Contribution of Family Background on Academic Performance of Vulnerable Girls in Nyaruguru District, Rwanda

Jeanne MUKESHIMANA [1]*, Michael Ng'umbi [2]
[1]PhD Candidate at the Open University of Tanzania, Tanzania
[2]Lecturer and Supervisor at the Open University of Tanzania, Tanzania

Abstract. This paper aims at assessing the contribution of family background on academic performance of vulnerable girls in Rwanda. The assessment goes to what is the contribution of the family background on the academic performance of the vulnerable girls under Malayika Mulinzi program.

For gathering the information, the cross-section survey design was used for 116 respondents. The probabilistic sampling technique was applied to select the respondents. The SSPS version 21 was in use to analyze the data. This study findings revealed that the parents' educational level might perhaps be the main source of influence determining a child's academic achievement.

Keywords: academic performance, vulnerable girls

Introduction

The education of the girls is important in any society. It leads to an improved standard of life for a big part of the community since educated girls would become women who are conscious of health issues, like hygiene and diet. Poor academic performance of the girls is thus an issue that would require a lot of consideration on ways to rectify it and reap benefits (Boakye, 2020).

In Africa, the education of Somali girls and women is already undermined by traditional gender attitudes, household responsibilities, economic barriers, and the timing of classes, and also suffer from the insecurity and violence created by the conflict in the country.

According to the Rwandan Ministry of Local Government, Information and Social Affairs (2003), a vulnerable child is a person under 18 years old exposed to conditions which do not permit him/her to fulfill his/her fundamental rights for his/her harmonious development; while an orphan is a child who has lost one or both parents.

Therefore, education for all policy has been introduced in Rwanda; despite the high population growth and financial constraints, all Rwandan children should attend schools. Issues of vulnerability and gender equality were included for empowering citizens to think critically and understand the challenge they have and can decide on their own for their life (Hannon & Peterson, 2017).

Unfortunately, a several number of children are suffering due to the conditions in which they are born in or by the life circumstances which affect their basic education and values towards their wellbeing. There are initiatives of education programs introduced in the Rwandan community like MALAYIKA MULINZI to address the problem of vulnerable children. This program is a continental campaign of the First Ladies "Treat Every Child as your own" and was launched by the Organization of African First Ladies against HIV/AIDS on 15 September 2005, during the World Summit which was to rekindle traditional Africa values to care for all children in the community. With MALAYIKA MULINZI, the annual awareness campaigns have been organized to recognize the community members who have adopted vulnerable children. The people with a good heart of caring for vulnerable children are known as guardian's angels (Rukundo et al., 2015).

* Corresponding Author

These individuals have set an example in their communities by illustrating that it is each adult's responsibility to protect, care for, and educate children. Despite of campaign made, vulnerable girls are still available in numbers and their adoption is not applied. It is narrowly known as to how the girls perceive themselves as pupils and their attitude towards schooling. Despite all the efforts invested in girls, girls' academic performance is still low. Thus, this calls for a study of contribution of family background on academic performance of vulnerable girls.

Review of Literature

Family Educational Background

According to Tiruneh and Petros (2014), family educational background is one of the factors which affect the education of women, the educated parents would perceive the need of women' education in a better way than those who are not educated. Educated parents might also facilitate the girls' learning at home, encourage continuous follow-up, and motivate them to score better academically. Memon, Joubish, and Khurram (2010) found that the majority of students whose parents were well educated performed better in matriculation examination as compared to those students whose parents were less educated or illiterate.

Kainuwa and Yusuf (2013) observed that literate and academically trained parents are more likely to enroll their daughters in school, than illiterate and traditionally trained ones. This suggests that the home is the most critical domain in the improvement of girls' education. Drajea and Sullivan (2014) indicated that parental illiteracy showed negative associations with children's literacy competence and subsequent success in primary school.

Domestic Household Tasks

Nyatuka (2015) pointed out in a study on the effect of socialization on gender roles on students' academic achievement in secondary schools that the participation of students in domestic household activities harms academic success. Thus, the low mean score in exams among boys and girls involved in the study could be attributed to the effect of domestic chores.

According to Nur (2010), Puntland is primarily a traditional Somali society with a high preference for male children. In the majority of communities, girls are expected to stay at home and attend to domestic household tasks and other subsistence duties. Emmanuel (2015), through his study regarding the influence of household chores on girls' academic performance in secondary schools in Morogoro rural district, found that parents do not consider household chores to be performed regardless of gender; they feel like girls have to perform them.

Family Income

According to Abdinoor et al. (2012), social and economic factors affect performance in Kenya. For example, the majority of the students (67%) said that their families are rearing livestock and farming as the source of income, reported that it, did not sufficiently cater to their needs in schools, hence affecting their performance due to lack of material support.

Chimombo et al. (2000) support that the lack of progress in achieving education EFA is partly due to the specific socio-economic problems in the educational environment. In fact, changes in the political, social and economic areas are also necessary for the education areas. Girls' education is more than an educational issue. It is deeply influenced by poverty, tradition, habits, systems, and discrimination; all requiring a political will, not only just to educate girls, but also to eliminate those non-educational obstacles.

The study of Drajea and O'Sullivan (2014) indicated a household poverty emerged as a major obstacle to educational success for children across the three socio-economic categories of family studied. Compromised lack of time for parent-child interaction proved to be the main obstacle as parents spent significant hours in non-academic matters for the day-to-day survival

of their families (Drajea & Sullivan, 2014).

Parents' Involvement in the Child's Schooling

Parents' involvement in the education of their children is essential because it is related to the pupil's academic success or failure. If parents get involved in their children's learning, their scholastic achievement could improve quite significantly because of parental care and involvement (Keith et al., 1993).

Parental encouragement affects the academic performance of senior secondary school girls. If senior secondary school girls have a high level of parental encouragement, they are likely to show a higher level of academic performance (Narad & Abdullah, 2016).

Parents play vital roles in the life of a child. The involvement of a parent with a child determines the future of the child. Parenting involvement is a catch-all term for many different activities, including good parenting, helping with homework, talking to teachers, attending school functions, and taking part in school governance. When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in schools but throughout life. In fact, the most accurate prediction of a student's performance in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student's parent can create an environment that encourages learning and expressing high expectations for children's achievement and future careers (Bond, 2019).

According to Subedi, Reese and Powell (2015), "pupils' capacity to do well at school is, to a certain degree, dependent on the encouragement they receive from their parents. Parents who take pleasure in helping their children in a warm, affectionate atmosphere appear to instill in their children a strong desire to study. Pupils' achievements efforts are always directed by the attainment values, expectations of success, conception about values and attributes which have been instilled in them by their parents' beliefs and values about academic achievement".

Materials and Methods

The study was employed a cross-sections survey design. A cross-sections survey design is used to collect data and make inferences about study populations at one point in time (Lavrakas, 2008). In this case, the researcher made conclusions about the contribution of family background on academic performance of vulnerable girls. Cross-sectional survey provides a snapshot of the population about which data was gathered from.

The study population of the research was the total respondents to be interviewed are only 116 as a sample size to represent the whole population. This study used a probabilistic sampling technique where all targeted populations had an equal chance for being selected for the general survey and simple random sampling to the selection of the secondary school and the Guardian Angels adopted these girls. Once questionnaires were filled, the researcher was sorted them out, code them, and feed them into (SPSS) Version 21 software for analysis. Descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, %, means, and SD was used to elucidate data which was presented in the form of tables. Person correlations were used to determine the relationships between the variables and data presented in correlation and regression coefficients.

Results and Discussion

Results

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 1a highlighted the demographic data of Guardian Angels of the vulnerable girls in Nyaruguru District. The findings indicated that the majority of Guardian Angels (75.9%) studied primary education. The dominated class age was 46 and above (82.8%) of respondents. The findings show that the 55.2% of respondents were widows.

Table 1a. Presentation of Guardian Angels

Variables	N (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Education			
Primary	22(75.9)	4.69	0.471
Secondary	2(6.9)		
University	1(3.4)		
Other	4(13.8)		
Age			
25-35	2(6.9)	3.76	0.577
36-45	3(10.3)		
46 and above	24(82.8)		
Marital status			
Married	13 (44.8)	3.10	1.012
Widows	16(55.2)		

Table 2b indicates the occupation of Guardian Angels in Nyaruguru District. The findings indicated that the majority of respondents were occupied by trading (69%).

Table 2b. Occupation of Guardian Angels (N=29)

Occupation	N (%)	Mean	SEM	STD
Trade	20(69)	1.41	1.27	0.682
Services/job	3(10.3)	1.90	0.058	0.310
Other	2(6.9)	1.93	0.048	0.258

Impact of occupation of Guardian Angels on the vulnerable girl's performance

Table 3 indicated that the excellent performance of girls depended on the occupation of the Guardian Angels which is statistically significant as $P < 0.05$ (Chi-square=17.611).

Table 3. Impact of occupation of guardian angels on the vulnerable girls' performance

		Occupation		Total
		Yes	**No**	
Performance of vulnerable girls	Excellent	2	0	2
	Very good	5	0	5
	Good	13	3	16
	Not good	0	6	6
Chi-square Test		**Value**	**Df**	**P**
Pearson Chi-Square		17(611)a	3	0.001
Likelihood Ratio		20(481)	3	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association		11.595	1	0.001
Total		**20**	**9**	**29**

Impact of income of Guardian Angels on the vulnerable girls performance

Table 4 indicated that excellent performance is not statistically significant compared to the other variables as chi-square is 4.516a with the $P > 0.05$.

Table 4. Impact of income of Guardian Angels on vulnerable girls

		Income		Total
		Yes	No	
Performance of vulnerable girls	Excellent	1	1	2
	Very good	5	0	5
	Good	15	1	16
	Not good	5	1	6
Chi-square Test		**Value**	**Df**	**p**
Pearson Chi-Square		4.516[a]	3	0.211
Likelihood Ratio		3.630	3	0.304
Linear-by-Linear Association		.265	1	0.607
N of Valid Cases		29		
Total		**26**	**3**	**29**

Domestic chores the vulnerable girls they are involved in after class

In Table 5, the findings indicated that water collection, wood collection, and food collection are the domestic chores reported to be done by vulnerable girls, studying in secondary schools of Nyaruguru District and are statistically significant as $P < 0.05$ (Chi-square=18.125).

Table 5. Rank of domestic chores that vulnerable girls are involved after class

Variables	Mean	Std	Chi-X2	Df	P
Water collection	3.36	0.435	18.125	5	0.003
Cow Feeds collection	3.47	0.455			
Wood collection	3.36	0.435			
House cleaning	3.57	0.471			
Food collection	3.36	0.435			
Transport	3.88	0.501			

Discussion

The results indicated (Table 1) that the majority 75.9% completed primary studies the dominant studies were not specified by 13.8% of the respondents. According to different scholars discussing the impact of parental educational level on the academic performance of students, For illustration, Sackey (2007) argued that parents' educational level might perhaps be the main source of influence determining a child's academic achievement.

This finding is in line with Essien (2002), who found and noted that "parents' level of education has no significant influence on the students' performance in Geography". The study of Foster and Walter (2018) which argued that while the parent's educational qualifications are an indication of their intellectual ability, having well-educated parents can be advantageous for a large number of reasons which, are not solely related to the parents' studies of current research. Therefore, the current study showed that the performance of vulnerable girls does not depend on the education of their guardians because the majority studied primary education. Contrary, Guo and Harris (2000) observed and noted that in Ghana and South Africa states, students' performance in school was strongly associated with their parents' educational attainments. This is not in line with the current study.

The same accounts for occupation of the Guardian Angles which indicated that excellent performance of girls depended on the occupation of the Guardian Angels while there was no impact of income on the academic performance of vulnerable girls. These results are contrary to the findings of the study about the influence of parent's economic status on girls 'Academic

performance in mixed day secondary schools. This study concludes that there is a positive influence of parents' economic status on girls' academic performance. The latter suggests that girls' academic performance will be high as their parent's income is high (Padley, Martínez & Hirsch, 2015).

Ayodo et al. (2012) note that girls from parents of high economic status performed better than those from low-income parents. The latter is because girls from high-income families are well catered for and hence have a higher concentration in learning, compared with those from low-income families. The latter are less catered for and instead are involved in domestic chores leading to less concentration in learning, which results in poor academic performance. According to Baliyan, Madhava, and Baliyan (2012), the income level, the mother's and father's educational level, have a significant influence on the performance of students.

Also, Daley and Bourne (2016) have similar observations regarding the socioeconomic status: parental occupation affects students' academic performance. In Canada, it was found that parental occupation contributed to students' success at school (Frederickson & Petrides, 2008).

The domestic chores after class were mostly including fetching water, wood collection, and food collection in the Nyaruguru district. This study fits integrally to the study of Karani (2006) cited by Emmanuel (2015). He argues that poor performance by girls in secondary schools and especially in rural areas, is attributed to a greater demand imposed on girls to assist with household chores such as fetching water, collecting firewood, helping with the cooking and caring for the young. This household chore interferes with schooling and depresses girls' performance (Emmanuel, 2015).

Gashahun (2019) noted that "parents with low economic status ,lack of adequate role model female teachers and early marriage were major problems affecting the academic performance of female students". This is in line with a simulation and sensitivity analysis in Egypt, performed by Assaad et al. (2010), cited by Abou (2016). It showed that the "number of hours of domestic work negatively and significantly affects the educational results of girls.

Conclusion

As conclusion, the research findings of the study conducted in Nyaruguru District concerned the contribution of family background on academic performance of vulnerable girls. Respondents reported that family background including poverty, illiteracy of the family and occupation in the family influence the academic performance. In contrast, their income does not affect vulnerable girls' performance. This could be heavily depended upon the involvement of the Malayika Mulinzi program in their academic activities (such as support in the learning process) to attain the higher level of quality in girls' academic success. The household duties such as fetching water, wood collection, and food collection, affect academic performance.

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Author Profile

Jeanne MUKESHIMANA is the Open University of Tanzania PhD candidate, a Red Cross and Red Crescent movement member. She is the holder of master degree in Education planning and Policy study, she is also a community worker, Sub-Saharan Africa first aid expert.