

**FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO GIRL CHILD DROPOUT IN PUBLIC PRIMARY  
SCHOOLS IN THANGATHA ZONE, TIGANIA EAST SUB-COUNTY, MERU  
COUNTY**

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors that contribute to girl-child dropout in public primary schools in Thangatha zone, Tigania East Sub-County, Meru County. The numbers of girls who sit for Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), coupled with enrolment statistics in the zone had specifically motivated this study. Not only had the completion rate of girls at primary school level been dismal but also comparatively low in Thangatha zone. The study therefore sought to assess the effect of home factors on girl child dropout; it also sought to establish whether cultural beliefs had any influence on girl child dropout; the study also investigated the influence of early sexual maturation on girl child dropout and assessed the effect of school based factors on girl child dropout. The study findings were expected to enable educationists and policy makers come up with strategies for helping the girl child. Schools also benefited in that they may come up with programmes to support the girl child and keep her in school, parents and guardians benefited by becoming knowledgeable and helped keep girls in school until completion. The study was guided by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory and Classical Liberal Theory of Equal Opportunities by Charles Darwin with the conceptual framework showing interrelationship of various factors influencing girl-child school dropout. The empirical literature was based on the objectives under study, and cited what other researchers had dealt with and their findings. Descriptive survey research design was used with the target population being 340 respondents comprising of 300 class seven pupils, 20 teachers and 20 headteachers. A sample size of 85 respondents was arrived at using simple random sampling method for pupils and purposive sampling method for teachers and headteachers. Questionnaires were the main data collecting instruments. Piloting of the research instruments was done to test the validity and their reliability and ethical considerations were put into place during the whole process of data collection. The collected data was analysed in table and presented in pie charts and bar graphs. The study found out that that home-based factors such as parental poverty, household work, preference for boy child educations had a negative impact on the girl-child educations which resulted to their dropout from schools in Thangatha zone. The study findings also indicated that some cultural beliefs such as undergoing FGM, girls should stay home to look for young ones and boys' education was better than that of the girl greatly contributed to girls dropping out of school. It was also discovered that early sexual maturation contributed a lot to girls dropping out of school since girls engaged in premarital sexual activities which resulted to unwanted pregnancies thus forcing them out of school. The study also found out that school related factors, such as forcing girls to repeat classes, lack of school uniform, lack of provision of sanitary towels in school as well as lack of enough sanitations contributed a lot to girls dropping out of school. Based on these findings the study made several recommendations to the players in education of the girl-child.