

Relationship between Economic Factors and Gender Disparity in Enrolment of Students in Public Mixed Day Secondary Schools in Kericho County, Kenya.

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ABSTRACT:

This study attempted to examine the relationship between economic factors and gender disparity in enrolment of students in mixed public day secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya. Social Demand Theory guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study targeted 124 public mixed day secondary schools. The target population consisted of 124 principals and 9,418 students. Sampling techniques applied included purposive and systematic random sampling techniques. A sample size of the principals was determined by applying Kerlinger (1986) 30% rule, whereas for the students Cochran formula was used. The sample size consisted of 38 principals and 384 students. Data for the study was collected by the use of questionnaires. The study revealed that there exists a statistically significant relationship between Economic Factors and Gender Disparity ($r=0.768$; $p<0.05$). From the findings, in connection with economic factors, it was established that child labour had the highest mean of 3.21 and therefore was the major factor related to gender disparity in enrollment. This was followed by parents' reluctance to pay fees due to the false notion of free education with a mean of 3.10. The study concluded that the government, through quality assurance and standards officers alongside local administration, should ensure that policies on child labour are well implemented. That child labour is not practised so that all school age going children irrespective of their gender attend school uninterrupted.

Key Terms: economic factors, gender disparity, enrolment, mixed public day secondary schools

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Introduction

Many countries of the world and particularly the developing countries are still struggling to attain gender parity in education, especially secondary education (Global Monitoring Report, 2015). Gender inequalities in primary school enrolment have declined in recent decades in low-income countries leading some observers to assume that educational disparities in educational attainment are now limited to secondary and higher education (Psaki, et al.,

2018). According to levels of attainment by 2013, only 14 per cent of children in low-income countries complete secondary school. Currently, enrolment of students in Kericho County raises a lot of concern since, apart from the fact that full enrolment has not been achieved, gender disparity is also an issue. As shown in Table 1, during the last 6 years, the enrolment of girls remains far below that one of the boys.

Table 1: Enrolment Rates of Students in Mixed Day Secondary Schools between 2013 & 2018

Year	Boys	Girls	Total	Disparity (B-G)	GPI
2013	17,101	14,715	31,816	2,386	0.86
2014	18,785	15,919	31,704	2,866	0.85
2015	19,911	17,965	37,876	1,946	0.90
2016	20,035	18,222	38,258	1,814	0.91
2017	21,505	19,079	40,584	2,426	0.89
2018	23,166	21,325	44,491	1,841	0.92

Source: County Education Office (2018) Kericho, Kenya.

According to Table 1, it is clear that the Gender Parity Index has always remained less than one. With this kind of scenario, it is critically important to investigate the factors influencing gender disparity in enrolment in mixed day secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya. However, as indicated by the background of the current study, gender disparity still presents a significant challenge in the education sector as evidenced by data on mixed public day secondary schools in Kericho County which shows that gross student enrolment has been consistently skewed in favour of boys than girls in mixed day secondary schools in the area (Ministry of Education, 2018). This is despite the government's commitment to ensure access, equity, transition, retention and completion of secondary school education for all its learners. This means that the country may fail to achieve its education target in line with its

commitment to the global action for education for all and its policy imperatives.

It also means the community in Kericho County and other areas in Kenya at large still experiencing this challenge may continue having an impaired and uncompetitive future labour force coupled with low living standards for its population for a long time if the current problem of gender disparity in enrolment is left unaddressed. Sustainable Development Goal No.4 will also not be realised in time.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Economic factors in society are one of the crucial determinants when it comes to participation in secondary education. Poverty influences the schooling demand because it influences the ability of the household to pay fees and other costs associated with a high opportunity

cost of schooling for children. Parents of high economic status find it easier to educate their children up to a reasonable level. Low income for a family can act as a hindrance to children from poor families from attending school because of poverty.

Economic variation in the society can be perpetuated from one generation to another if nothing much is done to stop it. Socio-economic background of families causes enrolment variation in schools. These types of family background variations in most cases are difficult to be eradicated because of perpetuation from one generation to another along family lines. Findings from Ding (2015) showed that children whose parents are at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder fail to access available educational facilities as compared to children whose families occupy the middle or the top level of the ladder.

One of the significant causes of dropout by students in secondary schools is the inability to pay fees (Achoka, 2007). As was reported by Sang et al. (2013), in spite of massive investments and concerted efforts to achieve full enrolment in secondary schools, no African country has gone closer to the mark. This is due to high dropout rates, especially among the poor and the girls. According to Republic of Kenya (2010), parents whose level of income is very low neglect their daughters' demands. This concurs with Nyamweya, (2012) who affirms that family income influences the participation of girls in secondary school. Poor families find it very difficult to meet educational demands of their children and when faced with a situation as to who between a girl and the boy is to be sponsored most families would favour a boy child and neglect the girl child (Ombago, 2014). Of the students who transition from primary school to post-primary school institutions, 9 per cent drop out of secondary school before completion. At the same time, 30% of the remainder proceed to other post primary institutions (Republic of Kenya, 2014). Majority of

those who fail to complete the secondary school education cycle are girls. The factors, which contribute to the failure of students to meet their secondary education and particularly the girls while the government has struggled to provide free education is what prompted the researcher to conduct the study. It is apparent that studies that have been conducted did not investigate the relationship between economic factors and gender disparity in enrolment of students, which the current study sought to address. Therefore, the study sought to establish whether parental income levels contributed to gender disparity in enrolment of students in mixed public day secondary schools in Kericho County.

Poor parents find it very difficult to pay fees for a girl child besides basic needs such as pocket money, clothes and sanitary towels. Parents of lower economic status experience difficulty in providing necessary assistance to their children that can enable them to attain secondary education (Chepchieng & Kiboss, 2004; Lukonzo et al., 2017). Due to poverty in the society, people tend to give priority to basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing and therefore, education is of secondary importance to them (Oguta, 2013). Further, economic level of a family affects girl child participation in secondary education because it determines contributions by parents towards school uniforms, personal effects, teaching and learning materials, payment of fees (Oguta 2013). This concurs with Oprong (2016) poverty influences student's participation in secondary education. He maintains that students from low-income family background fail to get necessary materials such as revision materials making them perform poorly in class thus dropout of school in the end.

National Household Survey (2009) study in Kenya showed that disparities in enrolment caused by economic differences in secondary schools were 14.1% compared to 27.3% of non-poor who had completed this level of

education. This study continued to show that the overall enrolment rate for primary school and the tertiary level for the poor and the non-poor are comparable. According to the study, substantial disparities are observed for secondary level with the percentage of enrolled non-poor almost doubling that of the poor. It is evident that various studies that have been conducted hardly examined the relationship between lack of money for personal effects, uniform, sanitary towels and upkeep and gender parity in enrolment of students, which was the emphasis of the current study. The opportunity cost for children increases as they grow hence their pressure to work and earn income for household increases as opposed to spending time in education. In a study by Ajaja (2012), the high incidence of drop out in Nigeria may also be linked to a high level of child abuses prevalent throughout the country. He reiterates that the abuse range from children being made to hawk when their colleagues are in schools through going to farm to sexual abuses. The sexually abused result in teenage pregnancies, early parenthood and single parents also are unable to take care of themselves and their children. According to Ngeno et al. (2014), child labour is a factor behind gender inequality in secondary schools. According to the findings, some students and especially the girls opt to stay out of school to be employed to earn a living for their families. All this is due to poverty in the families.

According to Republic of Kenya (2003) and Oprong (2016), child labour is a rampant practice that continues to keep children, particularly the girl child out of school. This concurs with the findings by Oguta (2013) who maintains many school-age girls are employed as house girls and baby sitters in both the urban and rural areas to meet their own, and their parents' economic needs these children cannot effectively participate in secondary education.

Finances being a source of inequality and hindrance to education is rather complex because funding of education is both from the public and the government. It is argued that many nations have tried to provide equitable distribution of educational opportunities, but this has not been feasible because of the problem of poverty, which has led to many people not being able to meet and to sustain the cost of education (World Economic and Social Survey, 2013). Due to poverty, most families in Kenya exert a lot of pressure on its members irrespective of age to provide food, water, clothing and other essential needs resulting into gender disparity in enrolment of students in schools. According to a study by Lukonzo et al. (2017), poverty causes most girls to become sex workers on the beaches of Lake Victoria to get money or fall prey to fishers to offer them free fish for trade or to fend for themselves and their siblings. Older women go with their nubile daughters to the lake to persuade fishers to provide them with fish as they like having sex with women who are of their mother's age.

Unfortunately, the informal business provides escape to this pressure by providing opportunities for boys to engage in illegal labour practices. Young boys who should be in school operate most 'bodabodas' in the country. These boys do not own the bicycles and motorcycles they ride. Adults lend out these machines to the boys to run the transport business at a commission. The fact that boys like riding motorcycles, earn money, and form the informal working class is a strong motivation for young boys to drop out of school. To this end, the boy is excluded from enjoying fundamental rights and privileges such as education, protection from family, but is instead exposed to child labour and exploitation. However, the relationship between child labour as an economic factor and gender disparity in enrolment of students in Kericho County, which was the focus of the current study, has not been addressed in previous studies.

The main objective of FSE policy which was introduced in 2008 in Kenya was to increase the rate in which students can access, can be retained and finally complete secondary education and hence achievement of basic education for all by 2015. The rationale behind the policy was to ensure equity in education by reducing the burden of fees borne by parents/guardians and to enhance the transition from primary to secondary schools. It was aimed at ensuring deserving children from poor family background got access to secondary education. The aim government desired to increase the transition rate to 70 per cent and raise secondary student enrolment from 1.2 million to 1.4 million in 2008. The gross enrolment rate for primary schools was 107.6 per cent and 36.8 per cent for Secondary schools

(Ministry of Education, 2007). At that time, it was considered a significant relief to many as well as a logical step to reduce the cost of learning in secondary school.

Consequently, schools have been reported as charging parents levies for a range of activities. Under the free secondary school policy, the government paid Ksh. 10,265 per student annually from 2008 until 2015 when the figure was revised and raised to Ksh. 12,870. Although the government further increased the figure to Sh. 22,400 per student in (2018) this may not be a lasting solution because of several factors related to hidden costs. Hidden costs include uniform, transport, sanitary pads for girls, lunch programme and pocket money. The table below shows various vote heads of Free Secondary School capitation.

Table 2: Distribution of fees provided by the government to cater for free secondary school Education

Vote Head	2008 to 2014		Revised (Day &Boarding)
	Day Schools	Boarding Schools	
Tuition	3600	3600	4792
B.E.S	0	0	-
R.M.I	400	400	800
L.T.T	400	400	800
ADM	500	500	800
Insurance	-	-	600
E.W § C.	500	500	1500
Activity fee	600	600	600
P.E	3965	3965	2700
Medical	300	300	278
Total fees	10,265	10,265	12,870

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2017).

This money was expected to cover tuition and administrative costs, class activities, school maintenance and improvements. However, the amount has not been adequate (Kwachi, et al., 2012). This has led to the schools to ask for extra levies from parents, which undermine the concept of free education (Muindi, 2011; Kirechi, et al.,

2012). This amount moreover, does not gather for hidden costs such as the development of physical facilities, transport, lunch, boarding fees and uniform. These types of expenses are supposed to be met by the parents, and they are still high for poor households who may find it difficult to maintain their children in secondary schools. All these

off-budget expenditures add to the high cost of schooling in Kenya (Fleshman, 2005). This concurs with Achoka (2007) who maintains that when schools charge fees, they are likely to create barriers to low-income students in their participation in the full life of the school.

According to Orodho (2014), the release of funds from the treasury takes a lot of time, and this leads to a delay in remittance of the funds to schools. He argues that this is because basic education institutions cannot follow a strict implementation tempo when learning resources are either inadequate or reach schools late. This type of phenomenon did not start recently, but it has been there since the inception of the FSE policy in 2008. According to Aboka (2008), while addressing Deputy Principals at Tom Mboya

Labour College in Kisumu (10th-23rd August 2008) identified late disbursement of funds as one of the challenges facing the implementation of FSE policy. Persistent delays by the government in releasing the funds to schools negatively affect the effective implementation of free secondary education (Kilonzo, 2007). In the year 2016 for example, the schools opened on 5/1/2016 for term one, 3/5/2016 for term two and 31/8/2016 for term three and the funds reached the schools on 15/2/2016, 17/5/2016 and 20/9/2016 respectively.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis according to Girls

The descriptive statistics of the Economic factors variable was calculated for the girls. Table 3 shows the findings.

Table3: Economic Factors

Statement	N	SD (%)	D (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
Extra levies are related to gender disparity in enrolment.	170	18.8	28.8	38.2	14.1
Lack of food at home due to poverty is related to gender disparity in enrolment	170	10.6	19.4	29.4	40.6
Child labour is related to gender disparity in enrolment.	170	9.4	6.5	32.9	51.2
Parents' reluctance to pay fees due to the false notion of free education is related to gender disparity in enrolment.	170	8.2	18.2	27.1	46.5
Lack of money to buy pens & geometrical sets is related to gender disparity in enrolment.	170	18.2	19.4	31.8	30.6
Lack of money for lunch programme is related to gender disparity in enrolment.	170	15.9	20.6	21.2	42.4
Lack of pocket money is related to gender disparity in enrolment.	170	21.2	24.7	29.4	24.7
Lack of transport expenses to school is related to gender disparity in enrolment.	170	29.4	27.1	24.7	18.8
Lack of personal effects is related to gender disparity in enrolment.	170	8.8	17.1	46.5	27.6
Lack of school uniform is related to gender disparity in enrolment	170	9.4	25.3	41.8	23.5

According to Table 3, the respondents aver that gender disparity in mixed public day secondary schools in Kericho County is largely related to child labour as 84.1 per cent of the respondents agreed. This concurs with Oguta (2013) many school-age girls are employed as house girls and baby sitters in urban and rural areas for them to meet their own and their parents' economic needs and such children cannot effectively participate in secondary education. This could be a reason why there exists gender disparity in enrolment in schools since more girls are involved in child labour.

The findings in Table 3 showed that 74.1% of the respondents agreed that lack of personal effects is related to gender disparity in enrolment whereas 54.1% agreed that lack of pocket money is related to gender disparity as well. Poverty in a family makes it very difficult for them to meet demands for their children. Moreover, it is believed that parents' reluctance to pay fees due to the false notion of free education is related to gender disparity in schools (73.6% of the respondents agreed). This implies that a good number of learners risk being shut out of education due to the misconception that there is free education for all. This could lead to some students, mainly girls dropping out of the school set up. According to Khamati and Nyongesa (2013) due to free secondary Education policy, the parents have developed a feeling that since the government has provided the funds towards education of their children; they do not have to contribute financially towards financing the schools. This has affected the contributions towards the lunch programme and particularly in day schools whereby most of the children cover long distances to school. In another study, Achoka (2007) declares that one of the major causes of dropping out of school by most students in secondary schools is the inability to pay fees.

Lack of adequate food at home due to poverty is also a serious factor that is related to gender disparity in public

day secondary schools, as was confirmed by 70% of the respondents. Lack of money to buy pens and geometrical sets has a relationship with gender disparity as well and was agreed to by 63.5% of the respondents. Due to poverty in the society, people tend to give priority to basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing and take the education of their children as a last resort (Oguta, 2013). That is why most of the children fail to meet their educational tools such as pens, geometrical sets and pocket money. This implies that when learners lack basic needs, they may fail to complete their studies. This could be a reason for gender disparity in enrolment in schools. According to Table 3, 65.3% of the respondents agreed that lack of school uniforms has a relationship with gender disparity. This means that the absence of a proper school uniform could make learners fail to attend school. This could be a reason for gender disparity in enrolment in schools. It has been observed that low income for a family can act as a hindrance to children from poor families from attending school (Ombago, 2014).

Similarly, lack of money for lunch program is a cause of gender disparity in schools as was supported by 62.4% of the respondents. This implies that when parents fail to pay fees for the lunch programme, most of the learners are hindered from continuing with their education. Therefore, it could lead to gender disparity in enrolment in schools. It has been observed that poverty has a relationship with demand for schooling because it determines the parents' ability to pay school fees and other costs associated with a high opportunity cost of schooling for children. This view is corroborated by Republic of Kenya (2003) who maintains that poverty is an issue that brings a lot of difficulty to most parents to the extent that they fail to pay fees and buy uniform for a child and particularly the girl child besides basic needs such as pocket money, uniform and sanitary towels.

Extra levies charged by schools is also a factor that bears a relationship with gender disparity in enrolment in schools as opined by 52.4% of the respondents. Although the government of Kenya has provided free secondary education, the amount has not been adequate, and this has led the head teachers to source for extra money from the parents. When parents fail to meet this type of demand, their children are normally sent home, and in the process, some decide to drop out of the system (Kamathi, & Nyongesa, 2013).

Table 3, shows that the majority of the respondents (56.5%) disagreed that lack of money for transport to school has a relationship with gender disparity. This could be because most of the students live within the proximity of the schools and therefore may not be in a serious need of means of transport because they can simply walk. This concurs with Kang'ethe (2015) who points out that distance to school being an important determinant of educational access. He reiterates that however, where the majority of the students cover a distance of 0 to 1 kilometre to go to school may not be the reason for the girl student dropping out of the school.

Mean Descriptive Statistics of Economic Factors

Table 4: Mean Descriptive Statistics of Economic Factors according to girls

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Lack of school uniform is related to gender disparity in enrolment	170	1.00	4.00	2.79	0.91
Lack of personal effects is related to gender disparity in enrolment	170	1.00	4.00	2.93	0.89
Lack of transport expenses is related to gender disparity in enrolment	170	1.00	4.00	2.33	1.09
Lack of pocket money is related to gender disparity in enrolment	170	1.00	4.00	2.58	1.08
Lack of money for lunch programme is related to gender disparity in enrolment	170	1.00	4.00	2.90	1.12
Lack of money to buy pens & geometrical sets is related to gender disparity in enrolment	170	1.00	4.00	2.75	1.08
Parents' reluctance to pay fees due to the false notion of free education is related to gender disparity in enrolment	170	1.00	4.00	3.12	0.98
Child labour is related to gender disparity in enrolment.	170	1.00	4.00	3.26	0.94
Lack of adequate food at home due to poverty is related to gender disparity in enrolment.	170	1.00	4.00	3.00	1.01
Extra levies are related to gender disparity in enrolment.	170	1.00	4.00	2.48	0.96
Economic factors Overall Index	170	1.30	3.90	2.81	0.52

The respondents indicated that a lack of school uniform is related to gender disparity (mean=2.79) as well as that lack of personal effects is related to gender disparity

(mean=2.93). Similarly, lack of money to buy pens & geometrical sets is related to gender disparity as well as that lack of adequate food at home due to poverty is

related to gender disparity with means of 2.75 and 3.00 respectively. These findings show that lack of proper uniform beside the necessary tools may hinder a learner from completing their studies. This finding implies that the lack of necessary personal necessities could affect gender parity in enrolment between boys and girls. Moreover, the lack of adequate food due to poverty is related to gender disparity as some students may engage themselves in looking for income to buy food and other basic needs. This agrees with that of Oguta (2013) who avers that many school-age girls are employed house girls and baby sitters urban and rural areas in order to satisfy their own, and their parents' economic needs and such children cannot effectively participate in secondary education.

Likewise, it was noted that child labour is related to gender disparity in enrolment (mean=3.26). Parents' reluctance to pay fees due to the false notion of free education is related to gender disparity (mean=3.12). Lack of pocket money, as

well as lack of money for the lunch programme, is related to gender disparity with mean of 2.58 and 2.90 respectively. This implies that when children engage in unlawful employment in the pursuit to get income for themselves will ultimately hinder them from continuing with their studies. This could be a reason for gender disparity enrolment between boys and girls in schools. According to Keiga (2009), due to free secondary Education policy, the parents have developed a feeling that since the government has provided the funds towards education of their children; they don't have to contribute financially towards financing the schools. However, it was found out that -most of the respondents disagreed that lack of transport expenses is related to gender parity (mean=2.33) as well as that extra levies are related to gender disparity (mean=2.48). The overall mean for economic factors variable was 2.81, indicating that respondents agreed that these factors could affect gender disparity in enrolment of students.

Descriptive analysis According to Boys

Table 5: percentage descriptive statistics for economic factors related to Boys

Statement	N	SD (%)	D (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
Extra levies are related to gender disparity in enrolment.	167	14.4	19.2	37.1	29.3
Lack of adequate food at home due to poverty is related to gender disparity in enrolment.	167	17.4	13.8	37.1	31.7
Child labour is related to gender disparity in enrolment.	167	13.8	15.6	34.7	35.9
Parents' reluctance to pay fees due to the false notion of free education is related to gender disparity in enrolment	167	15.6	16.8	35.3	32.3
Lack of money to buy pens & geometrical sets is related to gender disparity in enrolment	167	22.8	18.6	34.1	24.6
Lack of money for lunch programme is related to gender disparity in enrolment	167	18.0	11.4	32.3	38.3
Lack of pocket money is related to gender disparity in enrolment	167	24.6	29.9	28.1	17.4

Lack of transport expenses is related to gender disparity in enrolment	167	17.4	35.9	34.1	12.6
Lack of personal effects is related to gender disparity in enrolment	167	13.8	23.4	41.9	21.0
Lack of school uniform is related to gender disparity in enrolment	167	26.3	37.1	25.1	11.4

According to Table 5, 66.4 per cent of respondents agreed that extra levies are related to gender disparity. In comparison, 74.2 per cent also agreed that lack of adequate food at home due to poverty is related to gender disparity as well. Similarly, the respondents agreed that child labour is related to gender disparity in enrolment (70.6%) as well as that parents' reluctance to pay fees due to the false notion of free education is related to gender disparity (67.6%). This implies that when learners are asked to pay extra charges, due to poverty, some of them may drop out of the school as they go in search of the fees. This could lead to gender disparity in enrolment between boys and girls. This view agrees with that of Republic of Kenya (2003) & Oprong, (2016) who assert that child labour is a rampant practise particularly among girls as they drop out of school in search of fees. Similarly, these findings concur with that of Achoka (2007) and Malaysia Ministry of Education statistics (2010) who asserts that one of the major causes of dropout by students in secondary schools is the inability to pay fees. According to Republic of Kenya (2010), parents whose level of income is very low neglect their daughter's demands. It is argued that poor families find it very difficult to meet educational demands of their children and when faced with a situation as to who

between a girl and the boy is to be sponsored most families would favour a boy child and neglect the girl child.

Moreover, respondents agreed that lack of money to buy pens & geometrical sets is related to gender disparity (58.7%), lack of money for lunch programme is related to gender disparity (70.6%), lack of pocket money is related to gender disparity (45.5%). Similarly, lack of transport expenses is related to gender disparity (46.7%), lack of school uniform is related to gender disparity (36.5%), and that lack of personal effects is related to gender disparity (62.9%). This implies that the lack of most of the requirements by students could be a reason for the disparity in enrolment. This finding agrees with that of Ombago (2014) who affirms that socio-economic factors in the society are one of the crucial determinants when it comes to participation in secondary education. Furthermore, parents of high economic status find it easier to educate their children up to a reasonable level. It implies that low income for a family can act as a hindrance to children from poor families from attending school. In most cases, parents choose which of the children to educate, which in most cases goes to disadvantage the girl child.

Mean Descriptive Statistics of Economic Factors according to Boys

Table 6: Mean Descriptive Statistics of Economic Factors

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Lack of school uniform is related to gender disparity in enrolment	167	1.00	4.00	2.22	0.96
Lack of personal effects is related to gender disparity in enrolment	167	1.00	4.00	2.70	0.95
Lack of transport expenses is related to gender disparity in enrolment	167	1.00	4.00	2.42	0.92
Lack of pocket money is related to gender disparity in enrolment	167	1.00	4.00	2.38	1.04
Lack of money for lunch programme is related to gender disparity in enrolment	167	1.00	4.00	2.91	1.10
Lack of money to buy pens & geometrical sets is related to gender disparity in enrolment	167	1.00	4.00	2.60	1.09
Parents' reluctance to pay fees due to the false notion of free education is related to gender disparity in enrolment	167	1.00	4.00	2.84	1.05
Child labour is related to gender disparity in enrolment.	167	1.00	4.00	2.93	1.03
Lack of adequate food at home due to poverty is related to gender parity in enrolment.	167	1.00	4.00	2.83	1.06
Extra levies are related to gender disparity in enrolment.	167	1.00	4.00	2.81	1.02
Economic factors Overall Index	167	1.00	3.60	2.67	0.53

According to Table 6, child labour is a factor related to gender disparity in enrolment had the highest mean (2.93). It was followed by parents' reluctance to pay fees due to the false notion of free education with a mean of 2.84. Students in secondary school dropout an early age due to poverty to seek employment, which results in child labour. The high incidence of dropout in education is linked to a high level of child abuse when their colleagues are in schools. The abuse range from a child being made to hawk, going to the farm and sexual abuse (Adada, 2012). This implies that largely, child labour, as well as parents' reluctance in payment of school fees, could be a reason for gender disparity in enrolment between boys and girls.

Lack of adequate food in the homes had a mean of 2.83, whereas extra levies charged by schools had a mean of 2.81. This implies that specifically when learners lack basic needs such as food; this may lead them to drop out of school and could be a reason for gender disparity in enrolment between boys and girls. According to Republic of Kenya (2003), parents whose level of income is very low neglect their daughters' demands. They find it very difficult to pay fees and buy uniform for daughters leave alone basic needs such as pocket money, clothes and sanitary towels.

It was reported that lack of pocket money had a mean of 2.38 whereas lack of school uniform had a mean of 2.22. Similarly, the lack of personal effects had a mean of 2.70 whereas lack of pens and geometrical effects had a mean of 2.60. Lack of transport expenses had a mean of 2.42, and lack of money for lunch programme had a mean of 2.91. According to these findings, poverty in the society and lack of proper understanding of education contribute heavily towards gender disparity in enrolment. This implies that specifically when learners lack personal effects gender disparity in enrolment between boys and girls in schools

arises. Due to poverty in the society, most of the families tend to give priority to primary needs such as shelter, food and clothing and fail to provide education for their children (Chepchieng, & Kibos, 2004). The item with the lowest mean (2.22) was lack of school uniform, which was also below the average. Another item with a mean less than the average was lack of transport expenses with a mean of 2.42. However, the overall mean was 2.67, which suggest that economic factors had a major relationship with gender disparity in enrolment of students.

Descriptive Analysis of Economic Factors According to Head Teachers

Table 7: Economic Factors

Statement	N	SD (%)	D (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
Inadequacy of FSE funds is related to gender disparity in enrolment	36	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%
Extra levies related to gender disparity in enrolment.	36	8.3%	27.8%	36.1%	27.8%
Lack of adequate food at home due to poverty is related to gender disparity in enrolment.	36	5.6%	5.6%	44.7%	44.4%
Child labour is related to gender disparity in enrolment.	36	5.6%	2.8%	33.3%	58.3%
Parents' reluctance to pay fees due to the false notion of free education is related to gender disparity in enrolment	36	2.8%	11.1%	33.3%	52.8%
Lack of money to buy pens & geometrical sets is related to gender disparity in enrolment	36	11.1%	33.3%	19.4%	36.1%
Lack of money for lunch programme is related to gender disparity in enrolment	36	5.6%	30.6%	30.6%	33.3%
Lack of pocket money is related to gender disparity in enrolment	36	8.3%	25.0%	16.7%	50.0%
Lack of transport expenses to school is related to gender disparity in enrolment	36	13.9%	38.9%	25.0%	22.2%
Lack of personal effects is related to gender disparity in enrolment	36	8.3%	0.0%	36.1%	55.6%
Lack of school uniform is related to gender disparity in enrolment	36	11.1%	30.6%	19.4%	38.9%

Table 7 reveals that gender disparity in enrolments related to lack of personal effects as 91.7 per cent of the respondents agreed. This implies that lack of personal effects could lock out some students from attending schools. This could lead to gender disparity among boys and girls in enrolment. According to Republic of Kenya (2003) and Nyamweya (2012), parents whose level of income is very low neglect their daughters' demand. Poor parents find it very difficult to pay fees and uniform for the girls; basic need such as pocket money clothes and sanitary towel is a tall order for the girl child. This suggests that lack of personal effects could lock out some students from attending schools and instead look out for menial jobs. This view was upheld by 91.6 per cent of the respondents who reported that child labour was prevalent. This could lead to gender disparity in enrolment among boys and girls.

Moreover, it was reported that parents' reluctance to pay fees is related to gender disparity in enrolment in schools as was agreed by 85.9 per cent of the respondents. The inception of FSE instilled in the parents' and guardians' minds the false notion of free education as 64.6 per cent of the headteachers as the factor affecting the enrolment. This reflects the findings of Kilonzo (2007) cited in Khamati and Nyongesa (2013) that the parents were unwilling to pay any money to the schools because education was free. Furthermore, 66.7 per cent of the respondents also agreed that pocket money is a factor that contributes to gender disparity in schools. This implies that when parents are reluctant to pay the required fees for their children, it could, in turn, discourage them from continuing being in school while others may drop out. This could be a reason for gender disparity in enrolment between boys and girls in schools.

Extra levies charged by schools and lack of money for lunch programmes are related to gender disparity in schools as was indicated by 63.9 per cent and lack of adequate food

due to poverty in the homes is related to gender disparity as was agreed by 89.1 per cent of the respondents. This implies that the requirement to pay extra levies as well as lack of basic needs such as food affect the concentration of students in class and may lead them to drop out of the learning institutions. This could be a reason why there exists gender disparity in enrolment between boys and girls in schools. This Finding corroborates with that of Kirechi et al. (2012) who aver that payment of extra levies in secondary schools has led to dropouts of some students in secondary, thus causing gender disparities in schools. The finding shows that 58.3 per cent of the respondents indicated that school uniform is related to gender disparity in schools. This implies that when students lack basic needs such as uniform, it could affect their concentration in class as they will always be thinking of how to get the proper school uniform hence may lead to termination of their studies. This could be a reason why there exists gender disparity in enrolment between boys and girls in schools. These findings agree with that of Republic of Kenya (2003) who affirms that due to poverty in the society parents find it very difficult to pay fees and to buy uniform for a girl child besides basic needs such as pocket money clothes and sanitary towels. It was also indicated by 57.2% of the respondents that lack of transport expenses is related to gender disparity in schools. This concurs with the findings of Oguta (2013), who asserts that poverty in society forces people to treat education for their children as of no serious importance.

Lack of money to buy pens and geometrical sets play a role in determining gender parity in schools as was indicated by 55.6 per cent of the respondents. It implies that lack of essential tools to assist in academic work is one of the major causes of students' failure to complete their education in secondary schools. It was also revealed that inadequately of FSE funds in schools is related to gender disparity in schools, as was indicated by 50 per cent of the

respondents. Inability to pay fees for secondary education is one of the major causes of students' failure to complete their education in secondary schools. According to Orodho (2014) release of funds from the treasury takes a lot of time and this leads to delay of funds to reach the schools this

concurs with Kamathi and Nyongesa (2013) who pointed out that the students are sent home regularly for the school fees so that the principals could use the fund to run the schools.

Table 8: Mean Descriptive Statistics of Economic Factors

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Lack of school uniform is related to gender disparity in enrolment	36	1.00	4.00	2.86	1.073
Lack of personal effects is related to gender disparity in enrolment	36	1.00	4.00	3.39	.871
Lack of transport expenses is related to gender disparity in enrolment	36	1.00	4.00	2.56	.998
Lack of pocket money is related to gender disparity in enrolment	36	1.00	4.00	3.08	1.05
Lack of money for lunch programme is related to gender disparity in enrolment	36	1.00	4.00	2.92	.937
Lack of money to buy pens & geometrical sets is related to gender disparity in enrolment	36	1.00	4.00	2.81	1.0655
Parents' reluctance to pay fees due to the false notion of free education is related to gender disparity in enrolment	36	1.00	4.00	3.36	.798
Child labour is related to gender disparity in enrolment.	36	1.00	4.00	3.44	.809
Lack of adequate food at home due to poverty is related to gender disparity.	36	1.00	4.00	3.28	.815
Extra levies are related to gender disparity in enrolment.	36	1.00	4.00	2.83	.941
Inadequacy of FSE funds is related to gender disparity in enrolment	36	1.00	4.00	2.50	1.134
Economic factors Overall Index	36	1.70	3.80	3.05	.465

Head-teachers' views on the relationship between economic factors and gender disparity in public day secondary schools were analysed to get the mean and standard deviation. According to Table 8, child labour had

the highest mean of 3.44. Low economic status in a family makes some students drop out of school and seek employment, which results in child labour. According to Hanushak (2006), Child Labour is inescapable for the

survival of many rural households. He affirms that children from poor families are likely never to attend a school or drop out once they have enrolled. This could be the reason for the existence of gender disparity in enrolment of students in schools.

Parents' reluctance to pay fees due to the false notion of free education had a mean of 3.36. This was followed by lack of personal effects with a mean of 3.39. Lack of adequate food at home had a mean of 3.28. Lack of pocket money had a mean of 3.08 whereas lack of money for the lunch program had a mean of 2.92. Lack of uniform had a mean of 2.86, payment of extra levies had a mean of 2.83 and lack of money to buy pens, and geometrical instruments had a mean of 2.81. Lack of money for transport had a mean of 2.56 whereas inadequacy of FSE had a mean of 2.50. It can be inferred that the poverty level in a family is related to gender disparity in enrolment of students in schools. When there is a lack of adequate funds, most of the critical issues related to student's academics will be halted. This could cause some of the students to drop out of school. The family cannot have the ability to meet basic family needs, including adequate food, conducive room for sleeping and adequate light for carrying out extra studies in the evening. Poverty influences demand for schooling because it is related to the ability of the household to pay fees and other costs associated with a high opportunity cost of schooling.

Finally, it was noted that inadequacy of FSE funds could be related to gender disparity in enrollment between boys and girls (mean= 2.50). This is because when there is a lack of adequate funds; most of the critical issues related to students' academics will be halted. When the money sent to schools by the government is not sufficient, the schools are forced to seek the assistance of the parents. Due to inadequacy of FSE funds, the parents have been asked by schools to supplement in order to meet the gaps in the school budget (Kirechi, et al., 2012). Moreover, Free Secondary Education capitation grant, although it has been increased, it has not been in phase with inflation (New Vision, 2015). The extra levies the parents pay influences disparity in enrolment because when students are sent home regularly due to non-compliance, some fail to return to school and in the end fail to complete their education thus causing disparity in enrolment. Mostly, it is evident that there was general agreement among the head teachers that the economic factors had a relationship with gender disparity in enrollment of students as indicated by the overall index mean of 3.05.

Mean difference in Economic factors by Gender

The finding shows that there was a significant mean difference between girls and boys on a t-test of Economic Factors by Gender

Table 9: t-test by Economic Factors by Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	p-value
Girls	170	2.81	.52053	335	2.578	0.010*
Boys	167	2.67	.53107			

***Significant at 0.05 level**

The finding shows that there was a significant mean difference between girls and boys on Economic Factors

causing gender disparity in enrolment at 0.05, t (335) = 2.578, p < 0.05). This implies that economic factors affecting

girls were higher (Mean=2.81) as compared to boys (Mean=2.67). This means that girls are more vulnerable and affected by economic factors, which in turn could influence their participation in school activities. This finding agrees with Republic of Kenya (2003) who found out that child labour is a rampant practice that continues to keep children, specifically the girl child out of school. Many

school-age girls are employed as house girls and baby sitters in urban and rural areas in order to satisfy their own and their parents' economic needs. Such children cannot effectively take part in secondary education (Oguta, 2013). This could be a reason why there exists a gender disparity in enrolment in secondary school.

Table 10: Correlations between Gender Disparity and the economic factors (All)

		Gender Disparity	Economic factors
Gender Disparity	Pearson Correlation	1	.768**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	373	373
**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

According to table 10, there exists a statistically significant effect of economic factors on Gender Disparity ($r=0.768^{**}$; $p<0.05$). This implies that when the economic factors under investigation prevail, gender disparity increases. According to Psaki et al. (2018), many countries still face obstacles in reducing gender disparities in enrolment and progression in school, as well as improving absolute levels of enrolment and attainment.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: From the findings, in connection with economic factors, it was established that child labor had the highest mean of 3.21 and therefore was the major factor related to gender disparity in enrollment. This was followed by parents' reluctance to pay fees due to the false notion of free education with a mean of 3.10. Moreover, it was noted that respondents agreed that the lack of adequate food due to poverty could affect gender disparity in enrollment (mean=3.03). Similarly, the lack of personal effects could relate to gender disparity in enrollment

between boys and girls (mean= 3.00). This implies that due to poverty in society, child participation in education is adversely affected. That is why child labor was seen to be the most contributing factor to gender disparity in enrollment between boys and girls in schools. Further, basing on these findings and on the tests of hypothesis, the study concludes that Economic factors had a significant relationship with gender disparity in enrolment of students in mixed day secondary schools in Kericho County that must be taken into account.

Recommendations: The government through quality assurance and standards officers alongside local administration should ensure that policies on child labour are well implemented, and that child labor is not practised so that all school-age going children irrespective of their gender attend school uninterrupted. Parents should also be continuously sensitized on the scope of FSE funding so as to address their reluctance to pay fees arising from the

false notion of free education covers all education | expenses of the secondary school student.

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