

Influence Of Socio-Cultural Factors On Girls' Educational And Career Aspirations In Public Secondary Schools In Samburu County, Kenya

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Abstract

Under-representation of women in the education, formal employment and administrative positions is very conspicuous. The gender disparities are prominently exhibited among communities adhering to traditional cultural values, beliefs, customs, practices and harboring negative attitudes and perceptions among women and girls. These cultural attributes are likely to negatively influence the girls' career aspirations. This study therefore sought to determine the influence of social and cultural attributes on girls' educational and career aspirations in public secondary schools in Samburu County which is predominantly occupied by nomadic communities. Equal opportunities theory was adopted. A descriptive survey was employed. Data was collected from a sample of 132 girls using a questionnaire. Descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages were used to analyze and present the data. The following were the findings and conclusions: girls exhibited high educational and career aspirations; direct relationships existed between girls' higher educational and career aspirations and high socio-economic status, liberated attitudinal ideology, knowledge of role models, urban and rural-urban residence. Sex-role ideology, socio-economic status, role models, and residential location influenced the girls educational and career aspirations more than their religious affiliation. The following recommendations were made: researchers and educationists should investigate the subterranean factors that suppress girls' and career aspirations and recommend remedial measures to reduce or eradicate the negative influence of these factors; affirmative policies should be formulated aimed at creating a level playing ground for the disadvantaged groups of the society especially the girl child; and girls should emancipate themselves from the androcentrically biased socio-cultural web and challenge themselves by pursuing high status professional careers since given favorable educational and training opportunities and conditions, they can achieve equally better as their male counterparts.

Key Words: Socio-cultural factors, andocentric bias, male hegemony, role model, rural-urban fringe, socio-economic status, religion.

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