

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Opportunities and challenges for mixed day secondary school headteachers in promoting girl-child education in Kenya: A case study of Kisumu municipality**

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**Despite Kenya Government's commitment to enhancement of girl-child education, their participation rate at secondary school level is still notably low. Many studies on the girl-child education have concentrated in the rural populations with the assumption that the situation in the urban setting is nearly ideal. This was not the case as was evidenced in the period 2004-2007 whereby, mixed day secondary schools in Kisumu Municipality were averagely made up of only 43% girls. Headteachers as implementers of government policies are well placed to enhance girl child participation in mixed day secondary schools. The purpose of this study was therefore to investigate the opportunities, challenges and coping strategies for headteachers in the promotion of secondary school girl-child education. The findings of the study were that headteachers had several opportunities such as financial resources, government policies, political goodwill, personnel and facilities to promote girl-child participation in secondary education. Headteachers faced challenges including indiscipline, inadequate facilities and personnel, poverty and girl-child drop-out. Strategies to cope with the challenges were government policies, parental involvement and availing resources and personnel for the girl-child education. Based on the findings, the study recommended that the government should formulate appropriate educational policies whose implementation would be monitored and evaluated to improve Girl child education. Besides, the headteacher should facilitate the affordability of girl-child education in mixed day secondary schools.**

**Key words:** Opportunities, challenges, strategies, girl-child, secondary, education, Kisumu, Kenya.

## **INTRODUCTION**

High girl-child participation rate in education is crucial in a modern society. This is because education is one of the most effective instruments a nation has at its disposal for promoting sustainable social and economic development (Republic of Kenya, 1999). It leads to increased productivity of the educated as a means of human resource development for communal benefit (Republic of Kenya, 2002). Girl-child education raises economic productivity, reduces poverty and fertility rates, lowers infant and maternal mortality, and improves health,

nutrition and environmental management (World Bank, 2002).

Several factors influence girl-child participation in education. These factors include proximity to schools, the degree of motivation within schools, aspiration of the pupils themselves, their employment prospects and their level of achievement. In Zimbabwe for example, the enrolment figures in secondary school for girls have continued to decline in relation to that of boys (Graham, 2002). Thus in 1987, Matabeleland South, had 45.5% girls in form one compared to the national average of 43.6%, but by form four, they were 36.6% against the national mean of 38.9%.

In Kenya, the primary school average net enrolment rate

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**Table 1.** Student enrolment by gender in mixed day secondary schools from the year 2004 to 2007 in Kisumu Municipality, Kenya.

Year	Boys		Girls		Total enrolment
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
2004	4902	57.21	3665	42.78	8567
2005	4917	56.41	3799	43.59	8716
2006	5335	55.88	4212	44.11	9547
2007	5287	56.70	4037	43.29	9324
Average	5110	56.54	3928	43.44	8978

Source: DEO's office, Kisumu East District, 2008.

between the year 2000 and 2006 was 82.36% against a completion rate of 68.33% for girls in comparison with net enrolment rate of 82.26% for boys, and completion of 76.06% over the same period. The fact that in secondary schools the national gross enrolment rate was 29.9% for girls and 34.6% for boys indicated lower transition rates for girls than for boys at secondary level and eventually low participation rates. The mean enrolment rate in Nyanza Province in Kenya was at 28.7% for girls and 35.7% boys while Kisumu Municipality had a rate of 32.3% for boys and 22.7% for girls, much lower than both the national and provincial average rates (Republic of Kenya, 2006). In order to improve girl-child participation in secondary education, it is important to address opportunities, challenges and strategies for headteachers. This is because the headteacher is in a strategic position in the translation of ministry policies and objectives into programmes within a school set up. In this regard, the headteacher has an obligation to coordinate human resources, physical resources, materials, time and money in promoting girl-child participation in secondary education not only as a foundation for future career pursuits, but also as a developmental challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Statement of the problem

Considerable evidence showed that nationally, there were more girls than boys at the on-set of schooling yet as they moved up the academic ladder, the number kept declining creating a notable gender disparity with regard to access, retention, and completion of the secondary school cycle (World Bank, 1995). Secondary education is critical given that it prepares both boys and girls for tertiary education, career choice, and for overall effective community roles, survival and development. Available data on comparative enrolment in mixed day secondary schools within Kisumu Municipality as shown in Table 1 revealed a notable lower girl-child participation rate in secondary education compared to the boy-child.

It was revealed from Table 1 that on the average for

the period 2004 to 2007 only 43.44% of secondary school population was girls. This was against the expectation that there should have been enhanced participation rates within urban settings since the 1999 census revealed that there were more females than males in the population (Republic of Kenya, 2002). The headteacher, being the accounting officer and implementer of government policies at school level, is crucial in enhancing girl-child participation in secondary education. It was therefore necessary to investigate the challenges, opportunities and strategies for mixed day secondary school headteachers in the promotion of girl-child participation in secondary education in Kisumu Municipality.

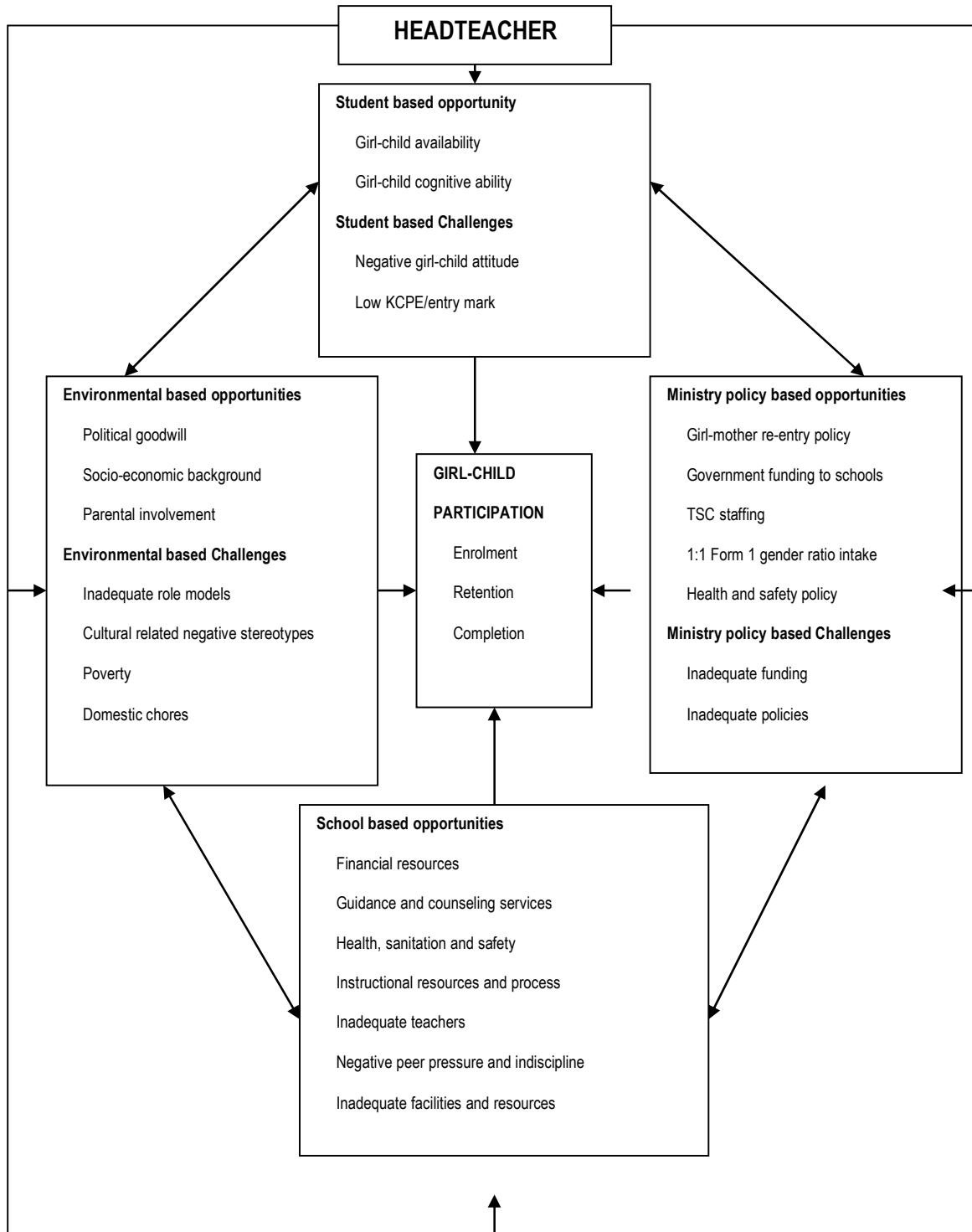
### Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What opportunities are there for mixed day secondary school headteachers in promoting girl-child participation in secondary education in Kisumu Municipality?
2. What challenges do mixed day secondary school headteachers face in promoting girl-child participation in secondary education in Kisumu Municipality?
3. What strategies can be used by headteachers to cope with challenges of promoting girl-child participation in secondary education in mixed day schools in Kisumu Municipality?

### Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework (Figure 1) was used to help focus on the variables in the study. These variables included: the student, ministry of education policy, school and environment. All the variables had perceived opportunities and challenges that the headteacher was bound to have in the process of enhancing girl-child participation in secondary education.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework showing opportunities and challenges for headteachers of mixed day secondary schools in promoting girl-child participation in education.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The area of the study was Kisumu Municipality with a target population of 26 headteachers, 293 teachers, 2020 female students and 2600

male students in forms 3 and 4. Data were collected using the questionnaire, in-depth interview schedule and observation guide. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 303 female and 306 male students in forms 3 and 4, simple random sampling for 153 teachers and 23 headteachers, and saturated

sampling for 1 District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. The instruments were validated after which piloting was done in 10% of mixed day secondary schools in Kisumu Municipality, that were not part of the study sample, to ensure their reliability. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in form of percentages and frequency counts while qualitative data were transcribed, classified and reported in an ongoing process as themes and sub-themes emerged.

## RESULTS

### **Question 1: What opportunities are there for mixed day secondary school headteachers in promoting girl-child participation in secondary education in Kisumu Municipality?**

In response to this question, headteachers, teachers, female and male students respondents were asked to indicate in a questionnaire the opportunities headteachers in mixed day secondary schools had for promotion of girl-child participation in education. Their responses were tallied to find frequencies then converted into percentages as shown in Figure 2. Twenty opportunities were cited by respondents, as being at the disposal of headteachers to enhance girl-child participation in mixed day secondary schools in Kisumu Municipality.

**Financial resources:** Availability of financial resources was cited as opportunity for the headteachers of mixed day secondary schools in Kisumu Municipality by 51% male and 40% female students, 45% teachers and 90% headteachers (Figure 2). The funds were from government grants, Free Secondary Education fund, Constituency Development Fund due to political goodwill, school fund raising, amongst other varied well-wishers. Headteachers explained when interviewed that these funds were used to provide textbooks, equip laboratories and libraries, pay for water and electricity bills besides the subordinate staff salaries, and to expand and maintain the school plant. District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer indicated that additional funds could be sourced from parents with the approval of the District Education Board.

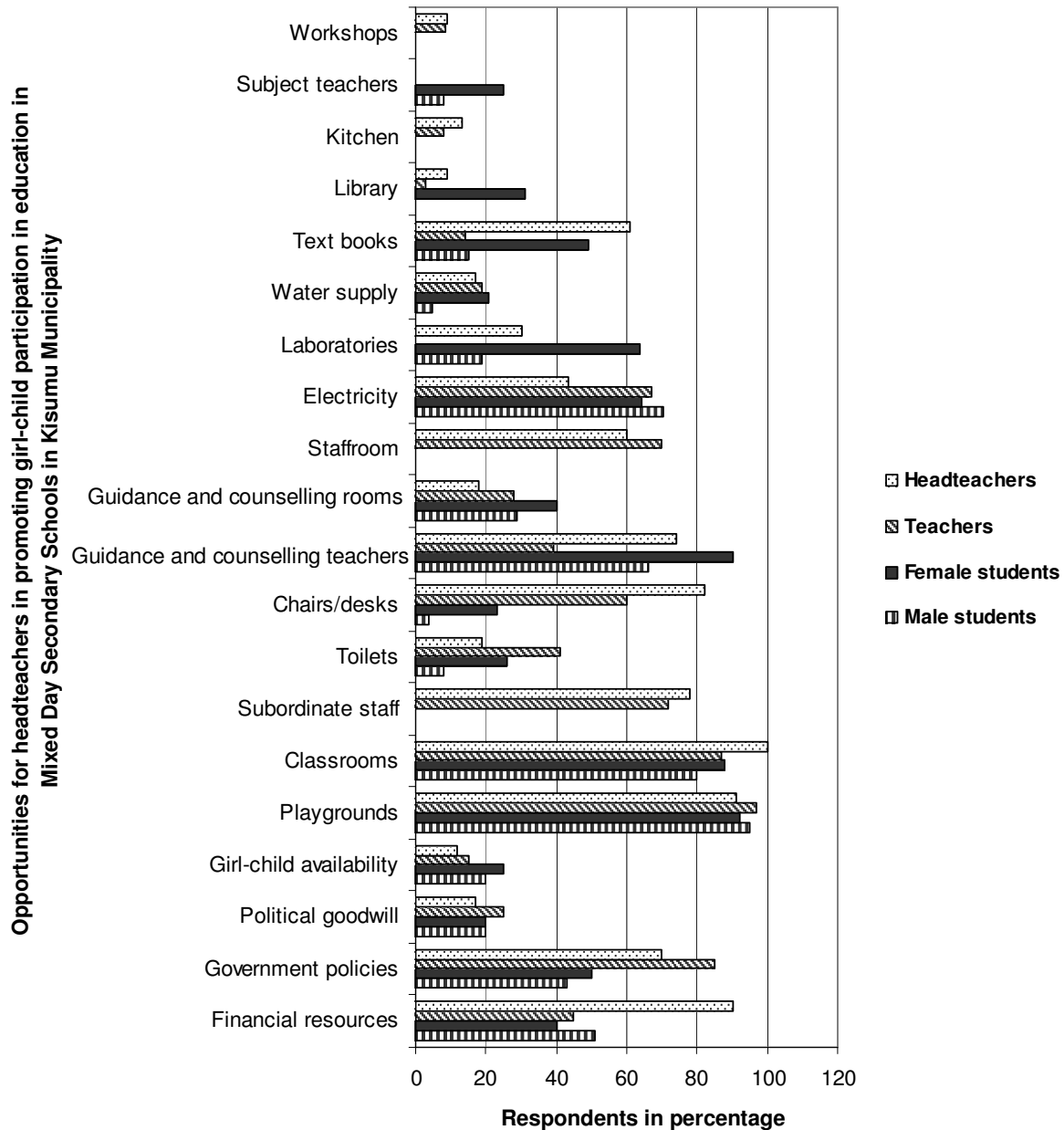
**Government policies and political goodwill:** Policies as opportunities were identified by 43% male students, 50% female students, 85% teachers, and 70% headteachers (Figure 2). Girl-mother re-entry, Legal Notice 56/2001 against corporal punishment besides those that are in line with Guidance and Counseling in schools, Health and safety policies, School fee guidelines, and government teacher staffing norms for adequacy in personnel were monitored by District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer to ensure that the girl-child was not only available in school, but also benefited

meaningfully from teaching–learning process. This would only come to reality if supported by political goodwill that was available as indicated by 17% headteachers, 25% teachers, 20% female students and 20% male students as presented in Figure 2. Without this goodwill government policies would not be realized effectively.

**Facilities and resources:** Playgrounds that were specific to girl-child needs were netball, volleyball and football as cited by 91% headteachers, 97% teachers, 92% female students and 95% male students. Female toilets cited by 19% headteachers, 41% teachers, 26% female students and 8% male students coupled with Guidance and counseling services that were sensitive to girl-child needs were available with some measure of adequacy as was indicated by 74% headteachers, 39% teachers, 90% female students and 66% male students as shown in Figure 2. Other opportunities included laboratories as indicated by 30% headteachers, 64% female students, and 19% male students and workshops for science and technical subjects as cited by 9% headteachers, 8.5% teachers which are necessary in the move towards industrialization. For most of the respondents, textbooks as indicated by 61% headteachers, 14% teachers 49% female students and 15% male students libraries were minimally available as indicated by 9% headteachers, 3% teachers and 31% female students. To facilitate girl-child participation for classroom exercises, homework and references to complement teacher in-put. Kitchen facility as indicated by 13% headteachers and 8% teachers were important in a day school since Free Secondary Education policy envisaged a lunch programme to ensure an adequate midday meal for all students and for the girl-child to limit possibility of exposure to out of school hostile environment that has sex pests and drug peddlers among other challenges. Other opportunities included water as cited by 17% headteachers, 19% teachers, 20.8% female students and 4.6% male students, and electricity by 43.5% headteachers, 67.3% teachers, 64.1% female students and 70.6% male students (Figure 2).

**Staff personnel:** These included subject teachers as indicated by 25% female students and 8% male students, whose function was to facilitate the core function of the school, curriculum implementation, and Guidance and Counseling teachers who offered complementary services with regard to personal, health, social and personal issues that if left unattended would hinder achievement of educational goals. Similarly, subordinate staff had opportunities available for both academic and non-academic services for the girl-child such as cleaning, entertainment, examination production, meal preparation and security as cited by 78% headteachers and 72% teachers (Figure 2).

**Girl-child availability:** Girl-child availability was cited by 20% male and 25% female students, 15% teachers and

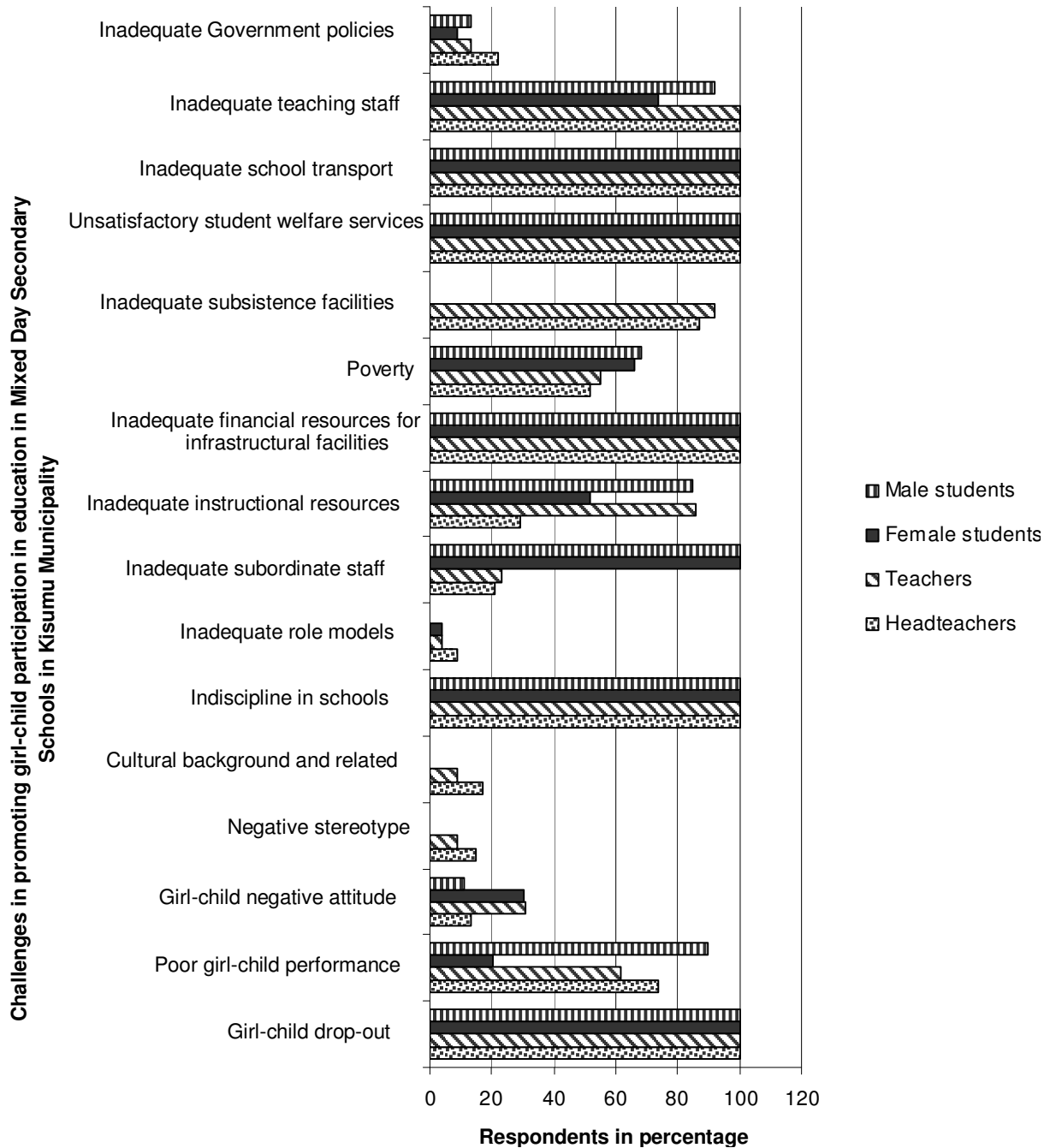


**Figure 2.** Opportunities available for headteachers of mixed day secondary schools in the promotion of girl-child education in Kisumu Municipality as indicated by headteachers (n=23), teachers (n=153), female students (n=303) and male students (n=306).

in number of students. Some headteachers 12% headteachers as an opportunity for headteachers in the promotion of their participation in secondary education (Figure 2). According to headteachers, this was facilitated by reporting to school on time every school day in the term and being available for both regular and extra teaching hours for instance at lunch time and on Saturdays that was monitored using school Daily Attendance Register.

No opportunity was adequate as perceived by all the respondents (Figure 3), but as observed, schools were

operating with a measure of satisfaction in some cases due to improvisation like using makeshift structures for kitchens and classrooms as workshops and laboratories while staffrooms and tree shades were used for guidance and counseling. District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer indicated that man can never be 100% satisfied with available opportunities since even when a pressing need is met another priority emerged sometimes due to change in fashion and technology, curriculum, interaction with others through travel and communication, or increase explained when interviewed that some of their schools



**Figure 3.** Challenges faced by headteachers in promoting girl-child participation in education in mixed day secondary schools in Kisumu Municipality as cited by headteachers (n=23), teachers (n=153), female students (n=303) and male students (n=306).

were young and hence were yet to establish the school plant adequately, they suffered inadequate funding mainly due to poor payment of school fees by parents hence limiting appropriate investment, and poor plant maintenance practices by subordinate staff, teachers and students necessitating costly irregular repair and replacement by school management.

**Question 2: What challenges do mixed day secondary school headteachers face in promoting girl-child participation in secondary education in Kisumu Municipality?**

The headteachers, teachers, female and male students respondents were asked to indicate in a questionnaire

the challenges headteachers of mixed day secondary schools were facing in the process of promoting girl-child participation in education. Their responses were tallied to find out the frequencies and percentages and then presented graphically (Figure 3).

**Inadequate Government policies:** This challenge was indicated by 22% headteachers, 13% teachers, 9% female students and 13% male student respondents (Figure 3). For instance, girl-mother re-entry policy was not fully supported by headteachers who preferred that their affected students relocate to other different schools to deter other girls from emulating them, and to save them further embarrassment of being mocked by their schoolmates that would hinder effective participation. Money disbursed through Free Secondary Education policy fund was inadequate to meet girl-child needs since it had suffered inflation overtime besides not catering for girl-child unique needs like sanitary pads, whose absence affected school attendance in a number of cases. It was observed that teachers in mixed day secondary schools in Kisumu Municipality continued to administer corporal punishment against government ban in the year 2001 thereby continuing to cause psychological and physical injury to the girl-child. Inadequate teaching staff in quality and availability especially in subjects that are favoured by the girl-child such as History and English besides those that require enhanced teacher-learner contact such as Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics was a challenge to headteachers in the promotion of girl-child participation as indicated by 100% headteachers and teachers, 74% female students and 92% male students (Figure 3). The foregoing compounded with limited stimulating educational experiences arising out of inadequate school transport indicated by 100% respondents (Figure 3) and time for academic field trips and co-curricular activities had a negative impact on girl-child participation.

**Inadequate financial resources for infrastructural facilities:** This was indicated by all (100%) respondents and attributed partly to poverty as reported by 52% headteachers, 55% teachers, 66% female students and 68% male students (Figure 3). Total orphans were 32% of the female respondents while only 20% had both parents alive implying that majority of girls in mixed day secondary schools in Kisumu Municipality relied upon well-wishers and guardians for their up-keep in school. For the consequence was that he/she was unable to purchase enough instructional resources as indicated by 29% headteachers, 86% teachers, 52% female students and 85% male students (Figure 3) such as text and exercise books, to employ adequate subordinate staff to sufficiently support teacher-learning activities in the school such as through cleaning, repair and maintenance of school facilities, laboratory assistance, and security provision. Unsatisfactory student welfare services indicated by all (100%) respondents were evident given the absence of school nurses and irregular water supply.

In one school where there was an attempt to address the long distance to school and its effects such as insecurity for the girl-child who leaves home very early in the dark and returns very late in the evening, there was a classroom improvised into a makeshift dormitory that was inappropriate since it was conjoined with that of the boy-child limiting her privacy and possibly exposing her to naughty boys. These were inadequate subsistence facilities according to 87% headteachers and 92% teachers (Figure 3).

**Student indiscipline:** All (100%) respondents identified indiscipline as a challenge to girl-child participation (Figure 3). A significant percentage of students in mixed day secondary schools in Kisumu Municipality live in slums and other informal settlements. This compromised discipline standards because, according to District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, the headteacher could not control activities the girl-child involved herself in such as prostitution, drug abuse, fighting, poor dressing, and other forms of distracters outside the school setting, in the evenings, weekends and during holidays. Headteachers explained that the permissive environment in which some of the students are brought up coupled with poor role models, indicated by 9% headteachers, 4% teachers and female students (Figure 3), inculcate a negative attitude towards secondary education in the girl-child as cited by 13% headteachers, 31% teachers, 30% female students and 11% male students (Figure 3). In such low income dwellings, there was inadequate food, room for sleeping and light for carrying out extra studies in the evenings. The other challenge was that some of the significant personalities to be emulated by the girl-child, particularly women, were little educated or had become outstanding through crime or sheer luck hence disorienting the girl-child from virtues such as hard work, goal setting and commitment in education. This study revealed that their mothers or female guardians who are naturally their immediate role models had attained the following levels of education; 2% no formal education, 16% primary 76% secondary, 6% post-secondary education. Girl-child attitude was to a large extent also influenced by cultural background and related negative stereotypes as cited by 15% headteachers, and 9% teachers (Figure 3).

Over the school year period 2003-2008, Kisumu Municipality mixed day secondary schools girl-child term results were below average. The headteachers indicated that the girl-child scores were as follows: grade As 0.2%, Bs 20.4%, Cs 64.8%, Ds 14.5% and Es 0.1%. Headteachers and teachers were further asked to give reasons why girls in Kisumu Municipality performed poorly. Their responses are as shown in Table 2.

The main reasons for poor performance given were domestic chores (23.86%), indiscipline (15.90%) and poor curriculum implementation (14.20%). The least important reason was motherhood and adolescence

**Table 2:** Reasons for Poor Performance of the Girl-child as indicated by Headteachers (n=23) and Teachers (n=153) in Mixed Day Secondary Schools in Kisumu Municipality in Kenya.

Reason	Headteacher	Teacher	Total	
	f	f	f	%
Domestic chores	7	35	42	23.86
Poor curriculum implementation	5	20	25	14.20
Peer influence	3	21	24	13.63
Absenteeism	3	17	20	11.36
Boy-girl relationship	1	10	11	6.25
Low entry mark	2	20	22	12.5
Indiscipline	2	26	28	15.90
Motherhood in adolescence	0	4	4	2.30
Total	23	153	176	100.0

f= Frequency ,% = Percentage.

(2.30%).

In response to an item on their general rating of girl-child performance in their school, 73.9% headteachers, 61.4% teachers, 20.5% female students and 89.5% male students indicated that it was below average (Figure 3). In relation to poor performance, the study found out that 21% female respondents had repeated at least one class in secondary school, 30% of them due to poor performance in class work.

Respondents were asked to give two reasons why girls in their schools dropped-out of the system. Their responses are as shown in Table 3.

The reasons given for drop-out were varied, the most prevalent being poverty and repetition. The least important reasons for this were getting married and sickness.

### Question 3: What Strategies can be used by headteachers to cope with challenges in promoting girl-child participation in mixed day secondary schools in Kisumu Municipality?

The respondents were asked to suggest the strategies for headteachers in coping with the challenges in promoting girl-child participation in secondary education in Kisumu Municipality. Their responses are presented as shown in Figure 4.

**Educational policies:** All (100%) respondents as shown in Figure 4, suggested formulation of girl-child appropriate policies and implementation of existing ones as a measure for enhanced participation. The suggestions included: issuing of bursaries and scholarships, employment of teachers, equipping all schools, offering civic education to the public on girl-child participation, separate boy and girl-schools, provide sanitary pads, build more boarding schools, curriculum review and motivation of teachers.

**Parental Involvement:** All (100%) respondents suggested that it was important to involve parents more as shown in Figure 4. The parents are to: Reduce domestic chores to create study time for girl-child, motivate girls to go to school, pay fees, provide sanitary pads, offer guidance and counseling, provide learning resources, treat all children equitably, provide adequate meals at home, participate in school activities, enforce discipline, follow-up on drop out cases and be role models as a step towards enhanced girl-child participation in secondary education.

**Instructional resources:** It was necessary for school authorities to: maintain 1:1 student-text book ratio, construct and expand existing school plant, have a suggestion box or forum where complaints regarding resource use and availability could be highlighted, establish a maintenance fund, and improve maintenance practices to optimize girl-child participation. This was suggested by 91% headteachers, 80% teachers, 65% female students and 70% male students (Figure 4).

**School motivational schemes:** As indicated in Figure 4, 91% headteachers, 81% teachers, 70% female students and 63% male students suggested the following; giving of material rewards to teachers, students and subordinate staff, certification and promotion for teachers and appointment of girls to leadership position in schools as important measures in the promotion of girl-child participation in secondary education.

**Role models for the girl-child:** This could be done by; invitation of female guest speakers, teachers being role models in the course of their duty and use of outstanding students both from within their mixed day schools and from neighbouring schools as suggested by 41% headteachers, 84% teachers, 48% female students and 89% male students as shown in Figure 4.



**Table 3.** Reasons for girl-child drop out in Kisumu Municipality mixed day secondary schools as indicated by headteachers (n=23), teachers(n=153), female students (n=303), and male students (n=306).

Reason	HT	TR	FS	MS	T	T
	f	f	F	f	F	%
Poverty/fees	12	84	200	209	505	32.17
Repetition	12	100	147	241	500	31.85
Poor attitude	3	47	90	33	173	11.02
Poor performance	1	21	46	51	119	7.58
Indiscipline	8	22	49	40	119	7.58
Transfer	4	11	52	17	84	5.35
Pregnancy	4	11	12	9	36	2.29
Marriage	1	7	3	8	19	1.21
Sickness	1	3	7	4	15	0.95
Total	46	306	606	612	1570	100.00

HT, Headteachers; TR, Teachers; FS, Female students; MS, Male students; f, Frequency; T, Total.

**Improvement on teachers:** As shown in Figure 4, 30% headteachers, 100% teachers, 56% female students and 81% male students contended that it could be done by exposing teachers to seminars and workshops to enhance girl-child needs sensitivity, acquiring better teaching methodology, employing more teachers to meet shortfalls in schools, and accommodating them in the school compound.

**Affordable school levies:** The girl-child in a mixed day school could pay for lunch programme, school educational tours, club activities, and infrastructural development. This should be charged reasonably. Others include establishing income generating activities to reduce the financial burden on parents, cutting down on luxuries such as expensive meals and unnecessary school tours, informing parents well in advance in case of additional school levies, and having a reliable accounting system that is believable by parents. This was suggested by 23% teachers, 67% female students and 51% male students (Figure 4). District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, when interviewed, indicated that the position of the government was that schools were not to send away students, especially girls, due to school fee arrears.

**Guidance and counselling services:** Guidance and Counselling could be used to address academic issues, interpersonal relations, adolescent morality, discipline, drug abuse, and sexual harassment to ensure optimum girl-child participation in secondary education as suggested by 52% headteachers, 67% teachers, 43% female students and 61% male students (Figure 4).

**Co-curriculum activities:** According to 21% headteachers, 45% teachers, 21% female students and 16% male students (Figure 4), this may be through social

interaction, and activities such as singing, dancing, sporting, dramatizing, handiwork and debating as a measure to enhance girl-child participation in secondary education.

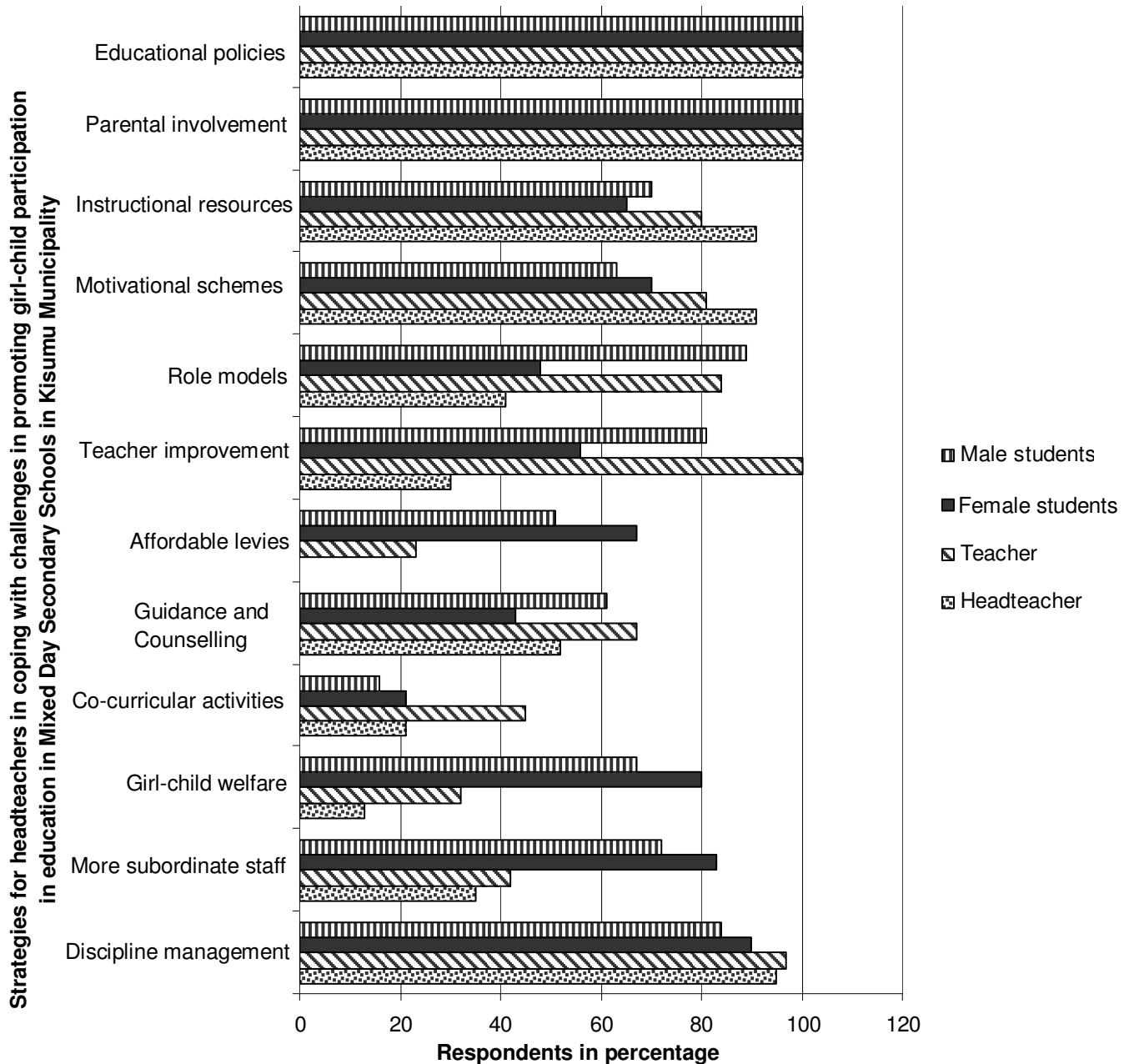
**Girl-child welfare:** Welfare services could include the provision of meals, transport to school, personal needs such as body lotion, shoe polish and neat uniform besides sanitary pads and appropriate toilets. This could include routine medical check up for the girl-child so as to address any emerging issues, and forum to air girl-child welfare concerns. This was the opinion of 13% headteachers, 32% teachers, 80% female students and 67% male students (Figure 4).

**More subordinate staff:** Increasing of the number of subordinate staff in schools to enhance the general school operations which include offering security, medical, welfare and clerical services to facilitate girl-child participation in secondary education in mixed day schools was a strategy suggested by 35% headteachers, 42% teachers, 83% female students and 72% male students (Figure 4).

**Management of discipline in schools:** Management of discipline in schools was a strategy suggested by 95% headteachers, 97% teachers, 90% female students, and 84% male students to control boy-child and girl-child behaviour so as to facilitate their participation in a peaceful and organized academic atmosphere (Figure 4).

## DISCUSSION

The forgoing has given an analytical review of the opportunities available, challenges and strategies for headteachers of mixed day secondary schools in Kisumu



**Figure 4.** Strategies for headteachers in coping with challenges in the promotion of girl-child participation in secondary education as indicated by headteachers (n=23), teachers (n=153), female students (n=303), and male students (n=306).

Municipality in their endeavors to promote girl-child participation in secondary education.

The study revealed that there were many opportunities for headteachers to use in the promotion of girl-child secondary education. The findings on girl-child availability, Guidance and counseling teachers and girl-child's motivation were consistent with Bandura's Social Learning Theory which states that students come from home not as empty slates but with a world view, expectations, and aspirations that can be used by the teacher to enhance their participation in learning (Papilia

et al., 1990). The finding on the role of guidance and counseling services in promoting girl-child participation in secondary education agrees with Bogonko's (1992) assertion that guidance and counseling helps the girl-child to cope with uncertainty and anxiety that comes with puberty in society with high levels of permissiveness. Guidance and counseling services are very beneficial to the girl-child as they enable her to realize her potentialities that provide for goal-setting. Kisumu Municipality has high levels of permissiveness such that for the girl-child to participate in secondary education,

there should be effective guidance and counseling services. Besides, guidance and counseling is the opportunity in which all other opportunities for promotion of girl-child participation in secondary education are anchored. Thus, the headteacher can only take the advantage of all these opportunities when the girl-child is available and is psychologically prepared and ready to learn.

The findings on poverty, lack of female role models, anti-girl-child socio-cultural factors, poor teacher quality, girl-child negative attitude, ineffective government policies as challenges facing headteachers in the promotion of girl-child secondary education agree with the findings of Juma (1994) who in a related study in Kwale and Taita-Taveta Districts, Kenya, found that educated mothers served as role models to the school going age-child. This means that lack of female role models impedes girl-child participation in education. These findings were also consistent with Ngaruiya's (2008) findings in a related study in Transmara District, Kenya, which indicated that poverty is an impediment to girl-child participation in secondary education since most parents live below poverty line and view education as a male domain. The findings also agree with Oloo's (2003) findings in a related study in Migori District, Kenya, where he found that the girl-child is a victim of stereotyping arising out of deep rooted socio-cultural norms and ideals which classify education as a male field. These findings also agree with Kasente's (1996) in a related study in the Republic of Uganda where he found out that teachers criticized students responses and other gender based teacher-pupil relationships that created inferiority complex among female students. Girls were often described as stupid and lazy, which articulated lower expectations. In effect, these challenges are a serious impediment to girl-child participation in secondary education. The headteachers should effectively address these challenges for the girl-child secondary education to be realized in Kisumu Municipality.

To cope with the challenges facing headteachers in the promotion of girl-child participation in secondary education, many strategies were suggested. These included: Involving the government through its policies and personnel such as District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, parental involvement in girl-child academic activities and discipline, use of more instructional resources, motivational schemes for both teachers and students, use of role models, improvement on teacher performance, charging affordable levies, guidance and counseling, co-curriculum activities, better girl-child welfare services, more subordinate staff and prudent discipline management. On the whole, all possible steps are related to educational policies by the government, in schools and at home (Graham, 2002). Craig (1990) summarized experiences in implementing educational policies by reference to various studies which revealed that although those involved in policy making

often blamed failures to implement them on resource constraints and that while shortage of monetary and other material resources often were the proximate causes of implementation failures, it was important for analytical purposes to distinguish between those constraints that could have been foreseen and those that were unpredictable. It is imperative that formulated policies should be focused to exploit and facilitate existent opportunities for headteachers of mixed day schools besides addressing the challenges that threaten girl-child participation in secondary education.

## Conclusion

Considering the findings of this study, it was concluded that headteachers must play a strategic role if girl-child participation in secondary education in Kisumu Municipality and Kenya at large is to be improved. Poverty appears to be the baseline challenge which impacts negatively on participation. For instance, it causes the girl-child absenteeism alongside inadequate personnel, infrastructure, instructional resources welfare and subsistence needs of the girl-child. It leads to indiscipline as it motivates negative attitude, prostitution, drug abuse and theft, besides determining the conduciveness of the home environment to facilitate undertaking take-home academic assignments and personal study. School girls are more likely to engage in overburdening domestic chores in low income homesteads than in high income ones where parents are more likely to offer a conclusive academic atmosphere due to higher levels of awareness. Educational policies are the means through which government agenda can be enforced to achieve set goals hence the need to formulate and implement them strategically considering the opportunities and challenges that face headteachers of mixed day secondary schools in Kisumu Municipality and Kenya at large. Continuous monitoring and evaluation procedures need to be effective so as to get feedback from stakeholders for further appropriate strategies to promote girl-child participation in education.

## Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions of this study the following recommendations were made:

1. The government should consider more funding to schools to avert impact of poverty; employ and in-service more teachers to address girl-child academic needs; co-curricula and personal needs for enhancement of girl-child participation in education.
2. Headteachers should encourage parents and guardians to attend to the needs of the girl-child by providing adequate meals at home, promptly paying school

fees and other levies, giving enough pocket money and daily fares to and fro school where necessary, providing sanitary pads monthly, discipline management and allowing reasonable study time in a conducive home environment. They should also be good role models and counselors to the girl-child.

3. Headteachers of mixed day secondary schools as supervisors of implementation of government policies to achieve goals of education, should source for funds, create income generating projects, urge government, donors and well-wishers to provide funds for infrastructure, instructional resources and employment of staff personnel. This would reduce the burden of non-critical payments and help moderate fees charged in schools to enhance girl-child participation in education.

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