

Determinants of Girls Low Enrollment in Physics in Secondary Schools: Case of Kajiado North District, Kajiado County, Kenya.

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Abstract

Women and girls in Kenya constitute more than 50% of the country's population (KNBS, 2012). Their full participation in science and technology at the leadership levels is crucial for realization of Kenya Development Vision 2030. In view of this, girls low enrollment in physics nationally and in particular Kajiado county, is of great concern since many of them will be technically not eligible for many university and polytechnic science courses where physics is a requirement. The purpose of this study was to find out the determinants of girls low enrollment in physics in Kajiado North district. The study also examined implications of girls' absence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) to achievement of gender equality and equity in education and employment by 2015 being one of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The researcher sampled 12 public and private secondary schools which constitute 30% of all secondary schools in the district. Eight schools and four girls' only schools took part in the study. The target population was the head-teachers, physics' teachers, form three girls and career guidance counselors. The sample attracted twelve head-teachers, twelve physics teachers, twelve career counselors and two hundred and forty students. Purposive sampling was used to get head-teachers and physics teachers. Students were put into two strata (those who enrolled in physics and those who did not). From each group, ten students were picked using simple random technique. Data was collected by use of questionnaires, physical facilities checklist and lesson observation guide. Both descriptive and influential statistics were used to analyze the data, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 11.5). The study revealed that girls attitude towards physics is just positive. However, most schools lack a particular trained career master. Gender stereotype and peer pressure influenced many girls in science subjects selection. Physics' teachers' lack of support and concern to girls during practical lessons discouraged many girls to proceed with physics beyond form two. The study recommends that each school should have a fully pledged career department, managed by a trained career masters. Head-teachers need to take charge and demonstrate prudent leadership by supervising subjects' selection exercise as part of curriculum implementation.

Key Words: Girls Low Enrollment in Physics In Secondary Schools; Kajiado County; Kenya

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