



*Full Length Research Paper*

# Footprint of cultural influence on academic attainment of secondary schools girl students in Kisumu East

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## ABSTRACT

Traditions and customs affect children's education. It has been noted that the girl child is performing poorly in Kisumu East District when compared to the boy child in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examinations. For instance in 2008, in Nyanza Province, only 5 girls compared to 25 boys were ranked among the top 100 nationally. Among the 5 girls, there was only one girl from Kisumu East District. In 2009, only 6 girls compared to 26 boys were ranked among the top 100 position nationally from Nyanza Province; and there was no girl while there were 4 boys from Kisumu East District. To date girls lag behind boys in academic achievement in secondary education. Many factors are believed to be responsible for this trend. Cultural influences are believed to be among them. It is this dimension that prompted the study. The study established that cultural influences indeed influenced girl student's academic achievement. Weekend funeral based disco dances, prior to burial ceremonies were found to negatively affect girls academic achievement, particularly in day secondary schools. Domestic chores and practices by parents of marrying off daughters were other cultural influences that negatively affected the girl child's academic performance. Positive community attitudes enhanced girl students' academic achievement while domestic chores negatively impacted on girl students' academic achievement. The study concluded that cultural factors influenced academic achievement of girls in secondary schools in Kenya. The study recommended that the government should sensitize parents on the need and importance of supporting girl child education for better performance, parents should also be sensitized by the school on the importance of providing for the needs of the girl student. The findings of this study are significant to stakeholders in education on issues of gender equity in education and family socio cultural factors that influence academic achievement of the girl student in secondary education.

**Keywords:** Footprint, cultural influence, Girl Students' Achievement, Secondary Schools

## INTRODUCTION

Education is valued because it contributes to national development through provision of an appropriate human resource that helps to spur productivity and eliminate poverty, disease and ignorance (Republic of Kenya, 2005). Education of girls, in particular, contributes to the various aspects of their lives such as increased productivity, family health and nutrition, reduced fertility

rates and related child mortality rates (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2004). Parental influence has been identified as an important factor affecting girl student's academic achievement; parents' education and encouragement are strongly related to improved student achievement (Wang et al., 1996). Parental education and social economic status have an influence on student

**Table 1.** Students who attained Grade C+ (Plus) and above

Year	Entry	Number of Candidates	Percentage
2003	39,213	9,482	24.18
2004	43,506	11,410	26.22
2005	50,293	13,098	26.04
2006	41,117	10,19	24.8
2007	48,341	15,021	31,07
2008	54,756	13,526	24.7
2009	59,912	14,695	24.52

achievement. Students with parents who were both college – educated tended to achieve at the highest levels. Children whose parents are of high educational status have a better statistical chance of participating in secondary Education (Oloo, 2003). Important factors include parental involvement in their children education, how much Television children are allowed to watch and how often students change schools (Hammer, 2003). Post primary education for a girl has important individual benefits in terms of her options and resources over her lifetime. These benefits extend beyond the girl in affecting her family and the society as a whole, the benefits to society include enhanced economic development, education for the next generation, healthier young girls and families and fewer maternal deaths (UNICEF, 2004). The benefit of education for a girl and society can be explained by the effect that education has on empowering girls to acquire and use new personal, social and economic behavior that in turn, affect societal change (Moulton, 1997). Ayodo (2010) observes that the quest for the provision of quality education continues to be a matter of leading concern to both consumers and providers of the education service in Kenya and other developing countries. This is supported by the UNESCO (1992) report that reveals that concerns for quality education has dominated the education debate from the early eighties and has remained a central issue in the twenty first century. Therefore the girls should not be left out in the quest for this education. From the reviewed literature the influence of cultural factors was unknown, the gap in knowledge this study fought to fill.

Cultural factors in Nyanza Province believed to have a big influence on girl student academic achievement than boy students (Provincial Director of Education, 2009). Thus the girl child is subjected to domestic chores daily in case of day schools. As for boarding schools, the girl student is affected mostly during school holidays. Furthermore, the boy child is given preference where financial resources are scarce. Hence, the girl student does not attend school regularly as desired. The girl child is also affected more by incidents of HIV and AIDS pandemic as the girl student is compelled to take care of the sick siblings and parents as the case may be in serious cases of loss of income, they are forced to drop

out of school temporarily to look for food, clothing and at times shelter. When they are readmitted back to schools their performance in class work is generally below average. The Kenya Government Sessional paper number 1 of 2005 (Republic of Kenya, 2005a) calls for affirmative action to enhance women participation in education and other areas of employment; it was entrenched in the country through the affirmative action bill in 2007. It is also included in the constitution of Kenya (2010), chapter 8 article 100 (a) and 197(a). The current study investigated how applicable the affirmative action was to girl student academic achievement whose status indicates that academic excellence is the panacea for advancement. International reports, for example the Education For All Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2003a), indicate that at the national level, Kenya has virtually attained gender parity in enrolment at both the primary and secondary education levels. However, close scrutiny reveals that serious gender disparities in enrolment exist between regions in favor of males with regard to access, retention, completion, performance and transition. Nevertheless, the boy child is also affected in one way or the other. Thus, all this has led to low academic achievement in Nyanza Province as shown in Tables 1 and 2.

From Table 1 it can be revealed that performance in Nyanza Province was low as in 2003 only 9,482(24.38%) attained the mean grade of C+ and above, in 2009, 14,695 (24.52%) scored C+ and above.

From Table 2 it can be observed that girls who scored grade 'A' in 2003 were 2(4.5%) compared to boys who were 42(9.5%) whereas in 2009 girls who scored grade 'A' were 8(7.3%) compared to boys who were 102(92.7%). Kisumu East being in Nyanza Province is not exceptional and the girls perform poorly compared to the boys. Kisumu East District which houses Kisumu municipality is expected to perform better than neighbouring districts, yet analysis of 2008 and 2009 revealed that only one girl was ranked among the top 100 students nationally in 2008 and in 2009 the district did not have any girls among the top 100 nationally. According to the Republic of Kenya (2005b), the high expectations for better academic achievement in Kisumu East District were due to the fact that it has better infrastructure and

**Table 2.** Grade 'A' Distribution in Nyanza Province – 2003-2009

Year	Total KCSE 'A' in the Province	Boys	Girls
2003	44	42	2
2004	36	35	1
2005	65	63	2
2006	104	96	8
2007	122	116	6
2008	93	84	9
2009	110	102	8

**Table 3.** Kisumu County's Districts KCSE Results, 2009

DISTRICT	Gender		Total	KCSE GRADES													MEAN SCORES	
	Boys	Girls		A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	X		Y
Kisumu East	2073	1439	3512	1	50	102	175	299	398	527	620	610	447	240	28	11	0	5.234
Kisumu West	1043	595	1638	29	80	69	88	127	185	289	307	251	156	42	0	8	7	5.290
Nyando	2664	1330	3994	3	46	143	222	359	451	581	767	699	481	205	10	16	11	5.541
<b>County Total</b>	<b>5780</b>	<b>3364</b>	<b>9144</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>1034</b>	<b>1397</b>	<b>1694</b>	<b>1560</b>	<b>1084</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5.355</b>

generally affluent society with high level of literacy and availability of electricity. However it provides labour market for children particularly girls who serve as house girls, kiosk vendors to generate income for their parents. Since most secondary schools are mixed day schools the girl student is highly vulnerable to motor bike and bicycle operators, this in the end affects their performance in secondary school examinations. There was therefore a need to conduct a study to establish the influence cultural factors on girl student academic achievement. The study sought to establish the performance of Kisumu East vis a –vis neighbouring Districts as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that the mean score for Kisumu East was 5.234 which was lower than Nyando District's 5.541 and Kisumu West District's 5.290. Based on data in this background it was conceived that there was a need for a study to establish the influence of cultural factors on girl student academic achievement in Kisumu East District.

### Synthesis of Literature Review

Parents have different attitudes towards their sons and daughters. Daughters are brought up for female roles such as child rearing while sons have a whole working life to devote to career building. Parents believe that females do not have qualities of independence, initiative and assertiveness (Mampele, 1994). Siegel (1987) argues that parents react differently whenever things go wrong for boys and girls in school performance. With this in view, the current research sought to find out whether the difference in reaction by parents is because of parental attitudinal differences due to culture. Eshiwani

(1986) noted that girls had not been encouraged to enter those academic disciplines that were historically dominated by men since cultural influence is still strong in many parts of Kenya. Girl's education is seen as a mere waste of time since girls will leave home and go to another family. Accordingly, Ademola (1989) noted that among the Sisala tribe of Ghana, girls are given powerful skills of being housewives yet denied that part of education that will make them compete favourably in other sectors as opposed to their counter parts. In that way, girls shy off and hence develop some dependent attitudes. On the other hand, Kihumba (1997) noted that in Lesotho, girls who would otherwise remain at home to be well fed and learn duties of good housewifery are taken to schools rather than boys who go to look after cattle. This is a totally different trend compared to what happens in most cultures where girls are left behind to take care of the children as maids while boys are sent to school. This situation in Lesotho depicts a disparity in the provision of education on the boy child. Some tribes in Kenya believe that the boy child education should be developed since they are going to be heads of families. He rightly concludes that the gender of a child should not be a fundamental issue when dealing with the provision of education. From the foregoing, the present study investigated whether cultural factors contribute to the inequality in the provision of education to boys and girls.

The Gachathi report (1976) concluded that the education of women is much less developed than that of men due to traditional beliefs and prejudices held by people in society. There is need to ensure that career prospects for women and men are made similar through guidance and counseling, increasing girls' opportunities

and promoting compensatory enrolment for women at secondary and university levels. Karugu (1987) says that whether in school or not, girls of primary school age spend significantly more time on household chores than boys. Culturally prescribed roles for girls and women especially in the domestic sphere socialize girls to take the roles of deputy mothers. Owing to the cultural division of labour and allocation of duties between sexes, which in many societies start early, the opportunity cost of sending girls to primary school tends to be higher than that of boys. Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1985) noted that parents, particularly mothers favored boys' education because they depend on the sons for old age insurance. Investment in a son's education is seen as security in old age. They also rely on the daughters labour before marriage. Bernard (2002) observes that lack of positive policy environment and structure for girls' education, including a lack of co-ordination between the education sector and other social sectors, inhibits girls' achievement in education. Chapman (2004) concurs with Bernard (2002); he observes that the absence of policy to promote education for adolescent girls is a hidden obstacle to achieving in academics gender equality. For example, data collected on attendance, completion and achievement that are not desecrated by sex prohibits the formulation of policies for gender equality. Other policies act as specific barriers to girls' education. For example, policies limit the access and placement of girls in secondary schools (Wolf and Kainja, 1999).

African countries largely have a male preference attitude. The boy child is expected to be able to do wonders in the world of knowledge and technology whereas a woman's place is at home, keep up with the livelihood of the family (Mischi, 2002). Family development efforts, including schooling are invested on the boys because they are makers of clans while the girls are expected to be married to husbands who will speak for them. As a result few efforts and resources are spent on girls' education (World Bank, 2002). This may lead to low academic achievement among girls in examination. Ballara (1992) observes that households, fathers and men in general have a negative attitude towards women's education, especially when it results in the possibility of learning new skills that give women a new role in the family, and in the society. These in turn impede the schooling of girls and hence cause low academic achievement in national examinations. In most African countries many poor and large families preferred to educate boys for family continuity, headship of household and property inheritance since girls marry and go away from their homes (UNESCO-UNICEF, 1990). Further more, the inability to pay fees and purchase books, large equipment and clothes compel parents to invest in education of their sons, whom they see as a source of future family support in preference to their daughters whose economic contribution could as well be to a different household (UNESCO-UNICEF, 1990).

Chege and Sifuna (2006) noted that parents tend to discourage too much education for their daughters. There is always the fear that if a girl is highly educated she may find it difficult to get a husband or be a good wife. They argue that women stay away from too much education in order to remain manageable and to avoid entering fields, which would make it difficult to follow their husbands incase of transfer of residence.

Patriarchal societies are affected by patriarchal systems, which give preferences for investment in schooling to boys who are believed to retain responsibility for their parents when they grow older, compared to girls, who are incorporated into their husbands' families (Eshiwani, 1993). This is why boys were expected to receive maximum training in order to attain the higher status as heads of the families and as successful heads of their respective families. Boys were also expected to inherit their parents' property and hence maintain their family's status quo. Girls on the other hand, believed that their success and future depended on the success of their husbands and therefore it was used as an excuse for girls not to be taken to school (Maritim, 1990). Lack of vision and prospects for future life reduces girls' interest to participate, achieve and perform in education. Special efforts, therefore, need to be employed to cultivate girls' interest to education and provide an environment that will ensure their full participation and achievement in education. Several authorities have discussed at varying lengths the cultural constraints as they operate to limit education for girls. Maleche (1972) argues that the cultural inhibitions include male prejudice. This is the belief that education will make girls discontented and immoral, less willing to engage in the heavy labour. The general attitude shows that education is undesirable for the women because it interferes with her cultural authenticity and to the dismay of men. This attitude therefore does not encourage education for women, let alone aspirations for a better place in society. This in the end may affect the performance of the girls'.

Abdulahi (2005) reported cases affecting girls in Maasai land. He noted that fathers do not wish to pay fees for their daughters; instead they would rather have them married. This has forced several of them to run away from home to seek refuge elsewhere. Otunga (1994) argues that the more popular theory advanced for the high dropout rates among girls is that parents still see boys as fetching greater financial gain upon successful completion of school and that culturally they are entitled to family land as they remain in their birth homes. Additionally, boys are also given preference by parents when it comes to purchasing core textbooks. According to Campbell (2004), people still continue to value activities traditionally done by men more than they value those done by women. He further asserts that adults and children alike know that society is going to be more supportive of the girl who wants to be assertive and athletic or become a childcare work. "You act like a girl" is

still one of the premier insults that can be hurled at a “good student” who is too closely identified with girls. Many boys want to be good students.

Wangechi (1996) observed that since women stayed at home while men went hunting, women indulged in idle chatter than men. She argues that colonization of Kenya provided an opportunity for traditional roles and rights of women to be eroded. Gender had for a long time muted a category with a male dominated and patriarchal character right through the colonial era. Rubin (1974) asserts that “Boys will be boys, as a fact of human nature, and girls will grow up to become mothers”. Besides, he notes that for working class girls, the domestic curriculum was their only option. For most middle class girls, private education provided the academic opportunities for a few, but also created the social class solidarity and enabled them to get the “right” husband. Some middle class girls, however, had the opportunity of attending “uncompromising” secondary school education.

Konchora (2004) observes that gender violence has provided a grim picture of the rigid cultural practices that make the main concern of the pastoral communities. This is especially rampant within the family, where complete violation against women rights are not adhered to. Kanyuka (1990) noted that girls were enshrined as homemakers and this provided the rationale for post war girl’s education by the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The education of the girls included a lengthy chapter on domestic subjects, like needlework, cookery, laundry and housekeeping. This was due to the fact that, ones “knowledge” of such subjects is a necessary equipment for all girls as potential house makers. Two, domestic subjects had advantage of (offering) a practical approach to theoretical work; and finally, domestic subjects could be a qualification requirement “for girls likely to go on to domestic science colleges.” For girls, domestic subjects provide a centre of interest natural and congenial to them. This study differs from Abdullahi (2005), Bernard (2002), Chapman (2004) Ballara (1992) Chege (1983), Sifuna (2006) who observe that lack of positive policy environment, structure for girls education and patriarchal societies are affected by patriarchal systems, which gives preferences for investment in schooling to boys who are believed to retain responsibility for their parents when they grow older, compared to girls who are cooperated into their husbands families. Besides, Sifuna (2006), Eshiwani (1993) observed that cultural factors affect the academic achievement of girls’ student. These studies did not cover girl students and academic achievement vis a vis cultural factors in Kisumu East which is inhabited by mostly by Luo or Luhyas and have different cultural practices from the ones reviewed.

### Research Question

The research question that was addressed in this study was:

What is the influence of Cultural Factors on Girl Student Academic Achievement in Secondary School Education in Kisumu East District?

### METHODOLOGY

The research designs used were correlation and descriptive survey designs. The study population consisted of 1560 form four girls, 33 head teachers and 33 class teachers. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 300 form four girls. Saturated sampling technique was used to select 30 head teachers and 30 class teachers. Data collection instruments included questionnaire, interview schedule and document analysis guide. To ensure face and content validity of the research instruments, experts in educational administration were consulted and their input included in the final draft of the instruments. Pilot study was conducted in three (10%) schools and the weaknesses, inconsistencies and ambiguity noted were corrected to make them reliable. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics in form of percentages, means and frequency counts. Inferential statistics, Pearson’s Chi Square Statistics was used to establish the relationship cultural factors and academic achievement of girls. Qualitative data was analyzed for content and reported in emergent and sub themes.

### Theoretical Framework

This study was based on Pearson’s gender relations theory, this theory was developed by Pearson (1995). This is where the society views all activities that are carried out to be based on social roles and interactions of men and women. The society seems to have ultimate authority on the precise nature of what women and men actually do, and their real contribution to production and reproduction which turns out to be culturally biased against women. Pearson’s gender relations theory was appropriate for this study because it emphasizes the various social, cultural and economic norms and standards which must be considered for women to take the opportunities to participate in social activities such as education. These cultural and economic norms emphasized in the theory are the factors that affect Girl Students’ academic achievement in school. This theory is relevant for this study because it captures the variables. In the traditional set up the family is headed by a house head, a position held by the male parent. The patriarchal ideology is thus dominant. The roles assigned to women are narrowly defined. They are expected to be good wives and mothers, girls and women are seen as subordinates and education for them is less important. Studies on the situation of girl’s education shows that, disadvantage and discrimination starts even before birth

with parental and societal negative attitudes which stress the value of sons against daughters (Wamahiu, 1995; Heneveld, 1995). The benefits of education for girls can be explained by the effect that education has on girls' achievement. Educated girls acquire and use new personal, social and economic behaviours that in turn affect societal change (Moulton, 1997). As such gender becomes a crucial factor in deciding who goes to school and for how long (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985) before parents make the decision, considerations are taken concerning family priorities. In most cases, girls are more disadvantaged by cultural factors operating within the home and school than boys. They also include socio-cultural and economic considerations for example, parental level of education, occupation, family size, traditional division of labour, early marriages and negative perception by parents regarding girls education, and hence this hampers Girl Students' academic achievement. From the studies and the literature, various factors either independently or dependently influence pupils learning.

## RESULTS

### Research Question

The research questions responded to was: What is the influence of cultural factors on girl student academic achievement in secondary school education in Kisumu East District? The response was as in Table 4.

### Classification of cultural factors influence

4.1 -5.0 Very high influence      3.1 – 4.0 High influence  
 2.1 -3.0 Low influence              1.0 -2.0 Very low influence

Table 4 reveals that most value girl student education with mean rating of 3.359 and that most members are strict on girl student studies with mean rating of 3.33. The cultural factor that my community value girls who are educated more than those who are not educated influenced girl student academic achievement was rated at 3.35 by head teachers.

The study employed the key as listed below for the Table 5.

**X<sub>1</sub>**- My community value girls who are educated more than those who are not educated.

**X<sub>2</sub>** - Members of my community are strict on girls and want them to concentrate on studies.

**X<sub>3</sub>**- Girls do more domestic chores like fetching firewood, water grinding maize, taking care of siblings while boys are free to do studies and school work.

**X<sub>4</sub>** - My community wants their daughters to get married at an early age.

**X<sub>5</sub>** - My community do not care whether girls indulge in night dances or not.

The study sought to establish the influence of cultural

factors on girl student academic achievement. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient test was used to find out if there were significant relationships between cultural factors and girl student academic achievement in examination in secondary education. The results were as shown in Table 5.

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for cultural factor  $X_1$  on girl student academic achievement was .0664. This was a strong positive relationship and was statistically significant as the p – value of 0.001 was less than the set significance level of 0.05 for the analysis. This means that increase in value of the girls who are educated by the community the girl student performance increased. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for cultural factor  $X_2$  on girl student academic achievement was 0.831. This was a strong positive relationship and was statistically significant as the p –value of 0.000 was less than the set significance level of 0.05 for the analysis. This also implied that concentration on studies by girls under the influence of the community increased the girls academic achievement. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for cultural factor  $X_3$  on girl student academic achievement was -0.401. This was a moderate negative relationship and was statistically significant as the p – value of 0.001 was less than the set significance level of 0.05 for the analysis. This meant that domestic chores negatively impacted on girls academic achievement as it reduced the girls academic performance. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for cultural factor  $X_4$  on girl student academic achievement was -0.342. This was a weak negative relationship and was statistically significant as the p –value of 0.004 was less than the set significance level of 0.05 for the analysis. This implied that early marriages negatively impacted on girls academic achievement. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for cultural factor  $X_5$  on girl student academic achievement was -0.742. This was a strong negative relationship and was statistically significant as the p –value of 0.000 was less than the set significance level of 0.05 for the analysis. In this case indulgence in weekend in disco dances caused a reduction in girl student academic achievement. This indicates that some cultural factors enhanced academic achievement of the girls while others militate against girl academic achievement. Coefficient of Determination was computed to establish the actual contribution of cultural factors to girls academic achievement (Table 6)

From Table 6 it can be observed that cultural factors had minimal contributions to girl student academic achievement in secondary education. These factors accounted for 1.1% of variation in girls academic achievement as was signified by a coefficient of 0.011. This means that 98.9% of girls students academic performance was influenced by other factors other than cultural factors. These factors could be; teacher

**Table 4.** Influence of Cultural Factors on Girls' Academic Achievement (n=300)

Cultural Factors	Mean Rating
My community value girls who are educated more than those who are not educated	3.35
Members of my community are strict on girls and want them to concentrate on studies.	3.33
Girls domestic chores like fetching firewood, water grinding maize, taking care of siblings while boys are free to do studies and school work.	2.99
My community wants their daughters to get married at an early age.	2.48
My community do not care whether girls indulge in night dances or not.	2.51

**Table 5.** Results of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showing the Relationship between Cultural factors and Girl student Academic Achievement

		X <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	X <sub>3</sub>	X <sub>4</sub>	X <sub>5</sub>	KCSE score
1	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.					
	N	300					
2	Pearson Correlation	-.115(**)	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.				
	N	300	300				
3	Pearson Correlation	-.127(**)	.249(**)	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.000	.			
	N	300	300	300			
4	Pearson Correlation	-.144(**)	.276(**)	.397(**)	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.000	.000	.		
	N	299	299	299	299		
5	Pearson Correlation	.296(**)	-.246(**)	-.447(**)	-.479(**)	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	
	N	300	300	300	299	300	
KCSE score	Pearson Correlation	.664**	-.831**	-.401**	-.342**	-.742**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.001	.004	.000	.
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300

\*\*Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2 –tailed)

\*Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (2 –tailed)

**Table 6.** Coefficient of Determination

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.103 <sup>a</sup>	.011	-.006	15.92978

a. Predictors: (Constant), Members of my community are strict on girls and want them to concentrate on studies., Girls do more domestic chores like fetching firewood, water, grinding maize, taking care of siblings while boys are free to do studies and school work., My community value girls who are educated more than those who are not educated, My community wants their daughters to get married at an early age., My community does not care whether girls indulge in night dances or not.

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**Table 7.** Analysis of Variance

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	800.340	5	160.068	.631	.676 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	74351.038	293	253.758		
Total	75151.378	298			

a. Dependent Variable: Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination score  
 Predictors: (Constant), Members of my community are strict on girls and want them to concentrate on studies., Girls do more domestic chores like fetching firewood, water, grinding maize, taking care of siblings while boys are free to do studies and school work., My community value girls who are educated more than those who are not educated, My community wants their daughters to get married at an early age., My community does not care whether girls indulge in night dances or not.

**Table 8.** Regression Analysis

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	36.165	5.637		6.416	.000
My community value girls who are educated more than those who are not educated	.141	.681	-.013	-.207	.836
Domestic chores like fetching firewood, water, grinding maize, taking care of siblings while boys are free to do studies and school work.	-.467	.632	-.046	-.740	.460
My community wants their daughters to get married at an early age.	-.345	.832	.028	.414	.679
My community does not care whether girls indulge in night dances or not.	-1.087	.752	.100	1.445	.149
Members of my community are strict on girls and want them to concentrate on studies.	.230	.863	.019	.267	.790

a. Dependent Variable: Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination score

qualifications, experience, age, commitment, gender and other factors such as school ethos, girls attitude towards academics, entry behavior among others.

Analysis of variance was computed to establish whether cultural factors were statistically significant in determining the girls students academic performance (Table 7)

From Table 7, it can be observed that cultural factors were not statistically significant predictors of girl student academic achievement as signified by a coefficient of 0.676 which is greater than the set significant level of 0.05. Further, regression analysis was performed and the results were as shown in Table 8

Table 8 indicates that community value for girls education contributed positively to girls academic achievement by .141 as was signified by the coefficient of .141. The relationship was not significant. This means that communities value for girls who are educated cannot be used as a predictor of girls academic achievement. Domestic chores contributed negatively to girls academic achievement by .467 as was signified by the coefficient of -.467. The relationship was not significant. This means that domestic chores cannot be used as a predictor of girls academic achievement. Early marriages contributed

negatively to girls academic achievement by .345 as was signified by the coefficient of -.345. The relationship was not significant. This means that early marriages cannot be used as a predictor of girls academic achievement. Indulgence in night weekend disco dances contributed negatively to girls academic achievement by 1.087 as was signified by the coefficient of -1.087. The relationship was not significant. This means that indulgence in night weekend disco dances cannot be used as a predictor of girls academic achievement. Strictness of members of the community on girls to concentrate on their studies contributed positively to girls academic achievement by .230 as was signified by the coefficient of .230. The relationship was not significant. This means that strictness by members of the community on girls to concentrate on their studies cannot be used as a predictor of girls academic achievement.

**DISCUSSION**

It was however revealed that domestic chores do hinder girl student academic performance especially in day schools. Some communities did not care whether girls



indulge in night dances or not. The cultural factors that my community value girls who are educated more than those who are not educated influenced girl student academic achievement was because the community tried to empower the girl child by motivating them through mass media, they provide physical facilities like laboratories, libraries, boarding facilities and classrooms through Constituency Development Fund, so that the girl student feel secure and concentrate on studies. Taking into consideration that municipality schools are mostly day schools, girl students have more household chores to attend to before and after school thus a setback to their academic achievement. At home girl students are involved in duties such as fetching firewood, cleaning the house, cleaning dishes and taking care of the younger siblings. Girls often become victims of circumstances when they fall pregnant. Eshiwani (1986) observes that 10% of female drop-out is due to pregnancy. The findings from the study revealed great interference from cultural values on the girl student academic performance which concurred with UNESCO (1992), in their studies that there was a general trend across all countries which reported on the matter that girl student performance weakens relatively to the performance of boys at some point in the school cycle for example in Botswana performance by female starts to decline at the age of ten years. However, in Madagascar and Rwanda girls performance weakens at the age of thirteen years and nine years respectively. The hypothesis which stated that there is no relationship between cultural factors and girl student academic achievement was rejected as the results showed that there is a positive relationship. This means that the positive attitude of the community on education enhances girl student academic achievement. The community's concerns on girls and wanting them to concentrate on studies enhanced girl student academic achievement. The domestic chores impacted negatively on girl student academic achievement. Early marriages impacted negatively on the girl student academic achievement. the community's permissiveness impacted negatively on girl student academic achievement.

The findings concur with those of Egbuna (2006) who noted that traditionally, a woman's role was basically to be a good mother and wife and her primary responsibility was the nurturing task of training and bringing up children. Girls were seen as inferior in their homes since they would later be married to other households, where their husbands would be expected to speak for them even if they did not perform well in school. Parents believed that once married, girls became part of another family and their parents' investment on them, in the forms of education was lost. The study established a great influence of cultural factors on the girl student academic performance which is in agreement with Eshiwani (1993) that the environment in which the individual student lives influence her/his aspirations, self-esteem and motivation. Eventually the environment can either enhance or hinder

a girl student learning and educational attainment. According to all (100%) head teachers, there are those girl student that are asked by their parents to quit school and help them with household chores, and there are those that go to school but due to the large number of idle young men preying on them and lack of guidance by parents and teachers, end up being pregnant and consequently drop out of school. This finding concurs with various studies conducted by other researchers; Oloo, (2003), indicate that involvement in domestic chores by the girls was found to be affecting their academic achievement negatively. Forum for African Women Educationist (2000) noted that cultural division of labour where girls are expected to participate more in farm work, marketing, domestic chores or care givers to siblings make them the least choice to be sent to school and the first to be withdrawn when need arises. This finally affects academic achievement of girl student. Forum for African Women Educationist (2000) further noted that women in developing countries spend large amounts of time performing household chores and girls share this work with their mothers. This coupled with other factors, work against good performance of girls in secondary education.

Parents have different attitudes towards their sons and daughters. Daughters are brought up for female roles such as child rearing. Furthermore, parents believe that females do not have qualities of independence, initiative and assertiveness. In some rural settings, parents fear that schooling will make their daughters disoriented from the cultural set up to become immoral.

According to head teachers, cultural impediments do provide them with less exposure to the information that allows individuals to develop self-efficacy hence it make girls loose morale for school since girls would traditionally depend on men. This finding can be supported by Kasente (1996) who noted that girl student's workload in their homes clearly has a detrimental influence on their academic performance, since their duties are a daily affairs. This study concurs with Abagi and Ayayo 1976) who notes that girls are normally overburdened with family and household chores thus do not enjoy plenty of time to study and freedom to choose what to engage in. This finally leads to poor academic performance in examinations. The success of girl student secondary education will depend on the role of the secondary principals' by involving all stakeholders and emphasizing on the importance of girls' retention. To achieve this, the principal has a role to invite guest speakers and women role models during annual general meetings to educate the parents and make them aware of their responsibility in providing the necessary resources that will enable the girls' to complete basic education, (Republic of Kenya, 2005a). According to head teachers factors associated with the instructional process such as textbooks, teacher quality, teaching methods, school organizations, teachers' correction of pupils' books, school library

activity, class room organization and frequency of homework determined the level of participation. This assertion is supported by Eshiwani (1993) who noted that the presence of quality school facilities and services are some of the symbols of high educational quality. It is the role of the principal to put in place rules and regulations that will ensure that girls remain in school at all times unless they are participating in educational activities outside the school. She understands the curriculum establishment and plays a key role to increase retention by organizing, planning and coordinating school activities with the girl at the center (Ochieng', 1997).

According to head teachers, most girl students could do better than they were scoring if the facilities could be adequate for learning. Inadequacy of facilities forces girls to either share or improvise and this venture is never liked by girl students who finally give up and relax for nature to take its course. This finding can also be supported by Odaga and Heveneld (1995) when he noted that the availability of physical and instructional facilities has significant influence on girl student performance. The facilities include classrooms, workshops, dormitories, computers, school vehicles, text books, laboratories and lighting among others. In his study of quality of schools in Kisumu Municipality, Odaga further noted that physical facilities attract and motivate students to work hard and complete their education. He further observed that those schools with better facilities do better in examinations. Wanjiku (1994) also noted that the quality and adequacy of these resources have direct influence on the girl student education. One Head teacher noted during interviews that; textbooks in Kenya do depict girls and women with sexist bias that does not only lead girls into traditional roles, but also contribute to their negative attitude to learning and withdrawal from school. This finding is consistent with Obura's (1991) observation that in reference to mathematics texts, it is noted that they depicted a picture of active male engaging in active work and business in a wider range of fields, earning cash, buying land houses, farm, vehicles, food, and clothing, borrowing and taking loan to develop his financial capacity, savings and investing substantial profits. Women in contrast are mainly absent from these activities, but when they do appear in textbook, they are engaged in domestic or poultry activities (Obura, 1991).

According to one head teacher during interview said; the personality and attitude of the subject teacher far exceeds the methods and materials in teaching and some teachers in either mixed schools or girls schools regarded girls as academically inferior as they described girls as stupid and lazy, articulating lower expectations. This finding is also supported by Kasente (1996) in a study of Uganda post-secondary institutions, who asserted that the way teachers criticized the student responses and other gender-based teacher-pupil relationships could lead to negative and limited perceptions of female academic ability and potential. The

findings can further be supported by various documented records that the majority of students admitted to pre-service training programmes did not choose education at all, but took teaching as the only available option (Republic of Kenya, 2005a). Consequently, they joined teaching as a last resort and were somewhat not stable and effective enough to promote girl-child participation. The head teachers equally noted that an unmotivated teacher is inappropriate personnel to promote girl-child participation since they might perpetuate gender stereotypes on role, occupation and behavior in the process of curriculum instruction. In addition to that, it is important to note that less experienced teachers are less likely to use textbooks, which motivate learning among students, than more experienced ones (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In Kenya, most parents believe that girls do not have qualities of self confidence, independence, initiative, innovativeness, creativity and assertiveness. Hence, they discourage them from full participation in education which inhibits them from high academic achievement. In fact, the media and books used in school curriculum depict them mere females whose roles are child rearing while sons are depicted as career builders.

Men have a negative attitude towards women's education, especially in what is considered as education that leads to prestigious careers such as engineering, architecture, teaching, medicine, law, statistics and actuarial science that would give women a superior role in society. These in turn impedes the schooling of girls and hence cause low academic achievement in National Examination.

Cultural factors in almost all circumstances depict girls as inferior to boys, a factor that demeans girls and indeed impedes girls' aspirations in life. They even fail to consider education as the best investment in good life free from poverty, slavery, ignorance and diseases. The consequence of which is laxity and negative attitude towards education. This lowers girls' morale and eventually low academic achievement.

All these factors encourage girls to develop a negative attitude towards schooling and ultimately result in low academic achievement. Where the girls have been liberated from the cultural bondage through religion, they have in fact excelled in National examinations. This implies that indeed negative cultural impede girls' academic achievement.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Head teachers should create girl friendly environment conducive to their academic work in schools.

Head teachers should put in place rules and regulations that should protect the girls from harassment by hostile teachers and fellow student.

School administrators should improve on teaching learning facilities in their schools to enhance academic achievement of students in general.

Head teachers should cater for individual needs of girls by improving on the infrastructure in accordance with the Ministry of Education and the Department of Public Works rules and regulations. For instance having pit latrines in the opposite direction and provision of running water.

Parents should provide basic needs for girls such as sanitary towels without which they cannot compete with boys effectively in academics.

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