so as to create a meeting time for girls to share their common experiences and challenges in life.

References

Abrahams, N., Mathew, S., & Ramela, P. (2006). Intersections of 'sanitation, sexual coercion, and girls' safety in schools. Tropical Medicine and International Health, 11(5), 751-756.

Achoka, J. S. K. (2009). In search of remedy to secondary school dropout pandemic in Kenya: Role of the principal. Educational Research and Review, 2(7), 236-244.

Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development. (2010). Pursuing justice and gender based violence: Options for protecting and compensating survivors of sexual and gender based violence. Nairobi, Kenya

Ajowi, J. O. & Simatwa, E. M. W. (2010). The role of guidance and counseling in promoting student discipline in secondary schools in Kenya: A case study of Kisumu District. Educational Research and Review, 5 (5), 263-272.

Amelink, C. T. (2012). Female interests in mechanics. In B. Bogue & E. Candy (Eds.) Apply Research to Practice (ARP) Resources. Retrieved from

https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:nzryFpra6vYJ:www.engr.psu.edu/awe/ARP Abstracts/FemaleInterestMath/ARP_FemaleInterestMathematics_Overview.pdf

Antecol, H., Eren, O., & Ozbeklik, S. (2012). The effect of teacher gender on student achievement in primary schools: Evidence from a randomized experiment. IZA Discussion Paper Number 6453.

Babbie, E. R. (2010). The basics of social research (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Centage Learning.

Bank, B. J., Delamont, S., & Marshall, C. (2007). Gender issues in education research. In DEB. J. Bank, S. Delamont, and C. Marshall (Eds.), Gender and education: An encyclopedia (pp 101-130). Westport: Greenland.

Bhargava, V. K. (2006). Introduction to global issues. In V. K. Bhargava (Ed.), Global issues for global citizens: An introduction to key development challenges (P.94). WA: World Bank.

Birch, E. L., & Wachter, S. M (Eds.). (2011). Global organization: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Dank, B. M. & Rafinetti, R. (1998). Sexual harassment and sexual consent: Sexuality and culture. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Dawo, J. I. A. & Simatwa, E. M. W. (2010). Opportunities and challenges for mixed day secondary school head teachers in promoting girl child education in Kenya: A case study of Kisumu municipality. Educational Research and Review, 5 (2), 730-741.

Etelej. P. (2011). KCSE statistics. KNEC. Retreaved on 20th September 2012 from www.scribd.com/doc/49933701/KCSE-statistics

Fink, A. (2006). How to conduct surveys: A step-by-step guide (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Fogarty, K. (2012). Teens and sexual harassment: Making a difference. Retreaved from http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/FY/FY85000.pdf

Glennerster, R., Kremer, M., Mbiti, I., & Takaravasha, K. (2011). Access and quality in the Kenyan education system: A review of the progress, challenges, and potential solutions. Paper prepared for office of the prime minister of Kenya. Retrieved on 12th September 2012 from http://www.povertyactionlab.org/publication/access-and-quality-kenyan-education-system

Herz, B. K., Subbarao, K., Habib, M., & Raney, L. (1991). Letting girls learn: Promising approaches in primary and secondary education. World Bank discussion paper volume 133. WA, DC: World Bank.

Imenikhe, J., Aluede, O., & Idogho, P. (2010). A survey of teachers' and students' perception of sexual harassment in tertiary institutions in Edo state, Nigeria. Asian Social Science, 8 (1), 268-274.

International Labor Office. (2009). Gender equality at the heart of decent work: Sixth item on the agenda. Geneva: Author.

Jackson, S. L. (2010). Research methods: A modular approach (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Centage Learning.

Kasomo, D. (2009). The factors militating against the education of girls: A case study in Kenya. International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology, 1(7), 116-123.

Kenya rape and sexual harassment at colleges and schools. (1998). Women's International Network News 24(4), 43.

Kimani, E., Mugenda, O., Maina, L., & Wainaina, M. (2010). Challenges facing female learners in various levels of education in Kenya. Unizulu International Journal of Education, 2(1), 1-19.

Kipngeno, R. R., & Kyalo, W. B. (2009). Safety awareness and preparedness in secondary schools in Kenya: A case of Turkana District. Education Research and Review, 4(8), 379-384.

Kisilu, J., Kimani, E., & Kombo, D. (2012). Factors influencing aspirations among girls in secondary schools in Nairobi region-Kenya. Prime Research on Education (PRE), 2(4), 244-251.

Koskey, C. (2011). Challenges and prospects: The case of education in Kenya in the 21st Century. International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 1(6), 257-261.

Lange, N. (2012). Youth envisioning safe schools: a participatory video approach. South African Journal of Education, 32 (24), 499-514.

Larkin, J. (1994). Walking through walls: The sexual harassment of high school girls. Gender and Education, 6(3), 263-265.

Lee, V. E., Voninger, R. G., & Chen, X. (1996). The culture of sexual harassment in schools. American Educational Research Journal, 3(2), 383-417.

Lewis, M. A. & Lockheed, M.E. (2007). Getting all girls into school. A Quarterly Magazine of the IMF, 44(2), 3-5.

Lifting the lid on nation's school toilets. (2004). Oak Drive: Children's commissioner for Wales. Retrieved from
https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/uploads/publications/27.pdf

Lindsberg, S.M., Hyde, J. S., & Peterson, J. L. (2010). New trends in gender and mathematics performance: A meta-analysis. Psycho Bull, 136(6), 1123-1135.

Lunenburg, F. C. (2010). Sexual harassment: An abuse of power. International Journal of Management, Business, and Administration, 13 (1), 1-7.

Makewa, L. N., Role, E. M., & Amadi, M. (2013). Girl child drop out: Experiential teacher and student perceptions. International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 3(3), 124-131

Marwa, J. G. (2012). Issues on students' safety in secondary schools in Kuria District, Nyanza Province. (Unpublished Masters Thesis). Kenyatta University.

Mbooni West DEO's Office. (2012). Enrolment records for the years 2011 and 2013.

Meyer, E. J. (2008). Gendered harassment in secondary schools: Understanding teachers' (non) interventions. Gender and education, 20(6) 555-570

Moor, C. (2010). Is there need for more male teachers? The Playmouth Student Educator, 2(1), 28-39.

Moyi, P. (2011). Child labor and school attendance in Kenya. Education Research and Review, 6(1), 26-35.

Muema, T., & Mutegi, R. (2011). The impact of school feeding programmes on pupil retention in primary schools in Kenya. Norderstedt, Germany: GRIN Verlag

Mugenda, O. M., & Mugenda, A. G. (2003). Research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches. Nairobi: Acts Press.

Musungu, L. L., & Nasongo, J. W. (2008). The head teachers instructional role in academic achievement in secondary schools in Vihiga District. Kenya Educational Research Review, 3(10), 316-323.

Narayan, O. P. (2005). Harnessing child development: Children and the right to education. Delhi: Isha Books.

Ndunda-Kiluva, M. (2001). Women's agency and education policy: The experience of the women of Kilome, Kenya. NY: State University of New York Press.

Ngakane, M. V., Muthukrishna, N., & Ngcobo. J. E. (2012). Experiencing violence in schools: Voices of learners in Lesotho context. Anthropologist, 14 (1), 39-48.

Ngesu, L., Wachira, L., Mwelu, B., & Nyambisi, E. (2012). Critical determination of poor performance in KCSE among girls in Arid and Semi-arid (ASAL) regions in Kenya. Journal of African Studies in Educational Management and Leadership, 2 (1), 63-70.

Odhiambo, R. A. & Yambo, J. M. O. (2012).Role of principals in dealing with challenges affecting girl child in mixedday secondary schools in Rongo and Ndhiwa Districts, Kenya. International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development, 1 (4), 220-256.

Ohba, A. (2009). Does free secondary education enable the poor to gain access?: A study from rural Kenya. CREATE pathways to access research Monograph No.21. Brighton: University of Sussex.

Oigara, J. (2011). Effect of school environment on student achievement and self achievement: A case study in Kenya. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 1 (7), 84-88.

Omolo, D. O., & Simatwa, E. M. W. (2010). An Assessment of the implementation of safety policies in public secondary schools in Kenya. Educational Research, 1(11), 637-649.

Omwoga, L. M. (2010). Dropout rate among secondary school girls in Ekerenyo Division of Nyamira District, Kenya. (Unpublished Masters Thesis). Kenyatta University, Nairobi.

Peoples, J. G. & Bailey, G. A. (2011). An introduction to cultural anthropology (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Centage Learning.

Prekel, T. (n.d). Sexual harassment: Causes, consequences and cures. Retrieved from www.synnovation.co.za/Sexual Harassment CC&C Oct 04.doc

Rani, G. S. (2010). Women's education in India: An analysis. Asia-Pacific Journal of Social Science 11 (1), 106-124.

Rape and murder at a Kenyan Catholic boarding school in Meru. (1991). Women International Network News.17 (4), 37.

Republic of Kenya. (2008). Safety standards manual for schools in Kenya. Nairobi: Government Printers.

Republic of Kenya. (2012). Ministry of Education: Task force on re-alignment of Kenya 2010: Towards a globally complete quality education for sustainable development. Report of the task force. Nairobi: Government printers.

Rettner, R. (2011). 6 ways sexual harassment damages women's health. Retreaved from http://www.myhealthnewsdaily.com/1884-sexual-harassment-health-effects.html

Ruto, J. S. (2009). Sexual abuse of school age children: Evidence from Kenya. Journal of International Cooperation in Education, 12 (1), 177-192.

Selecting an independent school. (2006). The benefits of the coeducational environment. Retrieved from http://www.ridleycollege.com/ftpimages/180/download/download_group4184_id171639.pdf

Shadreck, M. (2012). Challenges of implementing the food and nutrition curriculum in secondary schools in Chiri District, Zimbambwe. Journal of Energing Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies (JETERAPS), 3(5), 779-884.

Sommer, M. (2011). An early window opportunity for promoting girls health: Policy implications of the girl puberty book project in Tanzania. International Electronic Journal of Health Education, 1 (14), 77-92.

Steinberge, M. P., Allensworth, E., & Johnson, B.W. (2011). Student and teacher safety in Chicago schools: the roles of community context and school social organization. Consortium on Chicago school research at the University of Chicago. University of Chicago Press.

Tumwine, J. K., Thompson, J., Katia-Katua, M., Mujwahuzi, M., Johnstone, M., & Porras I. (2003). Sanitation and hygiene in urban and rural households in East Africa. International Journal of Environmental Health Research, 13(2), 107-115.

UNESCO. (2009). EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008: Education for all by 2015: Will we make it? Paris: UNESCO and Oxford University Press.

UNESCO. (2011). EFA Global Monitoring Report: The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education. Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO. (2012). EFA Global Monitoring Report: Youth and skills: Putting education to work. Paris: UNESCO.

UIS. (2011). Global education digest: Comparing education statistics across the world. Montreal: UNESCO. Retrieved from http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/ged-2011-en.pdf

United Nations. (2010). The World's Women 2010: Trends and statistics. Retrieved from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/Worldswomen/WW_full%20report_color.pdf

US Department of state. (2011). Educating women and girls is key to meeting 21st Century demands. Educating Women and Girls, 15(12), 1-32.

Wainaina, M. (2009). Gender in Nascent Module 11 programmes in Kenyan public universities. Addis Ababa: Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA).

Wasonga, T. & Mwita, M.B. (2012). mitigating the impact of educational policies in rural Kenya. In C. Boske and S. Diem (eds), Global leaderships for social justice: Taking it from the field of Practice. Advances in Educational Administration Vol 14, pp 3-20. UK, Bingley: Emerald Press.

Westwood, J. (2005). Marketing plan workbook. London: Kogan Page.

World Bank. (2005). Global Monitoring Report 2005: Millennium Development Goals: From consensus to momentum. WA, D.C: Author.