

Influence of Parental Socio-Economic Status on Academic Performance of Girls in Mixed Day Secondary Schools in Kenya: A study across Mixed Day Secondary Schools in Homa Bay town Sub-County.

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ABSTRACT

Education is globally recognized as a key investment with significant social and economic returns. Parents are considered to be the primary drivers of children's development holistically. Notwithstanding aforementioned factors, unequal access and persistent challenges continue to limit the academic performance of the girl child. In Homa Bay Sub-County, approximately 60% of girls in mixed day secondary schools perform below average, raising concern about the factors influencing their academic achievement. The objective of the study was to establish the influence of parental socio-economic status on the academic performance of girls in mixed day secondary schools in Homa Bay town Sub-County. The findings of the study indicated that, parental occupation, parental involvement and parental level of income highly influenced the girls' academic performance, while parental level of education and students' level of confidence had moderate influence on the girls' academic performance. The study concluded that parental socio-economic status has a high influence on girls' academic performance. The study recommended strengthening parental involvement through regular engagement, improving availability of teaching and learning resources, enhancing classroom environments, and addressing challenges related to distance to school. The findings of the study will inform policy makers and stakeholders in education in the formulation of policies for management and practice. They also form a baseline for future research on girls' academic performance in similar contexts.

Keywords: Influence, Parental Socio-Economic Status, Academic Performance, Girls in Mixed Day Secondary Schools, Kenya: Mixed Day Secondary Schools, Homa Bay town Sub-County.

INTRODUCTION

Education is universally recognized as a fundamental driver of human and societal development, providing individuals with knowledge, skills, values, and habits necessary for personal and collective advancement (UNESCO, 2023). Globally, governments invest significantly in formal education; in 2021, the average global expenditure on education was 4.3% of Gross Domestic Product (World Bank, 2022). Studies indicate that investments in education yield high socio-economic returns, including improved health outcomes, increased

employability, and enhanced gender equity. Despite these efforts, disparities in educational access and outcomes persist, particularly among marginalized populations such as girls in developing countries.

At the national level, Kenya has demonstrated a strong commitment to education, allocating approximately 28.1% of its national budget to the Ministry of Education (Education Sector Report, 2024). The Kenyan education system employs standardized assessments at multiple levels, including the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE), to measure student achievement and inform policy decisions (Ministry of Education, 2023; KNEC, 2023). These examinations serve as critical benchmarks for student progression, career placement, and overall evaluation of the education system. However, persistent low performance, particularly among girls in mixed day secondary schools, has been reported. For instance, KCSE results from 2023–2024 revealed that only 8% of girls in mixed day schools attained a grade of C+ or higher, compared to higher averages for boys and girls in boarding schools (Kenya National Examination Council, 2023; Kenya Economic Survey, 2024).

Table 1 shows the average mean scores of girls in day mixed secondary and girls in boarding schools in Homa Bay Sub County for a period of five years (2019-2023).

Table 1 Average Mean Performance of girls who scored C+ and above in Boarding and Mixed Day Secondary School (KCSE 2019 -2023) in Homa Bay Sub County

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average
Boarding	8.4	8.0	8.6	7.5	8.7	8.2
Mixed	5.9	4.3	5.7	5.1	5.3	5.2

Source: Director of Education, Homa Bay County, 2024

From Table 1, girls in boarding had an average mean score of 8.2 while girls in mixed day secondary had an average mean score of 5.2. Empirical studies have examined the influence of these factors in various contexts. Teaching and learning resources, including textbooks, laboratories, and digital platforms, have been shown to positively impact academic performance, although most studies focus on teacher effectiveness rather than direct student outcomes (Kipruto, Kiptony & Ngala, 2020; Obi & Ogbuagu, 2020). Similarly, classroom environment studies suggest that class size, teacher-student interactions, and learning climate affect performance, but gender-specific analyses remain limited (Meremikwu, 2020; Kamoet & Mbirithi, 2024). School proximity has been identified as a determinant of academic access, particularly for girls vulnerable to long commutes, absenteeism, and early pregnancies (Msoffe & Mohamed, 2023; Sherpa, 2022). Parental socio-economic status also plays a critical role in providing educational support and learning resources (Gul et al., 2021).

Synthesis of Literature on Influence of Parental Socio-Economic Status on Academic Performance of Girls in Mixed Day Secondary Schools

Parental socioeconomic Status, including income, education, and occupation, significantly influences learners' access to educational resources, payment of school fees, parental support, and overall academic achievement

(Guo, 2025; Hassan & Saidu, 2025). Studies consistently show that learners from high socioeconomic backgrounds tend to perform better academically because they have access to adequate learning materials, conducive home environments, and parental academic support. In contrast, low SES limits access to educational resources, reduces study time, and constrains parental guidance, thereby negatively affecting learners' academic outcomes (Shah & Hussain, 2021).

Globally, the influence of parental socio-economic status on academic performance varies across countries depending on government support systems and educational policies. Lyu et al. (2019) observed that in China, socioeconomic status has a relatively lower effect on academic achievement compared to countries such as the United States and Germany due to extensive government provision of educational resources. However, studies conducted in developing countries continue to demonstrate a strong relationship between socio-economic status and learners' academic outcomes. Idris and Rufus (2021), in Nigeria, found that parental occupation significantly influenced students' academic performance, while similar findings were reported by Owuor et al. (2022) in Homa Bay Sub-County, Kenya.

Research further indicates that parental involvement, both at home and in school, is a critical determinant of academic success. Home-based involvement, such as monitoring homework, discussing school matters, and providing guidance, as well as school-based involvement, including participation in school activities and communication with teachers, positively influences learners' academic achievement (Oranga et al., 2023; Sabrina & Adam, 2022). Studies also reveal that parental socio-economic status affects school choice, access to textbooks and learning materials, participation in extracurricular activities, and availability of a supportive learning environment (Aregae & Kikechi, 2023; Gital & Iggunnu, 2024). Conversely, poverty negatively affects attendance, nutrition, concentration, and overall learner participation, particularly among girls (Economic Survey, 2020; Stanley & Olomuyiwa, 2023).

Empirical studies in different contexts have consistently demonstrated that educated and economically stable parents are more likely to support their children academically. Kabinga (2014) and Okemwa (2014) established that learners from educated families received greater academic support and experienced fewer challenges in accessing educational resources and maintaining school attendance. Similarly, Seni and Onyango (2021) found that parents with stable occupations were better able to provide school fees, uniforms, textbooks, and a conducive home environment, thereby positively influencing students' academic performance. Likoko et al. (2021) further established that students in public day secondary schools performed better academically when parents were economically stable and actively involved in supporting their education.

Parental involvement has also emerged as one of the strongest predictors of learners' academic success. Singh and Mahajan (2021) established a significant positive relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement among secondary school students. The study revealed that students whose parents monitored homework, attended school activities, and communicated regularly with teachers demonstrated higher academic achievement. Similarly, Likoko et al. (2021) reported that parental involvement significantly enhanced learners' motivation and academic success in public day secondary schools in Kenya. Munir et al. (2021) also found that teachers perceived parental involvement as essential in improving learners' discipline, motivation, and academic performance.

In Kenya, parental involvement has been found to significantly influence girls' participation and performance in mixed day secondary schools. Dawo and Simatwa (2010) established that parental involvement through guidance,

payment of school fees, provision of learning materials, and reduction of domestic chores positively influenced girls' academic participation and performance. Similarly, Owuor et al. (2022) found that parental support and socioeconomic factors significantly affected students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Homa Bay Sub-County. These findings indicate that parental support remains a key determinant of learners' educational success, particularly among girls in mixed day school settings. Despite the existing literature, several gaps remain. Most reviewed studies employed descriptive survey designs with limited use of mixed research methods. In addition, few studies specifically focused on girls in mixed day secondary schools, and even fewer were conducted in Homa Bay Sub-County. Existing studies also tended to examine parental socioeconomic status independently without integrating it with other school-related factors such as teaching and learning resources, classroom environment, and school proximity. Therefore, the present study sought to fill these conceptual, methodological, and contextual gaps by examining the combined influence of teaching and learning resources, classroom environment, school proximity, and parental socioeconomic status on the academic performance of girls in mixed day secondary schools in Homa Bay Sub-County, Kenya.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Social Reproduction Theory, a sociological theory advanced by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron. The theory explains how social inequalities are perpetuated across generations through social institutions such as the family and the education system. According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), schools do not merely transmit knowledge and skills; they also reproduce existing patterns of social and economic inequality by privileging learners who possess greater access to economic, cultural, and social capital. Consequently, students from disadvantaged backgrounds often experience structural barriers that limit educational success and reinforce cycles of inequality.

In relation to this study, Social Reproduction Theory provides an appropriate framework for explaining how selected factors influence the academic performance of girls in mixed day secondary schools in Homa Bay Sub-County, Kenya. The theory is relevant because it links educational achievement to broader structural and socio-economic conditions within society. It suggests that girls' academic performance is not solely determined by individual ability or effort, but is also shaped by unequal access to educational resources, supportive learning environments, and social opportunities.

Parental socio-economic status is central to Social Reproduction Theory because it determines the level of economic, cultural, and social capital available to learners. Parents with higher levels of education and stable income are better positioned to support their children academically by providing school fees, learning materials, academic guidance, and conducive study environments. Educated parents are also more likely to interact effectively with schools and encourage positive educational aspirations among their children. Conversely, parents from low socio-economic backgrounds may lack the financial resources and educational exposure necessary to support effective learning. In many cases, girls from disadvantaged households are expected to participate in domestic chores, caregiving responsibilities, or income-generating activities, reducing the time available for academic work. Such conditions negatively affect concentration, homework completion, and examination preparation. The theory therefore demonstrates how family background contributes to unequal educational outcomes and perpetuates social inequality across generations.

Social Reproduction Theory is highly relevant to this study because it provides a comprehensive explanation of how structural and institutional inequalities influence academic performance among girls in mixed day secondary

schools. The theory demonstrates that factors such as inadequate learning resources, unfavorable classroom environments, long distances to school, and low parental socio-economic status are not isolated challenges but interconnected manifestations of broader social inequality. The theory further explains that educational institutions may unintentionally reinforce these inequalities by operating within unequal social and economic contexts. Consequently, girls from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to experience limited educational opportunities and lower academic achievement compared to their more advantaged counterparts. This study therefore adopts Social Reproduction Theory as the guiding theoretical framework because it enables the researcher to examine how social and economic inequalities shape educational experiences and outcomes among girls in Homa Bay Sub-County. The theory provides a foundation for understanding the persistence of low academic performance and underscores the need for interventions aimed at promoting equity in access to educational opportunities and resources.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a model of presentation where a researcher conceptualizes hypothetically the relationship between variables in the study diagrammatically. The model in this study focuses on how the parental socio economic status influences academic performance of girls in mixed day secondary schools.

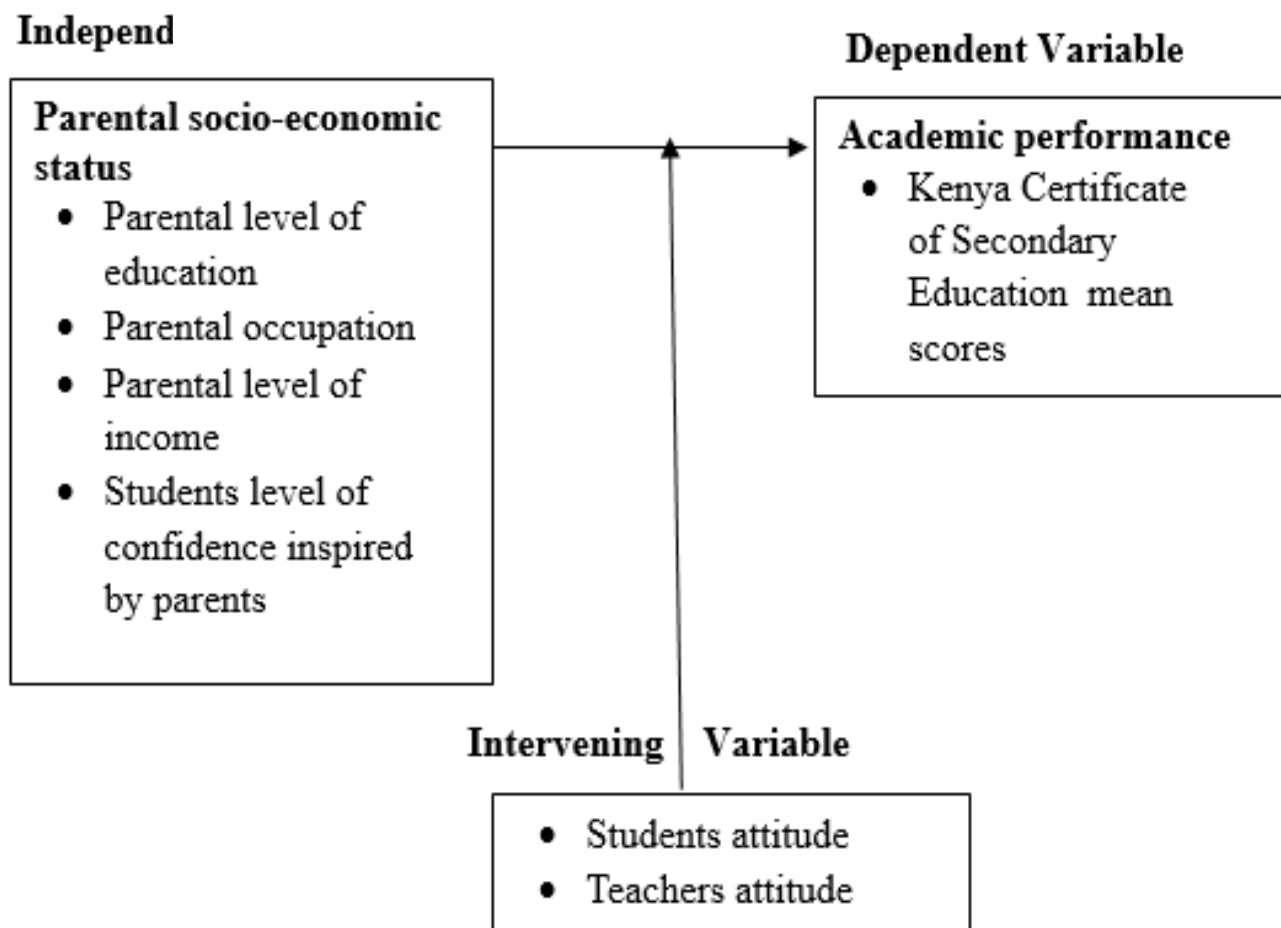


Figure 1

Conceptual Framework showing the influence Influence of Parental Socio-Economic Status on Academic Performance of Girls in Mixed Day Secondary Schools

The conceptual framework for this study is grounded in Social Reproduction Theory, which posits that educational institutions tend to reproduce existing social inequalities through unequal distribution of economic, cultural, and social capital. The conceptual framework illustrates how structural inequalities reflected in parental socio-economic status influence the academic performance of girls in mixed day secondary schools in Homa Bay Sub-County, Kenya. The conceptual framework assumes that these independent variables influence academic performance and the intervening or moderating factors are students' attitude and teachers' attitude. It further demonstrates that unless such inequalities are adequately addressed, disparities in academic achievement among girls are likely to persist.

Parental socio-economic status determines the level of economic, cultural, and social capital accessible to learners. Parents with stable incomes and higher educational attainment are more likely to provide adequate learning materials, academic support, and conducive home environments for study. Conversely, girls from low socio-economic backgrounds may experience limited access to educational resources and may also be required to engage in domestic responsibilities or income-generating activities, thereby reducing the time available for academic work. Such structural disadvantages negatively affect academic performance.

The dependent variable in this study is the academic performance of girls in mixed day secondary schools in Homa Bay Sub-County. Academic performance was measured using Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination results for the period 2021–2025. The relationship between the independent variables and academic performance may be influenced by intervening variables such as students' attitudes toward learning and teachers' attitudes toward learners. Positive attitudes may enhance motivation, participation, and academic achievement, whereas negative attitudes may hinder effective learning outcomes. In this study, the possible effects of intervening variables will be controlled through appropriate research procedures. Random sampling techniques will be used to minimize bias and equalize variations among respondents. In addition, the principle of local control, as advanced by Gesami, (2023), may be applied to reduce the influence of extraneous variables and enhance the validity of the findings. Grounded in Social Reproduction Theory, this conceptual framework therefore demonstrates that academic performance among girls in mixed day secondary schools is shaped by interconnected structural, institutional, and social factors that reflect broader societal inequalities. Addressing these inequalities is essential in improving educational outcomes and reducing persistent gender-based academic disparities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was anchored on Social Reproduction Theory, which explains how socio-economic inequalities are reproduced through educational systems. Descriptive survey research design employing a mixed-methods approach was adopted. This approach eliminated biases as the data was not in any way manipulated. The target population comprised of 1,400 Form Four girl students, 28 class teachers, and 28 Directors of Studies. A sample size of 371 respondents was determined using Fisher's formula (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This formula was appropriate for this study because the population was below the 10000.

$$nf = \frac{n}{1 + n/N}$$

Where;

N_f = desired sample size

n = sample size (when population is less than 10000) = 384

N = target population

l = Constant

Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents because those were the respondents that had data that was required by virtue of their knowledge and experience. Data was collected using structured questionnaires, interview schedules, observation schedules, and document analysis guides. Secondary data such as Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education results (2020–2025), class registers, and school records were also reviewed. Validity of the instruments was ensured through expert review, while reliability was established using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, with values above 0.70 considered acceptable. A pilot study was conducted in three non-sampled schools to refine the instruments. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 30 and presented using frequencies, percentages, means, and inferential statistics, while qualitative data was transcribed and analyzed thematically.

RESULTS

Demographic characteristics of Respondents

Table 2

Demographic characteristics of Teachers

Category		
Director of Studies	Frequency	Percentage
Male	19	95%
Female	1	5%
Total	20	100%
Class Teachers		
Male	9	52.9%
Female	8	47.1%
Total	17	100
Experience of class teachers in years		
3 – 5	7	41.2

6 – 8	5	29.4
9 – 11	3	17.6
12 -14	2	11.8
Total	17	100

From Table 2 total response by gender revealed that males (75.7%) outnumbered their female counterparts (24.3%). Most Directors of Studies are male (95%). This suggests a strong male presence in higher leadership roles in the schools studied. According to Aguilon et al. (2020), gender representation and participation are important in educational research because male and female engage differently which may influence the study outcome. Female representation in leadership (as Directors of Studies) is very low (5%). Among class teachers, gender distribution is more balanced, with males slightly higher at 52.9% and females at 47.1%.

Majority of class teachers had between 3 and 5 years of teaching experience, representing 41.2% of the respondents. Class teachers with 6–8 years of experience accounted for 29.4%, while those with 9–11 years and 12–14 years of experience constituted 17.6% and 11.8%, respectively. This distribution suggests that most class teachers were relatively early to mid-career professionals. Most respondents (90%) were below 18 years, while only 8.7% were aged 19 years and above. A small proportion of respondents (1.3%) did not disclose their age. The results indicate that the respondents were largely composed of learners within the expected age range for their level of education.

Table 3

Students by Gender

School	Male		Female		Class Size
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
1	10	58.8	7	41.2	17
2	14	50.0	14	50.0	28
3	18	54.5	15	45.5	33
4	19	45.2	23	55.8	42
5	20	52.6	18	47.4	38
6	22	52.3	20	47.7	42

7	23	47.9	25	52.1	48
8	23	62.2	14	37.8	37
9	26	48.1	28	51.9	54
10	29	63.0	17	37.0	46
11	30	55.6	24	44.4	54
12	31	52.5	28	47.5	59
13	33	52.4	30	47.6	63
14	34	55.7	31	44.3	65
15	35	58.3	25	41.7	60
16	37	65.0	20	35.0	57
17	37	64.0	24	36.0	61
18	39	64.0	22	36.0	61
19	45	64.3	25	35.7	70
20	47	55.3	38	44.7	85
Total	572	56.1	448	43.9	1,020

Table 3 showed that overall gender composition of learners revealed a slight male dominance, with males accounting for 56.1% of the total student population compared to 43.9% females. Although several schools exhibited near gender parity, the higher proportion of male learners in most schools suggests that gender imbalances in school enrollment remain evident. The learner enrollment revealed substantial differences in class size among the sampled schools. Class sizes ranged from 17 to 85 learners, with an average of approximately 51 learners per school.

Table 4 Demographic Characteristics of Girl Students

Girl student by Age	Frequency	Percentage
17-18 years	207	90
19 -22 years	20	8.7
Nil Response	3	1.3
Total	227	100
Distance travelled by girls to school (Km)		
Less than 1Km	52	22.6
1-3 Km	92	40.0
3.1-6 Km	58	25.2
6.1Km and more	26	11.3
Nil Response	2	9
Total	228	100
Girls Mode of transport to school		
Trekking	202	88.6
Boda-boda	9	3.9
Matatu	6	2.6
Bicycle(self-ride)	9	3.9
Nil response	2	0.9
Total	226	100
Girl student Family size		
1-3	4	1.7
4-6	127	55.2
7-9	74	32.2

10 and above	4	1.7
Nil response	21	9.1
Total	209	100
Parental Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Professionals	28	12.2
Farmers	85	37.0
Small scale business	109	47.4
Casual workers	1	0.4
Nil Response	7	3.0
Total	223	100

Table 4 revealed that 40% of the respondents lived between 1 and 3 kilometers from school, while 25.2% resided between 3.1 and 6 kilometers away. Learners living less than 1 kilometer from school accounted for 22.6%, whereas 11.3% traveled distances exceeding 6 kilometers. These results indicate that the majority of learners had relatively easy access to their schools, which may contribute positively to attendance, punctuality, and participation in learning activities. From Table 4, trekking was the most common mode of transport among learners, accounting for 88.6% of the respondents. Only a few learners relied on boda-bodas (3.9%), bicycles (3.9%), or matatus (2.6%) to travel to school. These findings suggested that the majority of learners lived within walking distance of their schools or lacked access to alternative means of transport. More than half of the respondents (55.2%) came from families consisting of 4–6 members, while 32.2% belonged to families with 7–9 members. Only a small proportion of respondents came from families with 1–3 members (1.7%) or 10 and above members (1.7%). Table 4 further revealed that 47.4% of the respondents' parents or guardians were engaged in small-scale business socio-economic status, while 37% were farmers. Professionals accounted for 12.2% of the respondents, whereas only 0.4% reported that their parents or guardians were casual workers. These results suggest that the majority of households relied on informal economic activities and agriculture as their main sources of livelihood.

Research Objective

The research objective was to establish Socio-economic status the influence of parental socio-economic status on girl student academic performance in mixed day secondary schools.

To achieve this objective, class teachers and form four girl students were to rate the influence of teaching and learning resources on academic performance. The results were as shown in the Table 5.

Table 5 Influence of Parental Socioeconomic Status on Academic Performance of girls in Mixed Day Secondary School as rated by class teacher (n=16) and girl students (n=231).

Aspect of Parental Socioeconomic status	Respondents		RATINGS					TOTAL	MR	OMR	T –Test
			1	2	3	4	5				
Parental level of Education	Class Teachers	F	4	4	1	5	2	16		2.31	t(245)=2.017,p=0.045
		S	4	8	3	20	10	45	2.81		
		%	21.1	21.1	5.3	26.3	10.5	84.2			
		NR					3	15.8			
	Girl Students	F	45	12	25	56	93	231			
		S	45	24	75	224	465	833	3.60		
		%	19.5	5.2	10.8	24.2	40.3	100			
		NR					0	0.00			
Parental Occupation	Class Teachers	F	0	0	0	4	12	16		4.38	t(245)=0.735,p=0.463
		S	0	0	0	16	60	76	4.75		
		%	0	0	0	21.1	63.2	84.2			
		NR					3	15.8			
	Girl Students	F	0	0	2	36		231			
		S	0	0	6	108		1079	4.00		
		%	0	0	0.9	15.6		100			
		NR					0	0.00			
Parental involvement	Class Teachers	F	0	0	0	4		16		4.70	
		S	0	0	0	16		76			
		%	0	0	0	21.1		84.2	4.75		
		NR					3	15.3			

	Girl Students	F	0	0	14	52	165	231			$t(245)=0.639, p=0.523$
		S	0	0	42	208	825	1075	4.65		
		%	0	0	6.1	22.5	71.4	100			
		NR					0	0.00			
Parental level of Income	Class Teachers	F	0	0	4	2		16			$t(245)=0.508, p=0.612$
		S	0	0	12	8		70	4.38		
		%	0	0	21.1	10.5		84.2			
		NR					3	15.8			
	Girl Students	F	0	0	2	41		231			
		S	0	0	6	164		1110	4.81		
		%	0	0	0.9	17.7		100			
		NR					0	0.00			
Students level of confidence inspired by parents	Class Teachers	F	4	0	0	2		12			$t(240)=0.852, p=0.395$
		S	4	0	0	8		42	3.50		
		%	21.1	0	0	10.5		63.2			
		NR					7	36.8			
	Girl Students	F	22	13	38	66		230			
		S	22	26	114	264		881	3.83		
		%	9.5	5.6	16.5	28.6		99.6			
		NR					1	0.4			
OVERALL RATING	Class teachers								4.29	4.35	$t(245)=-1.137, p=0.257$
	Girl Student								4.41		

Key: F- frequency S- Score NR-Nil Response MR- Mean Rating, OMR-

Overall Mean Rating

Interpretation of Mean Ratings;

1.00-1.44	No Influence
1.45- 2.44	Low Influence
2.45-3.44	Moderate Influence
3.45-4.44	High Influence
4.45-5.00	Very High Influence

The findings from Table 5 indicates that class teachers moderately rated the influence of parental level of education ($M = 2.81$), while girl students gave a high influence rating ($M = 3.60$). The t-test result, $t(245) = 2.017$, $p = 0.045$ indicates a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of teachers and students because the p-value was less than 0.05. Parental occupation is considered one of the most significant aspects of parental socio-economic status influencing Class teachers rated the influence of parental occupation very high ($M = 4.75$), while girl students also gave a high rating ($M = 4.00$). The t-test result, $t(245) = 0.735$, $p = 0.463$ revealed no statistically significant difference between the two groups. This implies that both teachers and students agreed that parental occupation significantly influenced students' educational experiences and opportunities. Class teachers rated parental involvement to have very high influence ($M = 4.75$), similar to girl students rating ($M = 4.65$). The t-test result, $t(245) = -0.639$, $p = 0.523$ indicates no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of teachers and students. This suggests consensus between the two groups that parental involvement plays a critical role in supporting students' academic progress. The results therefore demonstrate that parental involvement is a critical determinant of students' academic performance. This indicates that active parental engagement is a critical determinant of girls' academic success. The findings revealed that parental level of income was rated as a highly influential factor in determining girls' academic performance in mixed day secondary schools. Class teachers reported a high mean score of 4.38, while girl students reported an even higher mean score of 4.81, resulting in an overall mean of 4.61. This high overall rating indicates a strong belief among both groups that parental income significantly contributes to academic success. The higher rating by students suggests that they are more directly aware of how financial resources affect their educational experiences and opportunities.

Despite the slight difference in mean scores, the independent samples t-test showed that the difference between class teachers' and students' ratings was not statistically significant, $t(245) = 0.508$, $p = 0.62$, because the p-value was greater than 0.05. This implies that both teachers and students generally share the same rating that parental income plays an important role in influencing academic performance. Overall, the high mean score of 4.61 demonstrates that parental income was rated as a major determinant of girls' academic performance in mixed day secondary schools. The consensus between teachers and students further underscored the importance of financial resources in supporting educational attainment and creating opportunities for academic excellence. Both class teachers ($M=3.50$) and girl student rated ($M=3.83$) students' level of confidence at a high influence resulting in an overall mean score of 3.67. This finding suggests that students' confidence moderately influences academic performance of girl student in mixed day secondary schools. The independent samples t-test revealed no

statistically significant difference between the ratings of class teachers and girl students, $t(240) = 0.852$, $p = 0.395$, indicating a general agreement between the two groups regarding the role of confidence in academic achievement. Overall, the mean score of 3.67 indicates that confidence had a high influence on girl student academic performance. The agreement between teachers and students further suggests that strengthening girl student confidence through supportive teaching practices, feedback, mentorship, and participation opportunities may contribute to improved academic outcomes in secondary schools.

DISCUSSION

The data collected and analysed was from both male and female gender for all respondents. This eliminated the biases that would have affected the external validity of this study. Girl students who resided within 3km radius of the school indicated that the mode of transport was trekking. This mode of transport affected the learners negatively because of fatigue that was experienced on arrival at home and school. Lateness was also a challenge that was experienced that negatively affected their studies. Furthermore, learners who travelled longer distances indicated that experienced challenges such as fatigue, adverse weather conditions, insecurity and lateness, particularly where long distances were involved. The findings of this study underscore the importance of considering school accessibility and transport infrastructure in the efforts to improve learners' attendance, punctuality, concentration and overall academic achievement. Medium-sized households were most common among the respondents. Family size is an important socioeconomic characteristic because it influences the distribution of household resources, parental attention, and educational support available to learners. While moderate family sizes may facilitate adequate provision of educational needs, larger families reported to have increased financial and resource constraints that affected girl's academic participation and performance.

Small-scale business operators and farmers on the periphery of the town experienced challenges relating to income such that their occupations did not adequately enhance their learners access to educational resources, learning materials, and other forms of academic support. Girl students perceived parental level of education to have a greater influence on their academic life than teachers. This disparity shows that students are more directly affected by their parents' educational background than teachers may observe. Educated parents are more likely to provide academic guidance, assist with homework and emphasize the importance of education. The findings conquer with Social Capital Theory (1977) and Juma, Simatwa and Ayodo (2012) which posits that parents' knowledge, skills, and educational background contribute to the intellectual resources available to children. Educated parents tend to transmit academic values and competencies that enhance student performance. Additionally, the results can be interpreted through Ecological Systems Theory, which emphasizes the role of the home environment (microsystem) in shaping a learner's development. A parent's level of education directly influences the quality of academic support within this environment. In the interview, one of the Director of Studies opinions was in support of students' rating. Most parents have low education level with majority having basic education. In households where parents have lower levels of formal education, the challenge is usually not unwillingness to support their daughters but limited exposure to the long-term academic pathway. For example, a parent who did not progress far in school prioritize immediate, practical needs like household help or income-generating activities over extended schooling, especially for girl student. In certain Socio-economic status, this is where issues like early marriage or heavy domestic responsibilities come in, not necessarily out of neglect, but out of socio-economic pressure or cultural norms.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that girl students rated parental level of education as having a high influence on their academic life than class teachers observed. This disparity shows that girl students are more directly

affected by their parents' educational background in ways that may not always be visible within the school environment. Girl students interact closely with their parents at home, where educational support, encouragement, and guidance greatly shape their attitudes toward learning. This agrees with a girl student who noted in a focus group discussion that parents with low level of education do not understand that time is required for studies. They tend to be less concerned about education matters and more on meeting basic needs like food. In agreement, a study finding by Fakkal et al (2024) noted that lower parental education is associated with reduced academic support, lower educational aspirations, and increased risk of educational disadvantage among children. Educated parents are more likely to provide academic guidance, assist with homework, monitor their children's progress, and emphasize the importance of education. They also create a supportive learning environment at home by providing study materials, encouraging discipline, and motivating their children to work hard in school. Such parental involvement can increase learners' confidence, improve study habits, and positively influence academic performance. The findings agree with a multi-country study by (Xu & Fu, 2024) who found that parental education has a persistent intergenerational effect on children's educational outcomes, significantly influencing academic achievement performance.

The statistically significant difference between teachers' and students' ratings therefore highlights that parental educational background plays a more personal and practical role in students' daily academic experiences than teachers may realize. Both teachers and students agreed that parental occupation significantly influenced students' educational experiences and opportunities. This was supported by Director of Studies in an interview who stated that most of our parents are small scale farmers and business intrapreneurs with daily income barely above a dollar. Because of these occupations they lack steady income and is reflected on poor fee payment of Ksh 12,000 per year. The girls from small scale businesses tend to absentee themselves from school because of lack of pocket money and other personal effects which ultimately negatively influence their academic performance.

From the admission records it was clear that most parents were small scale farmers or intrapreneurs with fluctuating incomes. Occupation determines the income and its stability. Parents in stable or higher-paying occupations are better positioned to provide educational resources such as textbooks and revision guides School fees and related expenSocio-economic status and access to supplementary learning opportunities like tutoring. In a focus group discussion, the Director of Studies statement was supported by a girl student who said that her mother is fish monger in Homa Bay town and barely earns enough for a family size of ten members. As a result, she cannot afford revision books. The findings agree with the findings from a Kenyan case study in Homa Bay Sub County by (Owuor, Simatwa, & Ndolo, 2022), that concluded that parental occupation influences academic achievement through factors such as role modelling, motivation, educational support, and access to resources. Showing that parental occupation has a statistically significant influence on student academic performance in public secondary schools. Consequently, financial constraints often make it difficult to provide adequate educational support, such as learning resources, a conducive study environment, and consistent parental guidance. These circumstances negatively influence the girl student's academic performance, as she lacks sufficient academic supervision, motivation, and resources needed to fully concentrate on her studies. Similarly, findings of studies by Ogalo, Juma and Simatwa (2014), Juma, Simatwa and Ayodo (2012); Batoya, Simatwa and Ayodo, (2013) who found that parents with stable occupations are able to provide school fees, textbooks, uniforms, and a supportive home environment, which positively influences students' academic performance. These findings support Social Capital Theory, which highlights how economic and social resources enhance educational success. Occupational status contributes to both financial capital and social networks that benefit learners.

Parental involvement includes monitoring academic progress and attending school meetings. In support a Director of Studies in an interview noted that parental involvement is a real challenge in day schools around Homa Bay, and it usually reflects economic pressure more than lack of concern. When parents are working daily for food and basic needs, attending a mid-day meeting can feel like losing a day's survival income. So, the issue is less "they don't care" and more "the model doesn't fit their reality. From the Director of Studies statement, most parents are too busy to attend to school activities like parents meeting. These meetings are where parents get information concerning the girl student progress report, challenges faced in school and way forward for better academic performance. Due to low socioeconomic status, they spend time in fending for family daily needs. However, unlike occupation or education level, it is behavioural and can be improved regardless of socioeconomic background. Similarly, Odumbe (2015) established that parental involvement significantly influences academic performance in public day secondary schools in Kenya. In support, a study conducted in Homa Bay Sub-County, Kenya, found that parental occupational status significantly influenced students' academic performance, highlighting the importance of parental support and engagement in education (Owuor et al., 2022). It is clear therefore, that learners whose parents actively participated in their education were more motivated and academically successful.

With regard to parental income, the findings of this study conquer with those of Ogalo, Juma and Simatwa (2014) and the Ecological Systems Theory developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), which underscores the importance of interactions within the child's immediate environment. Active parental engagement strengthens the microsystem, leading to better academic outcomes. The strong influence of parental income can be explained by the fact that families with higher income levels are often better positioned to provide essential educational resources. Such parents can afford school fees, examination fees, textbooks, revision materials, school uniforms, transport costs, and other learning necessities without causing interruptions to a student's education. Financial stability also reduces the likelihood of absenteeism resulting from unpaid school levies or lack of basic educational requirements. Overall, the high mean score of demonstrates that parental income is perceived as a major determinant of girls' academic performance in mixed day secondary schools. The consensus between teachers and students further underscores the importance of financial resources in supporting educational attainment and creating opportunities for academic excellence. This finding is consistent with Ogalo, Juma and Simatwa (2014) who reported that family income level positively influences academic achievement through increased parental involvement and educational support.

he high rating on student's level of confidence inspired by parents implies that although confidence may not be the strongest determinant of academic performance compared to factors such as parental income or involvement, it still plays an important psychological role in learning outcomes. Students whose parents have higher confidence are more likely to actively participate in classroom activities, ask and respond to questions, complete assignments, and persist when faced with academic difficulties. This enhances their academic engagement and improves overall performance (Hascher et al., 2023). Furthermore, confident students inspired by parents tend to develop positive attitudes toward learning and setting higher academic goals for themselves. They also demonstrate stronger self-motivation and resilience, which help them overcome academic setbacks. In the context of girls' education, confidence can also support learners in overcoming social and environmental barriers that limit classroom participation and achievement. These findings conquer with research showing that academic self-efficacy significantly predicts student engagement and academic success (Wang et al., 2024). The results are also consistent with Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes that individuals' beliefs in their capabilities strongly influence their motivation, persistence, and performance. According to this theory, students

who believe they are capable of succeeding academically are more likely to exert effort and persist in learning tasks, leading to improved academic outcomes (Bandura, 1997).

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that parental occupation, parental involvement, parental income and students level of confidence inspired by parents highly influenced girls academic performance as while parental level of education had moderate influence.

Recommendations

1. Parents, government agencies, Non Governmental Organizationss, and sponsors should support girls from financially disadvantaged families through effective disbursement of bursaries, scholarships, and provision of essential learning materials. Economic empowerment programs for parents should also be encouraged to enhance their ability to support their children's education.
2. Schools should strengthen collaboration with parents through regular meetings and sensitization programs to encourage parents to actively participate in their daughters' education and monitor their academic progress.
3. Motivation speakers should be encouraged as their engagement motivate children to perform better in their academic work.
4. Role models from different professions should be engaged by schools to motivate children in their academic endeavours.

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