

**ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCE OF GIRL-CHILD ACCESS TO SECONDARY
SCHOOL EDUCATION IN BUNGOMA COUNTY: A CASE OF MOUNT ELGON
DISTRICT, KENYA.**

SCHOLASTICA NAMALWA NALOBILE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish environmental influence of girl –child access to secondary school education in Mount Elgon District. Despite impressive development towards achieving gender parity on access to education, enrolment statistics in Mount Elgon District at secondary school level reveals a worrying experience due to unknown environmental factors. For instance, in the year 2011, nine hundred and seven (907) girls enrolled for KCPE in the district and only 458 (50%) girls joined secondary schools in 2012; implying that accessibility of secondary school education to girls was limited. The girls' enrolment is low compared to boys. The study objectives were to; establish the influence of community and family factors, home environment and school environment on girl-child in access to secondary schools in Mt. Elgon District of Bungoma County. The study was guided by Gender Schema Theory. The study adopted survey research design. The study targeted 31 secondary schools, all teachers, principals and head girls who add up to 1611 respondents. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 17 schools. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 17 head teachers and 17 head girls from the 17 schools. The sample comprised of 17 head teachers, 68 teachers and 17 head girls making total population of 102 respondents. Questionnaires and interview schedule were used in the study as instruments for data collection. The study utilized the mixed method due to quantitative and qualitative data collected. The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science to report on the influence of the environment on girl child access to secondary school education in Mount Elgon District. Community factor, home factors, school factors and family factors significantly contributes variability respectively to girl child access in Mt. Elgon District of Bungoma County. In total environment influence 78 % variability to girl child access to secondary school education in Mt. Elgon District of Bungoma County. The remaining 22 % variability is a counted for by other factors not looked at in this study. The girl- child access to secondary school education was influenced by environmental factors such as long walking distance, cultural practices and fee payment. Parents invest in boy child education with little concern for the girl-child. Cultural practices such as female genital mutilation and early marriage drag behind the girl-child access to secondary school education in the district. The government should put in place stringent measures to counter the above challenges. The government of Kenya should put in place bursary funds kitty for the girl child to increase access to secondary school education. The local administration should be actively involved in eradication of female genital mutilation and early marriages as a culture and all forms of child labour should be eradicated.