

SOCIO-CULTURAL PRACTICES AND LEARNERS' ENROLMENT RATES IN HOME SCIENCE EDUCATION: CASE OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN POKOT CENTRAL SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

Mukire Nasimiyu Josephine

Postgraduate student Department of Centre for Teacher Education, University of Eldoret

Dr. Robert Aming'a

Senior Lecturer Department of Centre for Teacher Education University of Eldoret

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ABSTRACT

Home Science education is an interdisciplinary field of study which applies science and arts towards achieving better, healthier and happy homes. This study sought to establish the extent to which socio-cultural practices affect learners' enrolment rates in home science education using a case of public secondary schools in Pokot Central Sub-County. Specifically, the study assessed the extent to which gender roles affect learners' enrolment rates in Home Science education in public secondary schools of Pokot Central Sub-County. The researcher utilized socio-cultural theories which suggest that social norms and interactions of people living in a given area affect those peoples' individual behavior and choices. The study adopted descriptive survey design which was used to answer the research questions. The target population for this study comprised of 5079 respondents consisting of 24 public secondary schools, 1 Sub-County Director of Education, 72 local leaders and 4,982 secondary school learners. Stratified, simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used in the selection of the respondents. The researcher used questionnaires to collect data from teachers and learners, focused group discussions for local administrators and document analysis for enrolment rates in 24 secondary schools. The researcher used interview schedule for Pokot Central Sub- Director of Education. The collected data was analysed using SPSS computer program version 22 and presented as frequency. The study revealed that gender roles are a major contributor to low enrolment rates in home science in public secondary schools in Pokot Central. The researcher recommended that concerted efforts by local leaders, Ministry of Education, parents and other stakeholders of education should make efforts to stamp out retrogressive socio-cultural practices to boost enrolments in not only home science but also other subjects in schools. The results of this study should be beneficial to education policy formulators, managers and planners in coming up with policies and management strategies that can boost enrolment rates in Home Science.

Key Words: Socio-Cultural Practices, Enrolment Rates, Home Science Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Increasing the educational level of girls and boys in home science education (HSE) has had an encouraging influence on economic growth of developed and developing countries since 2003 (UNESCO, 2004). In African countries, girls seem to be doing better at key competency tests and participate better in HSE than boys especially in secondary schools (UNESCO 2013). Plan international (2012) reported that, 33% of the children in Senegal and 30% of the respondent children in Mali identified lack of HSE as a key factor in early pregnancy- a determinant of high

drop out in schools. In Tanzania, child bearing for adolescence is very high in Mtwara as statistics show that 35.5% of adolescence are affected (Tanzania National Bureau of statistics 2014). Home Science as an applied and integrated subject aims at improving the quality of life for an individual, a family and the community through application of the skill, knowledge and attitudes in everyday life (Sempele, 2019). Despite its relevancy as a learning area that handles more efficiently adolescent personal life, family and community resources as well as interpersonal relationships, there has been continued low enrolments in this learning area.

In the last five years there has been a decrease in the learners' enrolment in Home Science subject in secondary schools of Pokot Central Sub County public secondary schools. The number of learners enrolled for all the subjects and the number of girls and boys who enrolled for Home Science KCSE examination in the last five years were as follows; out of 1246 total number of candidates, only 11 girls and 0 boys in 2016 enrolled for home science. Out of 1329 candidates only, 17 girls and 0 boys in 2017 registered for the subject. 23 girls and 0 boys chose the subject in 2018. Out of 1457 candidates only 12 girls 0 boys enrolled in 2019. And out of 1485 candidates 9 girls and 0 boys took the subject in 2020 as compared to the overall KCSE national figure of approximately 15,000 students who did Home Science in the year 2020 (Sub County Director of Education Pokot Central, 2020). The purpose of this study was to establish the extent to which gender roles had affected learners' enrolment rate in Home Science in Secondary schools of in Pokot Central Sub-County, Kenya.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study was based on social constructivism, social cognitive and social learning theories. The theories suggest that social norms or beliefs and social interactions of people living in a given area affect those peoples individual behavior. Social norms are unwritten expectations regarding appropriate behaviors within particular social groups (Cislaghi & Heilse, 2014). Socio-cultural practices have some of these rules that affect a child's behavior in the achievement of educational outcomes. Social norms define the roles that girls and boys have in a family and the community expectations about their future individual preferences and the kind of relationships they form (King and Windrop, 2015).

Gender role refers to the socially given attributes, chores, activities, responsibilities and needs connected to being men and women in a given time as a member of a specific community within that society. Plan international (2012) argues that entrenched assumptions about girl's roles as care givers, mothers, brides and household workers influence perceptions of the value of girls education as well as their life and career choices that are available for them. Mohammed, Mberia & Muturi (2017) in a study on the influence of socio cultural practices on girl child participation in secondary schools in Garowe, Punt Land (nd) observed that traditional sex role stereotypes and expectations by the parents and community disadvantage girls because they are forced to perform most domestic chores than boys having them exhausted with no time for doing their studies and homework. These girls often feel culturally out of place as they do not want to compete with boys particularly in mixed gender schools. Similarly, Juma and Enosi (2014) revealed that these roles hinder girl student academic performance especially in day schools where the learners are asked by their parents to drop out of school and help them with household chores.

Ndunge, (2013) argues that the concept of gender parity is theoretical because genders biases are still being seen in some communities hence deny certain roles and effective participation of male and female in the existing opportunities. Moreover, gender sensitization has not challenged the attitudes of male supremacy, for example in Kenya primary school curriculum, all subjects are compulsory for all pupils but immediately after primary a few subjects are made optional to choose and preferences immediately become apparent.

According to Maina et al (2018) observed that enrolment in Home Science Education in secondary schools is largely composed of girls with a few boys since the implementation of the 8.4.4 system of education. Moreover, Oruonye (2012) in a study on the challenges of the girl child education to the attainment of education of millennium developmental goals argues that educational bias against girls and low earning power of adult women form a vicious circle perpetuating discrimination against girls and women in households and societies. Further observed that the socio-cultural set up in most parts of Taraba states in Nigeria encourage education for males in favor of the females who are expected to perform various domestic chores at home like cooking, fetching water and child care.

Achoka, Nafula & Oyoo (2013) established that the stereotypic gender role dispositions tended to favor male children against girls. This agrees with the argument that male supremacy is advocated in many cultures in terms of inheritance of homestead, property and control of family resources (Ndunge, 2013). Moreover, Sifuna (2005) observed that many girls are not ambitious or interested in school because of societal and parental expectations that their primary roles are to be wives and mothers. They are socialized to believe that formal education is not required to fulfill these roles. The gender division of labor is a reflection of the overall community's expectations of gender roles and this societal perception leads to overburdening girls with domestic chores leaving them with little time to study (Saya, et al 2017). However, Juma, et al (2014) in a study on cultural factors affecting academic achievement in Kisumu East, Kenya reported that parents believed that the success and failure of girls depend on their husbands.

Sempele C., Natode J. and Otunga R., (2018) opine that the society perceives Home Science as a subject for girls and women only and that it does not require one to go to school to study it (Serem, 2010). In a study on perceptions students on Home Science education for degree programmes, some student respondents strongly agreed that Home Science is more related to cooking and is more suitable for female than male students (Jitumoni et al 2016). According to Ministry of Education (2009), gender stereotyping in preferences for courses by boys and girls is likely to be overcome if it can be shown that available career chances have the potency to benefit both genders and in the case of girls, deliberate steps are taken to show examples of females who have succeeded in careers traditionally considered as a preserve for male. However Ndunge, (2013) argues that boys and girls should base their career choices on their needs, preferences and aptitudes. Moreover Aminga et al 2018 observed that more male students should be encouraged to join Home Science teaching profession especially in Diploma Teacher Training colleges and at the universities as it will encourage more male students to choose the subjects and some of the negative attitude would change.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted descriptive survey design which was used to answer the research questions. The target population for this study comprised of 5079 respondents consisting of 24 public secondary schools, 1 Sub-County Director of Education, 72 local leaders and 4,982 secondary school learners. Stratified, simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used in the selection of the respondents. The researcher used questionnaires to collect data from teachers and learners, focus group discussions for local administrators and document analysis for enrolment rates in 24 secondary schools. The researcher used interview schedule for Pokot Central Sub- Director of Education. The collected data was analysed using SPSS computer program version 22 and presented as percentages, counts and bar graphs as recommended by Cohen L. & Manion L.(1989).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study sought to determine the extent to which gender roles have affected learners’ enrolment rate in Home Science in Secondary schools of in Pokot Central Sub-County. The indicators of gender roles were division of labor and time spent on domestic chores. In order to find out how these indicators affect the students’ enrolment rate in Home Science as a subject of study, the researcher sought from students their opinions on how the indicators swayed their choice of the subject using a Four Point Likert Scale indicated as:- SA (Strongly Agree), A (agree), DA (Disagree). SD (Strongly Disagree). Table 6 below has the responses as they were recorded.

Table 1: Boys opinions on gender roles and enrolment in Home science education

Gender Attributes	Frequency of Responses for Male students								
	SA	Rate	A	Rate	D	Rate	SD	Rate	Total
Home Science as a subject only enables girls to know their roles and responsibilities in their daily lives.	28	17.1%	31	19.0%	65	39.6%	40	24.4%	164
Home Science subject is all about cooking, cleaning and child care	68	41.5%	65	39.6%	21	12.8%	10	6.1%	164
Stereo typed roles in our community have affected enrolment in Home Science education in schools	81	49.4%	50	30.5%	15	9.1%	18	11.0%	164
Home Science is a science applied in the homes hence relevant for girls only	53	32.3%	50	30.5%	26	15.9%	35	21.3%	164
To improve enrolments in Home Science education, the subject should be taught as an elective subject in all boys schools	50	30.5%	50	30.5%	30	18.3%	34	20.7%	164
Home Science is a subject for girls and women as homes managers	55	33.5%	55	33.5%	32	19.5%	22	13.4%	164

Home Science is a subject for girls who are assigned more house hold chores than boys at home	50	30.5%	61	37.2%	36	22%	17	10.4%	164
Home Science is not a suitable subject because as a male I do tasks outside our home	57	34.8%	63	38.4%	22	13.4%	22	13.4%	164
Parents and teachers assign us roles based on our gender	70	42.7%	31	18.9%	30	18.3%	33	20.1%	164
Boys should not enroll for home science as they don't spend a lot of time on house chores	112	68.3%	23	14.0%	11	6.7%	18	11.0%	164

Source: Field Data, 2022

The analysis in above table 6 above shows that more than half that is; thirty six percent of the boys either strongly agreed or just agreed that they have not enrolled in studying Home Science as a subject because the subject only enables girls to know their roles and responsibilities in their daily lives. Sixty four percent did not agree with this suggestion meaning that the boy's choice of Home Science as a subject in schools is highly influenced by their roles and responsibilities in their daily lives. Similarly, 133 (81.1%) boys were in general agreement that they did not enroll in studying Home Science because the subject content essentially discusses cooking, cleaning and child care. A paltry 31(18.9%) declined to agree with this suggestion. This implied that there are misconceptions about Home Science. Boys perceive Home Science as a subject that is all about cooking, cleaning and child care yet there is more that is taught in the subject than what they think about it. This indicates that most boys do not choose Home Science because they have wrong perceptions about what is taught in Home Science in schools.

On whether stereo typed roles in the society affect enrolment in Home Science education in schools, majority 131(79.7%) boys consented to this statement while 33(20.3%) did not agree. Another majority 103(62.8%) were in agreement that they did not enroll in studying Home Science as subject because it was a science applied in the homes hence relevant to girls only. Sixty one percent of the learners also agreed that to improve enrolment in Home Science education, the subject should be taught as an elective subject in all boys schools. However Chelagat, Kitainge &Were, (2019) argue that any negative attitude towards a subject may lead a student to have no interest in it and when such a subject is made optional many students would then avoid such a subject totally. A similar 100 (61%) also agreed that they had not enrolled in studying Home Science as subject because it was a subject for girls and women as homes managers. A majority which is sixty seven percent said they had not enrolled in studying Home Science because it was a subject for girls who are assigned more house hold chores than boys at home. This agrees with the findings in a research study on factors militating inclusion of Home Science in boys schools that indicated that a good number of male students did not like the idea of studying Home Science at all (Maina et, 2018).

In general, 120 (73.2%) male learners agreed that they had not enrolled in studying Home Science as a subject because as males they do tasks outside their homes.44 (26.8%) declined to agree. This

data agrees with Maina et al (2018) who observed that enrolment in Home Science education in secondary schools is largely composed of girls with a few boys since the implementation of the 8.4.4 systems of education with 44 (26.8%) declining. 110(67.1%) either strongly agreed or just agreed that they had not enrolled for Home Science because their parents and teachers assign them roles based on their gender roles. This agree with Ndunge, (2013) who argued that the concept of gender parity is not theoretical because gender biases are still being seen in some communities hence deny certain roles and effective participation of male and female in the existing opportunities. Only 54(32.9%) failed to agree. 135 (82.3%) boys agreed that only girls should enroll for Home Science as they spend a lot of time on house chores. 29 (17.7%) boys did not agree with this construct. From the analysis, it is evident that male students generally agreed that gender role affect the enrolment rates of student in Home Science Education in Public Secondary Schools of Pokot Central sub-County.

In order to establish the extent to which gender roles affect learners’ enrolment rates in Home Science in Secondary schools of Pokot Central Sub-County, the researcher computed and presented the boys views using SPSS Version 22 and the results presented in bar graph as shown in figure 2.

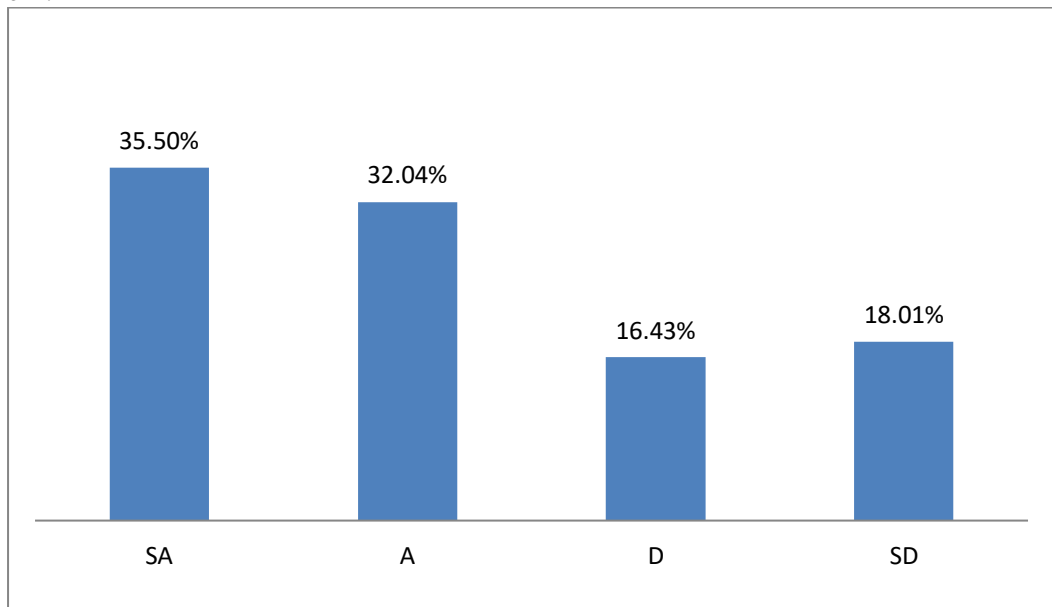


Fig. 2.Boys’ Opinions on effect of Gender Roles on enrolment rates in Home Science

The analysis shows that boys generally agreed that Gender Roles influence enrolment rate in Home Science by 67.54%

Table 2: Girls Opinions on Gender Roles and Enrolment in Home Science Education

Gender Attributes	Frequency of Responses for female students								
	SA	Rate	A	Rate	D	Rate	SD	Rate	Total
Home Science as a subject enables me to know my roles and responsibilities in my daily lives.	50	26.9%	50	26.9%	30	16.1%	56	30.1%	186
Home Science as a subject is about cooking, cleaning and child care	79	42.5%	63	33.9%	22	11.8%	22	11.8%	186
Gender roles in our community have influenced me to enroll for Home Science education in my school	77	41.4%	55	29.6%	32	17.2%	22	11.8%	186
Home Science subject is a science applied in the home hence relevant for me	70	37.6%	55	29.6%	30	16.1%	31	16.7%	186
It is important that Home Science as a subject be taught as an elective subject in all girls schools	50	26.9%	61	37.8%	36	19.4%	39	21.0%	186
Home Science as a subject is a subject for girls and women as managers of homes	50	26.9%	50	26.9%	30	16.1%	34	18.3%	186
Home Science is a subject for girls who are assigned more house hold chores at home	63	33.9%	79	42.5%	22	11.8%	22	11.8%	186
Home Science as subject because mainly puts emphasis on tasks in homes	72	38.7%	60	29.6%	32	17.3%	22	11.8%	186
My parents and teachers assign me roles basing on my gender	55	29.6%	55	29.6%	32	17.3%	44	23.7%	186
All girls should enroll for Home Science as they spend a lot of time on house chores	50	26.9%	61	32.7%	36	19.4%	39	21.0%	186

Source: Field Data, 2022

From analysis in table 7 above, 100 (53.8%) girls said Home Science as a subject enabled them to know their roles and responsibilities in their daily lives. 86 (26.6%) of them did not agree with this statement. About 142 (73.4%) girls reported that Home Science subject is about cooking, cleaning and child care. These are the major tasks girl should know though 44 (26.6%) declined. Sempele,

(2018) observed that background knowledge in a subject is believed to improve the learner's interest and mastery of the content being taught.

Another 132 (71.0%) girls thought that gender roles in West Pokot community have affected learners' enrolment rates in Home Science education in West Pokot public secondary schools. However, a few 54 (29.0%) did not agree. Similarly, 125 (67.2%) female learners observed that Home Science subject talks about a science applied in the home hence relevant for girls in secondary education. This agree with Jitumoni & Nithyeshree (2016) in a study on attitude of students towards Home Science, the researchers observed that majority of respondents; 47% agreed that Home Science is interesting and useful because whatever they learn from Home Science is applied in their daily life situation. However, 61 (32.8%) did not consent.

The analysis also shows that majority 111(59.7%) of the girls suggested that it was important if Home Science as a subject was taught as an elective subject in all schools. Only 75 (40.3%) dissented. Another majority100 (53.8%) said that Home Science is a subject for girls and women as managers of homes but 86 (46.2%) were of the contrary opinion. Over 142(76.3%) reported that Home Science as a subject is for girls who are assigned more household chores than boys. Only 100 (53.8%) declined to support this construct. Table 7 also indicates that 132 (71.0%) girls accepted that Home Science put emphasis on tasks in homes. This is suitable for girls who should enroll for Home Science as they spend a lot of time on house chores. Some 34 (29.0%) girls did not agree. On whether parents and teachers assign girls roles based on their gender, 111(59.7%) agreed that this basis had a bearing on their choice of the subject. In general, girls opined that gender roles have a major influence on their choice of Home Science in their schools. This phenomenon has affected enrolment rates in Home Science education in public secondary schools in West Pokot County.

The researcher also computed and presented the girls views using SPSS Version 22 and the results presented in bar graph as shown in figure 3.

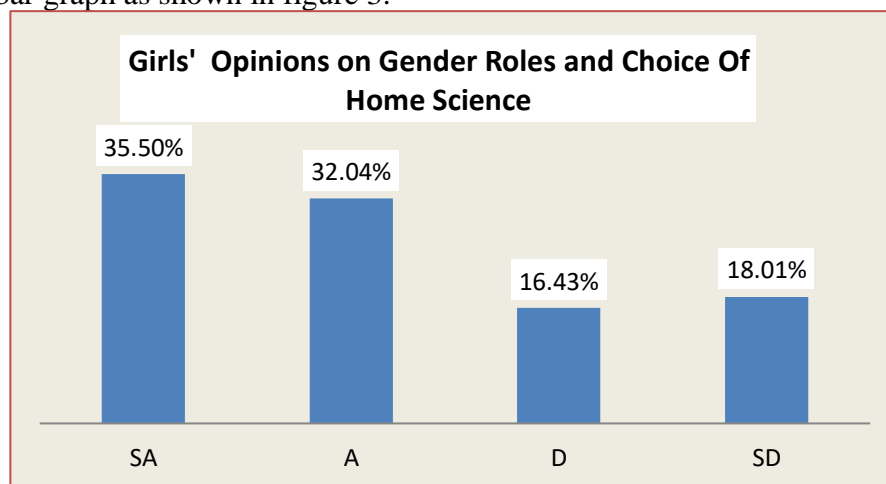


Figure 2: Girls' Opinions on Gender Roles and their Choice of Home Science

The analysis shows that Girls generally agreed that Gender Roles influence their choice of Home Science education by 67.54%.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study revealed that gender roles is a major contributors to low enrolment rates in home science in public secondary schools in Pokot Central. The study recommended that concerted efforts by local leaders, Ministry of Education, parents and other stakeholders of education should make efforts to stamp out retrogressive socio-cultural practices to boost enrolments in not only home science but also other subjects in schools. The results of this study can be beneficial to education policy formulators, managers and planners in coming up with policies and management strategies that can boost enrolment rates in Home Science education. 0

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