

# **Influence of Headteachers' Motivation Practices on Girls' Access to Public Primary Education in Garissa Sub-county, Garissa County, Kenya**

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## **Abstract**

*Introduction of Free Primary Education has increased demand for primary education. However, the number of girls' accessing primary education is still below expectations with the ratio of boys to girls being 5:2 in Garissa Sub-County. The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of headteachers' motivation practices on girls' access to primary education in Garissa Sub-County, Garissa County, Kenya. The study was guided by the Management Practices and Pearson's Gender Relations Theories. The study adopted mixed methodology and descriptive research design. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically along the objectives and presented in narrative forms. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation and inferentially using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23) and presented using tables. The study established that headteachers' motivation practices influence girls' access to public primary education. Thus, the study recommends that headteachers need to change their approaches of motivating girls to enroll in schools. School supervision by the headteacher and the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards should be enhanced for monitoring to give proper guidance to the headteachers on the need to implement child rights education in their schools.*

**Keywords:** Headteachers' motivation practices, girls' access to public primary education

## **Introduction**

Motivation and interest arouse a girl's curiosity to learn, respond and attend to subject matter. According to Brista (2015), girl's ability to learn is affected by both extrinsic motivation, that is, their involvement with a subject or activity in order to receive reward or avoid punishment and intrinsic motivation, that is, involvement because it is personally satisfying and unrelated to the external reward or punishment they might receive. This points to the fact that management practices most schools adopt play critical roles in enhancing girl's access to primary education. To lend credence to these assertions, Unterhalter and Dutt (2011), in a study conducted in India, posit that the vast amount of research, which has been done on the relationship between these two types of motivation and learning, indicates that intrinsic motivation is of particular significance to sustained girl learning. Unterhalter and Dutt (2011) further posit that intrinsic motivation is enhanced when headteachers' management practices promote a girl's sense of personal

autonomy, when they feel supported and safe, when their school work is challenging but also relevant to their lives and when it builds on their experiences.

Unterhalter and Dutt (2011) believe that a girl's experience in the classroom such as interactions with the curriculum, teachers and peers, has a strong effect on her involvement and learning in a subject. Consistent with these assertions, Stacki and Pigozzi (2015), in a study carried out in 17 Grade III schools in South Asia, noted that, in some schools, the interest, motivation and achievement of boys is enhanced as a practice, while females experience discouragement due to factors related to curriculum, instruction and assessment. Stacki and Pigozzi (2015) cite a commonly noted bias as the portrayal of men as "active" in the generation and application of knowledge, while females are portrayed as "passive" and occupying subordinate positions. Examples of local scientific practice and indigenous knowledge production in which females are directly involved are even more likely to be absent. Girls' dissatisfaction with the way in which teaching is presented in the classroom has a negative impact on their interest in the subject.

In most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, studies have shown such connections are of interest to both boys and girls, with girls particularly drawn to topics that involve helping others (Stacki & Pigozzi, 2015). Yet despite efforts in some countries to address these biases, they persist.

This lack of motivation has made girls to shy away from schools which has, in turn, impacted on their enrolment in schools.

In a study conducted in Nigeria, Igbuzor (2011) revealed in schools where management offers different forms of motivation to girls, their number tends to increase as more get enrolled. However, Igbuzor (2011) underscore the fact that, in many schools, teachers tend to give boys more education feedback than girls, call on boys more often, give them longer time to answer, and more frequently ask them higher order questions than they do girls. Praise, encouragement and feedback are more often directed to boys (Igbuzor, 2011). In Kenya and Garissa Sub-County in particular, motivation strategies teachers adopt play an influential role in schools and act as a primary source of gendered messages received by girls (Sifuna, 2016). The majority of time at school is spent with teachers, who are responsible for curricular and organization decisions and hold a position of authority relative to their girls. Teaching has also traditionally been done in a more competitive and teacher centered manner, which has tended to dampen girls' interest in going to schools.

A study conducted in Garissa Sub-County by UNICEF (2014) echoes similar views. The study reveals that girls are given less time than boys for a task in science classrooms and boys are generally given more opportunities to ask and answer questions, to use equipment and learning materials, and to lead groups. That is, interactions with girls tend toward social, non-academic topics, and girls are less frequently called on to help with demonstrations or experiments. However, UNICEF (2014) and other empirical studies have fallen short of specifying each form of motivation practices and approaches adopted enhance girls' access to public primary schools. UNICEF (2014) has not indicated how different motivation practices adopted by primary school headteachers enable girls to be actively engaged in going to school and undertake academic activities, boost their self-confidence given that very little is done to enhance their motivation to enroll and pursue education; thus, the study.

## **Statement of the problem**

Girls' access to primary education has been low. Statistics has shown that girls' access to primary education in Garissa Sub-County is lower than that of boys with ratio of boys to girls being 5:2 in public primary schools (UNICEF, 2014). Ministry of Education (2015) on the other hand found out that although Free Primary Education (FPE) introduced in 2003 arguably raised the gender enrolment rate to from 68.2% in 2002 to 88.2% (63.0% for boys and 37% for girls), the regional disparities are evident in enrolment and performance in KCPE. Coupled with effective headteachers' management practices, such initiatives should enhance girls' access to primary education. However, MoE (2015) noted that, despite the effort being put by various stakeholders, the realization of girls' access to public primary education has been impeded by a number of factors. Despite these observations, few empirical studies have interrogated the extent to which headteachers' motivation practices influence girls' access to primary education, hence the need for this study.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The study was guided by Management Practices Theory which as postulated by Kuo (2009). This theory addresses how managers and supervisors relate to their organizations in the knowledge of its goals, the implementation of effective means to get the goals accomplished and how to motivate employees to perform to the highest standard. The rationale of using management practices theory in this study is that to enhance girls' access to primary education, school managers ought to appreciate the important role they play in their respective organizations if they are to achieve improved enrolment of girls. The school managers need to adopt practices geared towards increasing enrolment of girls into such schools and to promote excellence among all learners in such schools. This study was also based on Pearson's gender relations theory which was postulated by Pearson (1995). One of the premises of this theory is that society views all activities that are carried out to be based on social roles and interactions of men and women. In the same token, the relevance of Pearson's gender relations theory in this study is that it underscores the fact that school practices and norms, just like in any other society, affect girl's enrolment and participation in school activities.

## **Delimitations of the Study**

This study was conducted in public primary schools in Garissa Sub-County only. The study focused on the influence of headteachers' motivation practices on girls' access to primary education. The study adopted mixed methodology and thus, applied descriptive research design. Questionnaires were applied to gather quantitative data from teachers whereas interview guide was applied to collect qualitative data from headteachers.

## Research Methodology

The study adopted mixed methodology and descriptive research design. The target population comprised of 28 headteachers and 302 teachers all totaling to 330 respondents from which 180 respondents were determined using Yamane’s Formula. Stratified sampling was used to create three strata based on the number of zones in Garissa Sub-County. From each zone, four headteachers and 56 teachers were selected using simple random sampling to avoid bias. The procedures adopted enabled the researcher to sample 12 headteachers and 168 teachers. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically along the objectives and presented in narrative forms.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation and inferentially using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23) and presented using tables.

## Results and Discussions

The study sought to:

- i. Assess the influence of headteachers’ motivation practices on girls’ access to public primary education in Garissa Sub-county, Garissa County, Kenya.

## Response Rate

In this study, 168 questionnaires were administered to teachers out of which 160 questionnaires were filled and returned. At the same time, the researcher also interviewed ten headteachers. This yielded response rates shown in Table 1;

**Table 1: Response Rates**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Sampled Respondents</b>	<b>Those Who Participated</b>	<b>Achieved Return Rate (%)</b>
Headteachers	12	10	83.3
Teachers	168	160	95.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>94.4</b>

Table 1 shows that headteachers and teachers registered a response rate of 94.4%. This confirmed the findings of Creswell (2014) that a response rate above 75.0% is adequate and of suitable levels to allow for generalization of the outcomes to the target population.

## Motivation Practices and Girls’ Access to Primary Education

This study sought to assess the extent to which headteachers’ motivation practices influence girls’ access to primary education. The findings are presented in Table 2;

**Table 2: Influence of Headteachers’ Motivation Practices on Girls’ Access to Primary Education**

Test Items	Ratings						
	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
	%	%	%	%	%		
Recognition of their efforts enable headteachers to attract girls to primary schools	75.0	11.5	4.5	7.5	1.5	4.531	0.368
Use of social rewards such as recognition of girls’ efforts has enabled headteachers to enrol many of them to primary schools	65.0	10.5	3.0	11.5	10.0	3.927	0.319
In many primary schools, headteachers use praise and rewards to entice girls to enrol into schools	75.0	10.5	2.5	9.0	3.5	4.531	0.368
Use of praise and rewards has enabled headteachers to enrol many girls in primary schools	88.5	2.5	1.5	4.5	3.0	5.347	0.434
Headteachers often acknowledge girls’ efforts as a way of attracting them to primary schools	65.5	11.5	4.0	13.0	6.0	3.957	0.321

Table 2 shows that 120(75.0%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that recognition of girls’ efforts enable headteachers to attract them to primary schools as did 19(11.5%) who agreed. Only a paltry 8(4.5%) were undecided, 12(7.5%) of the teachers disagreed whereas 1(1.5%) strongly disagreed. The study also found out that 104(65.0%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that use of social rewards such as recognition of girls’ efforts has enabled headteachers to enrol many of them to primary schools. 17(10.5%) agreed. 5(3.0%) were undecided, 19(11.5%) disagreed whereas 16(10.0%) strongly disagreed. These findings corroborate the assertions of Brista (2015) that motivation and interest arouse a girl’s curiosity to learn, respond and attend to subject matter. Brista (2015) further indicated that girlchild’s ability to learn is affected by both extrinsic motivation, that is, their involvement with a subject or activity in order to receive reward or avoid punishment and intrinsic motivation, that is, involvement because it is personally satisfying and unrelated to the external reward or punishment they might receive. This points to the fact that recognition and motivation practices most schools adopted by schools play critical roles in enhancing girlchild’s access in schools and the level at which they drop out.

The study also revealed that three-quarters, 120(75.0%) strongly agreed with the view that, in many primary schools, headteachers use praise and rewards to entice girls to enrol into schools. 17(10.5%) agreed. 4(2.5%) were undecided, 15(9.0%) disagreed whereas 6(3.5%) strongly disagreed. 142(88.5%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that use of praise and rewards has enabled headteachers to enrol many girls in primary schools. 4(2.5%) agreed. 1(1.5%) were undecided, 8(4.5%) disagreed whereas

5(3.0%) teachers strongly disagreed. These findings lend credence to the findings of a study conducted in Nigeria in which Igbuzor (2011) asserted that praise, encouragement and feedback are important in enhancing access of both boys and girls into schools. Hence, these findings point to the fact that motivation strategies such as praise and recognition teachers adopt play an influential role in schools and act as a primary source of gendered messages received by girls.

Majority 105(65.5%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that headteachers often acknowledge girls’ efforts as a way of attracting them to primary schools. 19(11.5%) agreed. 7(4.0%) were undecided, 21(13.0%) disagreed whereas 10(6.0%) strongly disagreed. These findings are consistent with the assertions of Unterhalter and Dutt (2011) who posit that intrinsic motivation is enhanced when school management practices acknowledge and promote a girl’s sense of personal autonomy, when they feel supported and safe, when their school work is challenging but also relevant to their lives and when it builds on their experiences. These findings indicate that schools which acknowledge and believe that a girl’s experience in the classroom such as interactions with the curriculum, teachers and peers, has a strong effect on her involvement and learning in a subject.

Table 2 shows that the mean ranged between,  $\bar{x} = 3.5$  and 5.5, whereas the standard deviation ranged between,  $\sigma = 0.3$  and 0.45. This further affirms the fact that it is agreeable that all forms of motivation practices adopted by headteachers cumulatively contribute to girls’ access to primary education with little variations (standard deviation < 1). To verify the relationship between headteachers’ motivation practices and girls’ access to primary education, data were collected on how often headteachers motivate girls and the number of girls in the sampled primary schools. The results are shown in Table 3:

**Table 3: Results of How Often Headteachers Motivate Girls and the Number of Girls Enrolled in Public Primary Schools**

<b>How Often Headteachers Motivate Girls</b>	<b>Number of Girls Enrolled in Public Primary Schools</b>
1	124
1	134
1	177
2	178
2	234
2	239
3	245
3	267
4	341
4	359

Table 3 shows that different motivation practices adopted by school management enhance girls’ access to primary education. In primary schools, where headteachers frequently motivate girls, their number is high compared to those schools where levels of motivation are very low and rarely undertaken. These findings further affirm the fact that recognition and motivation practices most schools adopted by schools play

critical roles in enhancing girlchild’s access in schools and the level at which they drop out. These results were subjected to Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Analysis and the results are shown in Table 4:

**Table 4: Relationship between Motivation Practices and the Number of Girls Enrolled in Public Primary Schools**

		Motivation Practices	Number of Girls Enrolled in Primary Schools
Motivation Practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.952*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	5	10
Number of Girls Enrolled in Public Primary Schools	Pearson Correlation	.952*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	10	10

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows that there is a strong positive correlation between headteachers’ motivation practices and the number of girls enrolled in public primary schools ( $r(10) = 0.952, p = 0.001$  at  $\alpha = 0.05$ ). These results are consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Sifuna (2016) which generated a p-value of  $0.027 < 0.05$ .

These findings thus attest to the fact that each form of motivation practices and approaches adopted by school management influence access of girls in public primary school and thus enable girls to be actively engaged in going to school and undertake academic activities, boost their self-confidence given that very little is done to enhance their motivation to enroll and pursue education. Headteachers were also interviewed to evaluate how headteachers’ motivation practices influence girls’ access to primary education. The interviewees also responded in favor of the view that recognizing girls’ efforts influence their number enrolled in schools and also determine the number of girls who might drop out after access. These views thus point to the fact that recognition and motivation practices most schools adopted by schools play critical roles in enhancing girls’ access to primary education. On further probing, headteacher, H1, noted:

*“In my primary school, we have adopted several approaches to motivating girls to come to school. These include materials rewards such as sanitary towels and money for best performing girls” (Male, BEd).*

These views further lend credence to the views expressed in Nigeria by Igbuzor (2011) indicated that praise, encouragement and feedback are important in enhancing access of girls into schools. Given these views, motivation strategies such as praise and recognition teachers adopt play an influential role in schools and act as a primary source of gendered messages received by girls. The headteachers also noted that acknowledging girls’ efforts influence their number enrolled in schools and those who are likely to drop out of school. Like in quantitative findings, these views thus, affirm the fact that schools which acknowledge and believe that a girl’s experience in the classroom such as interactions with the curriculum,

teachers and peers, has a strong effect on her involvement and learning in a subject. In addition, any form of motivation practices and approaches adopted by school management influence access of girls in public primary school and thus enable girls to be actively engaged in going to school and undertake academic activities, boost their self-confidence given that very little is done to enhance their motivation to enroll and pursue education.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

From the study findings, it is evident that there are different practices adopted by headteachers which influence girls' access to primary education. These include; motivation, involvement of female teachers, counselling and girls' protection practices. From the study findings, most girls are not very often recognized for good efforts, not praised and rewarded for good work in school nor are they get acknowledged upon good performance. This points to the fact that schools where management offers different forms of motivation to girls, their number tends to increase as more get enrolled. Recognizing girls' efforts, praising and rewarding girls and acknowledging girls' efforts influence their number enrolled in schools influence their enrollment in schools and rates at which they drop out.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study recommends that headteachers need to change their approaches of motivating girls to enroll in schools. School supervision by the headteacher and the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards should be enhanced for monitoring to give proper guidance to the teachers on the need to implement child rights education in their schools.

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