

Impact of Gender and Socio-Economic Factors on Learning Achievements in Primary Education in Kenya: Empirical Evidence

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Abstract

Gender and socio-economic background of a pupil have a link to school opportunities and achievement. However, their effects vary across cultures and environments. This paper examines gender parity in primary schools in Kenya and factors that explain the differences in performance in mathematics and reading. The paper also presents an analysis of internal efficiency and gender equity in primary schools in Kenya and empirical evidence on what explains achievement in mathematics and reading scores. Gender differentials are manifested in schooling performance. Various gender-related and socio-economic variables affect pupils' performance in mathematics and reading differently. Overall, boys perform better than girls in both mathematics and reading. Teachers' competency in subject matter has positive impact on performance in reading and mathematics. Emerging policy implications include need to put more emphasis on the professional development of teachers in mathematics and reading; and enhancing reading skills for both teachers and students. Pedagogical interventions in Kenya's basic education should focus on improving performance of girls in both mathematics and reading. Provision of basic schooling sanitation facilities should also be increased. General reduction in poverty levels would lead to improvement in schooling performance.

Keywords: Gender, Socio-economic, Learning achievements, Primary education

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