

**ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL FACTORS INFLUENCING GENDER
INEQUALITY IN SECONDARY EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF
SCHOOLS IN KAHAMA MUNICIPALITY, TANZANIA**

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**A PROPOSAL TO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL OF CARRYOUT
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UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA**

2025

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that he has read and hereby recommends for acceptance to the Open University of Tanzania that this dissertation entitled, “Analysis of Cultural Factors Influencing Gender Inequality in Secondary Education, Tanzania - A Case Study of Schools in Kahama Municipality” in a partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Master of Social Work of the Open University of Tanzania.

.....

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.....

Date

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I, Ambindwile Lwitiko, declare that the work presented in this dissertation is original. It has never been presented to any other University or Institution. Where other people's works have been used, references have been provided. It is in this regard that I declare this work as originally mine. It is hereby presented in fulfillment of the requirement for the Master of Social Work (MSW).

.....
Signature

.....
Date

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my lovely family who encouraged and challenged me in academic life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work has been accomplished with the help of many people. I am very grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Straton Ruhinda (Ph.D.), for his guidance, commitment and willingness to provide feedback during the research process. I am also appreciative of the academic support I received from a number of lecturers.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the cultural factors influencing gender inequality in secondary education within Kahama Municipality, Tanzania. Despite governmental efforts toward gender equality, significant disparities persist, driven largely by deep-rooted cultural norms at family, societal, and institutional levels. The research employs a mixed-methods approach with a convergent parallel design, collecting data from students, teachers, and parents across selected secondary schools. Using Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory as a theoretical framework, the study investigates family-level decisions, societal expectations, and institutional practices that limit educational opportunities for girls. The findings reveal that family perceptions of boys' education as a priority, societal norms favoring early marriage, and institutional biases in school infrastructure and teacher expectations all contribute to gender inequality. These insights underscore the need for culturally sensitive policies and community awareness programs to challenge stereotypes and promote equal educational access. This study contributes to the understanding of gender disparities in education and offers recommendations for policymakers, educators, and community leaders to support gender equity in Tanzania's rural and semi-urban educational contexts.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

IND	-	Indulgence vs Restraint
INDV	-	Individualism vs Collectivism
LTO	-	Long-term Orientation vs Short-term Orientation
MAS	-	Masculinity vs Femininity
OUT	-	Open University of Tanzania
PDI	-	Power Distance Index
PO-RALG	-	President's Office -Regional Administration and Local Government
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UAI	-	Uncertainty Avoidance
UNCEF	-	United Nations Children's Fund
URT	-	United Republic of Tanzania

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Overview

This study examined the cultural factors influencing gender inequality among secondary school students in Tanzania, with a focus on Kahama Municipality. The first chapter provides an in-depth exploration of the study's background, its problem statement, objectives, research questions, and significance, along with the study's limitations and delimitations.

1.2 Back ground to the Problem

Gender inequality in education remains a critical global issue, marked by substantial disparities in access to and completion of education between boys and girls. Despite international frameworks like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all by 2030 (United Nations, 2015), as well as various national initiatives, many countries continue to face significant gender gaps in education. Tanzania is among these nations, where cultural, economic, and institutional factors particularly impede gender parity in secondary education (Mbilinyi, 2016).

In many Tanzanian communities, entrenched cultural norms and traditional beliefs continue to perpetuate gender inequality. Boys' education is frequently prioritized, while girls are often expected to assume domestic roles or prepare for early marriage. This is especially evident in rural regions like Kahama Municipality, where patriarchal

structures dominate family decision-making processes (Mushi, 2019). In this region, girls are often withdrawn from school to help with household responsibilities or marry early, both of which severely restrict their educational attainment (Magesa & Nyangara, 2020). Consequently, disparities in access to secondary education persist despite government efforts to advance educational equality.

At the family level, the belief that boys' education is a more valuable long-term investment further exacerbates the issue. According to Mkumbo (2021), parents in areas like Kahama frequently prioritize boys' education, viewing girls primarily as future wives and mothers whose domestic abilities are more valuable than formal education. This cultural perspective not only restricts girls' educational opportunities but also reinforces stereotypes that portray girls as less capable of success in professional fields.

These societal expectations are further reinforced in the school environment, where gender biases and stereotypes influence how girls are perceived and treated by teachers and peers. Studies indicate that teachers often exhibit unconscious biases that dissuade girls from pursuing subjects perceived as male-dominated, such as science and mathematics (Nyoni, 2018). This discouragement contributes to lower academic performance and reduced self-confidence among female students, who may internalize beliefs about their inferiority compared to male peers. Institutionally, gender inequality in education is compounded by the absence of gender-sensitive infrastructure and supportive mechanisms in schools. For instance, many schools in rural areas lack adequate sanitation facilities for menstruating girls, leading to increased absenteeism and

diminished academic performance (Makoye, 2020). Furthermore, there are limited policies to address specific challenges faced by girls, including the risks of dropping out due to pregnancy or early marriage (Vavrus, 2019). Although the Tanzanian government has implemented policies such as the Education and Training Policy (2014) and the National Strategy for Gender Development (2016) to address these issues, enforcement is often inconsistent, particularly in rural areas like Kahama Municipality (URT, 2016).

Despite these challenges, there have been notable improvements in girls' enrollment in secondary schools across Tanzania, spurred by initiatives such as the Girls' Education Support Program (UNICEF, 2021). However, in Kahama Municipality, girls' participation and completion rates remain significantly lower than those of boys. This discrepancy suggests that cultural barriers—beyond merely economic and institutional factors continue to impact girls' educational outcomes in this region (Magesa & Nyangara, 2020).

This study seeks to examine the cultural factors contributing to gender inequality in secondary education within Kahama Municipality. Specifically, it investigates the influence of family expectations, societal norms, and institutional practices on educational opportunities for girls. By identifying the primary barriers that girls encounter in accessing and completing secondary education, this research aims to provide valuable insights for policymakers and educators dedicated to fostering gender equality in education. The findings will support ongoing efforts to enhance educational

access and retention for girls in Tanzania, particularly within rural and semi-urban areas like Kahama.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Despite considerable efforts by the Tanzanian government to promote gender equality in education, gender disparities persist, particularly in rural areas such as Kahama Municipality. Policies like the Education and Training Policy (2014) and the National Strategy for Gender Development (2016) aim to improve girls' access to education. However, cultural and societal factors continue to restrict girls' participation and achievement in secondary schools (URT, 2016; Vavrus, 2019). In Kahama Municipality, traditional gender roles, early marriage, and societal expectations often prevent girls from completing their education. These culturally ingrained practices influence families to prioritize boys' education over girls' (Mkumbo, 2021; Magesa & Nyangara, 2020).

Previous research has primarily focused on economic and institutional barriers to girls' education, creating a gap in understanding the specific cultural factors contributing to gender inequality within the Tanzanian context. Studies from other countries have highlighted the influence of cultural norms on educational outcomes (Nussbaum, 2018); however, these findings cannot be directly applied to Tanzania, where unique local customs and traditions significantly shape educational practices. Additionally, while research on gender inequality in education in Tanzania has focused on urban areas, little literature exists on how these issues manifest in rural regions like Kahama Municipality,

where the socio-economic and cultural environment differs markedly (Mbilinyi, 2016; Makoye, 2020).

This study seeks to address this gap by examining the cultural factors—such as family expectations, community perceptions, and institutional biases that sustain gender inequality in secondary education in Kahama Municipality. The study will also explore how these factors interact with broader societal norms to impact girls' access to and performance in education. Understanding these dynamics is critical for developing targeted interventions that address the root causes of gender disparities in education.

The persistence of these inequalities has serious implications for educational outcomes, social mobility, and overall development in Kahama Municipality. If unaddressed, these barriers will continue to limit girls' potential, affecting not only their future opportunities but also the broader socio-economic progress of the region (Nyoni, 2018; Magesa & Nyangara, 2020). Thus, this study is essential for identifying the cultural drivers of gender inequality in education and providing actionable insights for policymakers, educators, and community leaders to foster a more equitable educational environment.

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 General Objective

To investigate the cultural factors contributing to gender inequality in secondary education within Kahama Municipality

1.5 Specific Objectives

- i. To assess how family-level cultural factors influence gender inequality in secondary education within Kahama Municipality.
- ii. To examine societal-level cultural factors that perpetuate gender inequality in secondary education in Kahama Municipality.
- iii. To investigate the role of institutional-level cultural factors in reinforcing gender inequality in secondary education within Kahama Municipality.

1.6 Research questions

- i. How do family-level cultural factors influence gender inequality in secondary education within Kahama Municipality?
- ii. What societal-level cultural factors perpetuate gender inequality in secondary education in Kahama Municipality?
- iii. How do institutional-level cultural factors reinforce gender inequality in secondary education within Kahama Municipality?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study offers important insights for the Tanzanian government, particularly regarding the cultural factors that continue to affect gender equality in education. By identifying how cultural practices influence educational opportunities for girls, the research establishes a foundation for targeted policy interventions aimed at addressing gender inequality in secondary schools, especially in Kahama Municipality. The

findings may inform future educational reforms, particularly in rural areas, to ensure that girls have equal access to educational resources and opportunities.

For academic audiences, this study contributes to the existing literature on gender inequality in education in Tanzania and Sub-Saharan Africa. While prior research has largely focused on economic or institutional barriers, this study shifts attention to cultural factors—family, societal, and institutional—that sustain gender disparities. By addressing the gap in comprehensive studies on cultural influences in Tanzanian education, this work offers a new perspective and encourages further exploration of the topic.

Furthermore, the study provides practical insights for parents and educators by raising awareness of the cultural dynamics that limit girls' educational participation. Parents, especially those in rural areas, will develop a better understanding of how societal perceptions of gender roles can directly impact their children's education. For educators, the findings emphasize the need for culturally sensitive approaches that challenge entrenched biases and foster more inclusive educational environments for all genders.

Lastly, the research is significant for organizations advocating for gender equity in education, as it presents a context-specific framework for action. By exploring the intersection of cultural practices and gender inequality, the study proposes actionable strategies for local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community leaders to support girls' education and dismantle barriers to their success in secondary schools.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

This study faced several limitations that could potentially influence the results and the generalizability of its findings. One significant limitation was the sample size; the study included only eight schools from Kahama Municipality instead of all the schools in the region, which may affect the representativeness of the findings. Additionally, time constraints posed challenges for the researcher in adhering to the research timeline, particularly when collecting data from respondents, such as parents, who were spread across the region and often had conflicting schedules. As a result, delays occurred in completing data collection, which may have impacted the study's ability to fully capture the phenomenon being investigated.

1.8 Delimitations of the Study

This study was deliberately narrowed in scope to concentrate on specific cultural factors influencing gender inequality in education within Kahama Municipality. First, the study focused on a smaller, manageable sample size that could provide rich, reliable data within the available resources. The research targeted Form Four students and those in higher levels, as they were considered to have a better understanding of gender inequality and more relevant experiences compared to students in lower grades. Additionally, the decision to include only secondary schools in Kahama Municipality and to select specific cultural factors at the family, societal, and institutional levels was intentional, aiming to enhance the depth and relevance of the research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter concentrated on the empirical literature that clarified the meanings of all relevant operational terms in the study, including gender inequality, family-level cultural factors, societal-level cultural factors, and institutional-level cultural factors. The study also reviewed a theory related to gender inequality to guide the research. Following this, it presented an empirical review and identified the research gap. The final subsection of this chapter illustrated a conceptual framework that outlined the dependent and independent variables of the study.

2.2 Operationalization of Terms

2.2.1 Cultural Factors

Pisano (2020) defined cultural factors as the core principles and ideals that form the foundation of an entire society. He noted that these core principles are associated with customs and beliefs. In this context, cultural factors encompass all the agreed-upon principles and guidelines that shape daily life, emphasizing the importance of respecting these principles within society. Schank et al. (2021) explained that cultural factors include the shared behaviors of living within a community. They highlighted that the behaviors, beliefs, ideas, and practices agreed upon by a society to guide their daily lives are what constitute cultural factors. Accordingly, cultural factors encompass all practices

within society, including both accepted and unaccepted practices that should be recognized and maintained.

2.2.2 Family Cultural Factors

Bisanda (2019) described family-level cultural factors as practices within the family that deny equal access to opportunities or resources among children. The author emphasized that girls are disproportionately affected by these cultural factors compared to boys, as certain practices assign girls the responsibility for all domestic chores. This places a burden on girls, often preventing them from accessing education as they struggle with household tasks. In pastoralist societies, cultural practices also designate boys as responsible for herding cattle. Thus, cultural factors at the family level contribute to gender inequality in children's access to education.

Additionally, Bisanda (2019) noted that cultural factors at the family level often lead to early marriage for girls. Some family-level practices explicitly dictate that girls should marry soon after puberty, creating further gender inequality in education access. In this study, family-level cultural factors will be assessed through indicators such as parents making decisions for their children, perceiving secondary education as only for boys, viewing girls as sources of income or reserved for marriage, and neglecting to invest in their daughters' education.

2.2.3 Society Cultural Factors

Pisano (2020) stated that societal cultural factors include all cultural practices or norms that are prevalent within a society and to which society conforms. He noted that certain

cultural norms can create gender inequality among children, particularly regarding access to education. A multi-country study on social norms and education conducted in Uganda, Nepal, Ethiopia, and Vietnam found that societal-level social norms significantly influence gender inequality. In all these countries, girls continue to drop out of school due to cultural practices that force young girls into early marriages.

Additionally, parental reluctance to invest in girls' education is influenced by cultural norms in some societies, which dictate that parents should not invest in their daughters' education, leading to gender inequality (UNICEF, 2020). In this study, this factor will be measured by examining how society pressures young girls into marriage, the low morale regarding girls' education, and the preference for boys over girls.

2.2.4 Institutional Level Cultural Factors

Institutional-level cultural factors encompass all practices within educational institutions that create or perpetuate gender inequality. Stereotypes held by teachers regarding subjects and career choices significantly influence gender inequality. Children who encounter these stereotypes may become discouraged, resulting in school dropouts. Additionally, this stereotype regarding subjects and career choices can also be perpetuated by some students towards their peers, further discouraging them and increasing the rate of gender inequality. This understanding is relevant to the study, as it highlights the segregation or disparities that children, particularly girls, face in educational institutions due to stereotypes related to subjects and career choices from teachers. In this study, institutional-level cultural factors will be measured by examining

indicators such as the distance students must walk, poor infrastructure, stereotypes from teachers, and stereotypes from male students.

2.2.5 Gender Inequality

Gender inequality involves the unequal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities between men and women (Shang, 2022). This concept encompasses the disparities in access to resources and opportunities for both genders. It also refers to the differences between men and women in society regarding their access to opportunities and resources across social, economic, and political aspects, as well as their participation in decision-making power (Joyce, 2019). Therefore, gender inequality highlights how men and women differ in their rights to access opportunities and the power dynamics involved in decision-making.

This understanding is relevant to the study as it provides insight into how cultural factors contribute to the disparities between women and men in accessing opportunities and resources. In this research, gender inequality will be measured by assessing the extent to which girls participate in decision-making at the school level, the number of girls in classrooms, the representation of girls in leadership roles, and their academic performance levels.

2.3 Theoretical Literature review

The theoretical framework for this study is primarily informed by Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, which offers a valuable perspective for understanding how cultural factors shape behaviors and values within a society. Developed by Geert Hofstede in the

1980s, this theory outlines six cultural dimensions: Power Distance Index (PDI), Individualism vs. Collectivism (IDV), Masculinity vs. Femininity (MAS), Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI), Long-term vs. Short-term Orientation (LTO), and Indulgence vs. Restraint (IND). These dimensions help explain cross-cultural interactions and societal behavior (Nickerson, 2023). In this study, three dimensions are particularly relevant for examining the cultural factors that contribute to gender inequality in education: Power Distance, Masculinity vs. Femininity, and Indulgence vs. Restraint.

The Power Distance Index (PDI) measures how much less powerful members of a society accept that power is distributed unequally. In societies with a high-power distance, the inequality between those in power and subordinates is often accepted without question. This dimension is particularly pertinent for understanding gender inequality in education, especially in Kahama Municipality. In rural areas of Tanzania, patriarchal systems dominate family and societal structures, with decision-making about girls' education frequently controlled by male family members. This reflects a broader societal acceptance of unequal power distribution. Girls are often perceived as less deserving of education compared to boys, which subjects them to decisions that restrict their access to educational opportunities. Such cultural dynamics at the family level reinforce the belief that girls are less capable or worthy of formal education (Mkumbo, 2021). Therefore, Hofstede's PDI dimension is instrumental in explaining how cultural power dynamics within households and communities impact girls' educational opportunities in Kahama.

The Masculinity vs. Femininity (MAS) dimension examines the extent to which a society values traditionally masculine traits, such as assertiveness, competitiveness, and material success, compared to feminine traits like nurturing, modesty, and quality of life. In societies where masculinity prevails, gender roles are often more rigid, confining women's roles primarily to the domestic sphere. This dimension is particularly relevant to the societal-level cultural factors in Kahama Municipality, where expectations regarding gender roles influence how girls and boys are treated within the educational system. In patriarchal cultures, men are typically regarded as the primary economic providers, resulting in their education being prioritized over that of girls. In contrast, girls are often viewed through the lens of future domestic roles, such as wives and mothers, which limits their educational aspirations (Magesa & Nyangara, 2020). By focusing on these societal-level factors, this theory facilitates an exploration of how cultural norms related to masculinity and femininity create barriers to girls' educational attainment in Kahama.

The Indulgence vs. Restraint (IND) dimension examines how societies either permit or restrict the gratification of desires. Societies that are characterized by restraint impose significant limitations on the satisfaction of needs and desires, particularly in relation to education and gender roles. In Kahama Municipality, cultural values often inhibit girls' aspirations for education, imposing societal expectations that prioritize domestic responsibilities or early marriage. This dimension is especially relevant for understanding the institutional-level factors that contribute to gender inequality in education. School environments may reinforce these cultural constraints through biased

teaching practices, gendered expectations, and a lack of supportive policies for girls' needs, such as menstrual hygiene management or flexible school hours (Makoye, 2020). Hofstede's Indulgence vs. Restraint dimension underscores how institutional factors can perpetuate gender inequality by stifling girls' educational aspirations and reinforcing societal norms that limit their opportunities.

By employing these cultural dimensions, Hofstede's theory offers a framework for understanding how family-level, society-level, and institutional-level cultural factors interact to sustain gender inequality in secondary education. This study aims to explore these factors within Kahama Municipality to identify the root causes of gender disparities in education and to shed light on the complex cultural forces that shape girls' educational experiences. This theoretical perspective is vital for addressing the study's objectives and for pinpointing targeted interventions to alleviate the impact of cultural barriers on girls' education.

2.4 Empirical Literature Review

A substantial amount of literature has examined gender inequality in education, providing insights into the various factors that affect access to education, particularly at the secondary school level. These studies emphasize the significant role of cultural, societal, and institutional barriers in sustaining gender disparities, especially for girls in developing regions like Tanzania. For example, Bisanda (2019) conducted a study in Tanzania that identified cultural practices, poverty, and ignorance as major contributors to gender inequality in the education system. While this study offers valuable insights

into the systemic nature of gender disparities, it does not adequately address the intersectionality of these factors, particularly how they manifest in specific regional contexts such as Kahama Municipality. Bisanda's work could benefit from a more localized approach that considers the unique socio-cultural dynamics present in smaller districts or municipalities within Tanzania.

Similarly, Mligo (2017) explored gender differences in educational outcomes among students and teachers in Dodoma, Tanzania, revealing that male students outperformed their female counterparts. While Mligo's findings align with the prevailing narrative of male superiority in academic performance, the study does not thoroughly investigate the cultural or familial factors that shape these outcomes. This gap is significant because understanding the root causes of these disparities at the family and community levels is essential for developing targeted interventions. Furthermore, the limited focus on higher education institutions overlooks the systemic issues that often begin in primary and secondary education, where gender disparities are frequently first introduced.

In a more recent study, Mhewa (2020) investigated the role of gender-responsive pedagogy in reducing inequalities in secondary education. Although the study highlighted that teacher lacked sufficient understanding of gender-responsive teaching strategies, it did not connect these shortcomings directly to the cultural norms that influence teachers' perceptions of gender roles in the classroom. This oversight is particularly relevant in Tanzania, where societal views on gender often dictate the behavior of both educators and students. Addressing this gap could assist policymakers

and educators in developing more effective gender-responsive curricula and teaching practices that are contextually relevant. In neighboring Kenya, Carolyne (2022) investigated the factors contributing to gender disparity in education, emphasizing cultural beliefs, household chores, and poverty. This study provided compelling evidence linking high dropout rates among girls to cultural practices, particularly the prioritization of boys' education over that of girls. However, Carolyne's research was limited by its broad geographical focus and would benefit from a more detailed examination of regional differences within Kenya and across East Africa. Understanding how these factors manifest in specific areas can offer a clearer understanding of the localized nature of gender inequality in education.

A study by Zheng et al. (2013) presents an international perspective on gender inequality in education, focusing on China's progress in narrowing gender gaps over time. The research highlights the persistence of inequality in rural areas, particularly in secondary education. This observation resonates with the Tanzanian context, where rural areas often experience higher levels of gender disparity in education compared to urban centers. The findings emphasize the need for tailored interventions that address the specific challenges faced by girls in rural regions like Kahama Municipality, where cultural and economic barriers are particularly entrenched. Assaad and Isfahani (2019) examined educational inequality in the Middle East and North Africa, revealing that gender inequality in school attainment is exacerbated by factors such as parental education, household income, and urban-rural divides. This study underscores the importance of addressing familial and socio-economic factors in combating gender

inequality in education. However, it does not sufficiently explore the cultural aspects that shape parental decisions, particularly regarding gender roles and the perceived value of educating daughters. This gap is critical, as parental perceptions often significantly influence educational outcomes for girls, especially in patriarchal societies like those in sub-Saharan Africa.

Lastly, Awinia (2019) assessed the impact of free basic education in Tanzania, noting that while access to education has increased, gender disparities persist, especially at higher levels of education. Awinia's study revealed that cultural factors, such as early marriage and gendered expectations of domestic roles, continue to undermine girls' education in rural Tanzania. These findings align with the work of Emmanuel (2020), who similarly identified cultural practices, including patriarchy and religious beliefs, as key drivers of gender inequality in Tanzanian education. However, both studies could benefit from a more in-depth exploration of how institutional factors—such as school policies, teacher biases, and gender norms in the curriculum—interact with cultural practices to sustain gender disparities.

In summary, this review emphasizes the complex nature of gender inequality in education, identifying cultural, societal, and institutional factors as significant contributors to the issue. However, many studies have been restricted by their broad geographical focus and often overlook the specific cultural dynamics present in smaller regions such as Kahama Municipality. This study seeks to address this gap by offering a localized analysis of the cultural factors that influence gender inequality in secondary

education in Kahama, Tanzania. In doing so, it aims to contribute to the global conversation on gender equality in education.

2.4 Research Gap

While existing literature has thoroughly examined the various factors contributing to gender inequality in education, significant gaps remain, particularly regarding Tanzania and more specifically in regions like Kahama Municipality. Most studies have concentrated on economic, institutional, or policy-driven factors, often neglecting the cultural underpinnings that sustain gender disparities in education. As noted by Bisanda (2019) and Mligo (2017), cultural practices such as early marriage, household responsibilities, and patriarchal decision-making greatly affect girls' access to and success in education. However, these studies often generalize findings across broader regions and do not provide a localized understanding of how these factors function in smaller, rural settings like Kahama.

Another important gap in the literature is the absence of a comprehensive, multi-level analysis of cultural factors at the family, societal, and institutional levels. Most studies, such as those by Mhewa (2020) and Carolynne (2022), have either concentrated on individual-level interventions or limited their examination to one specific cultural factor. Gender inequality in education is a complex, multi-faceted issue that necessitates an integrated approach, taking into account the interactions between family dynamics, societal expectations, and institutional barriers. By focusing solely on one dimension, previous research has overlooked the interplay between these factors and how they

collectively influence girls' educational opportunities. Furthermore, empirical evidence of gender inequality in education within rural Tanzanian contexts, particularly in Kahama Municipality, is still limited. Studies by Mkumbo (2021) and Magesa & Nyangara (2020) have highlighted broader national issues of gender disparity in education but fail to consider regional variations, especially the unique cultural factors that exist in rural municipalities. Research conducted in more urbanized areas like Dar es Salaam does not adequately address the distinct challenges that rural girls encounter, such as limited access to resources, greater household expectations, and more rigid gender roles, all of which impede their educational participation.

The literature also reveals a lack of gender-sensitive pedagogical approaches in Tanzanian schools. While some studies have explored the role of teachers in perpetuating gender inequalities (e.g., Vavrus, 2019), these studies do not adequately investigate how cultural expectations shape teachers' interactions with male and female students, particularly in rural areas. The role of gender biases in the classroom and how they influence teaching methods, student engagement, and academic performance remains underexplored. Additionally, despite the growing body of literature on gender inequality in education, interventions and practical solutions to mitigate cultural barriers are rarely explored in detail. While policy reforms like the Education and Training Policy (2014) have been introduced, their practical implications, particularly in rural areas, have not been thoroughly examined. This study, by focusing on Kahama Municipality, aims to fill this gap by proposing specific interventions that can address cultural barriers and promote gender equity in education. In summary, while existing

literature has provided useful insights into the broad causes of gender inequality in education, there is a clear need for more focused, localized studies that consider the cultural factors at the family, societal, and institutional levels. The existing research fails to provide a comprehensive framework that addresses the complex nature of gender inequality in education in rural Tanzanian contexts. This study aims to fill this gap by offering a detailed exploration of these cultural factors and their implications for girls' educational outcomes in Kahama Municipality. The literature indicates a significant lack of gender-sensitive pedagogical approaches in Tanzanian schools. While some studies, such as those by Vavrus (2019), have examined the role of teachers in perpetuating gender inequalities, they do not adequately investigate how cultural expectations influence teachers' interactions with male and female students, especially in rural areas. The impact of gender biases in the classroom and their effects on teaching methods, student engagement, and academic performance remain largely underexplored.

Moreover, despite the increasing amount of literature on gender inequality in education, detailed explorations of interventions and practical solutions to address cultural barriers are rare. Although policy reforms, such as the Education and Training Policy (2014), have been introduced, their practical implications, particularly in rural contexts, have not been thoroughly analyzed. This study aims to fill this gap by focusing on Kahama Municipality and proposing specific interventions to address cultural barriers and promote gender equity in education.

In conclusion, while existing literature has provided valuable insights into the overarching causes of gender inequality in education, there is a clear need for more focused, localized studies that take into account the cultural factors at the family, societal, and institutional levels. Current research lacks a comprehensive framework that addresses the complex nature of gender inequality in education within rural Tanzanian contexts. This study seeks to fill this gap by offering an in-depth exploration of these cultural factors and their implications for girls' educational outcomes in Kahama Municipality.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The study establishes a conceptual framework to enhance the understanding of the cultural factors influencing gender inequality among secondary school students. Shekipelo (2020), citing Imenda (2014), states that a conceptual framework is the outcome of integrating several related concepts to explain and provide a broader understanding of the phenomenon being researched. This framework is developed from Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, as described by Nickerson (2023), and is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

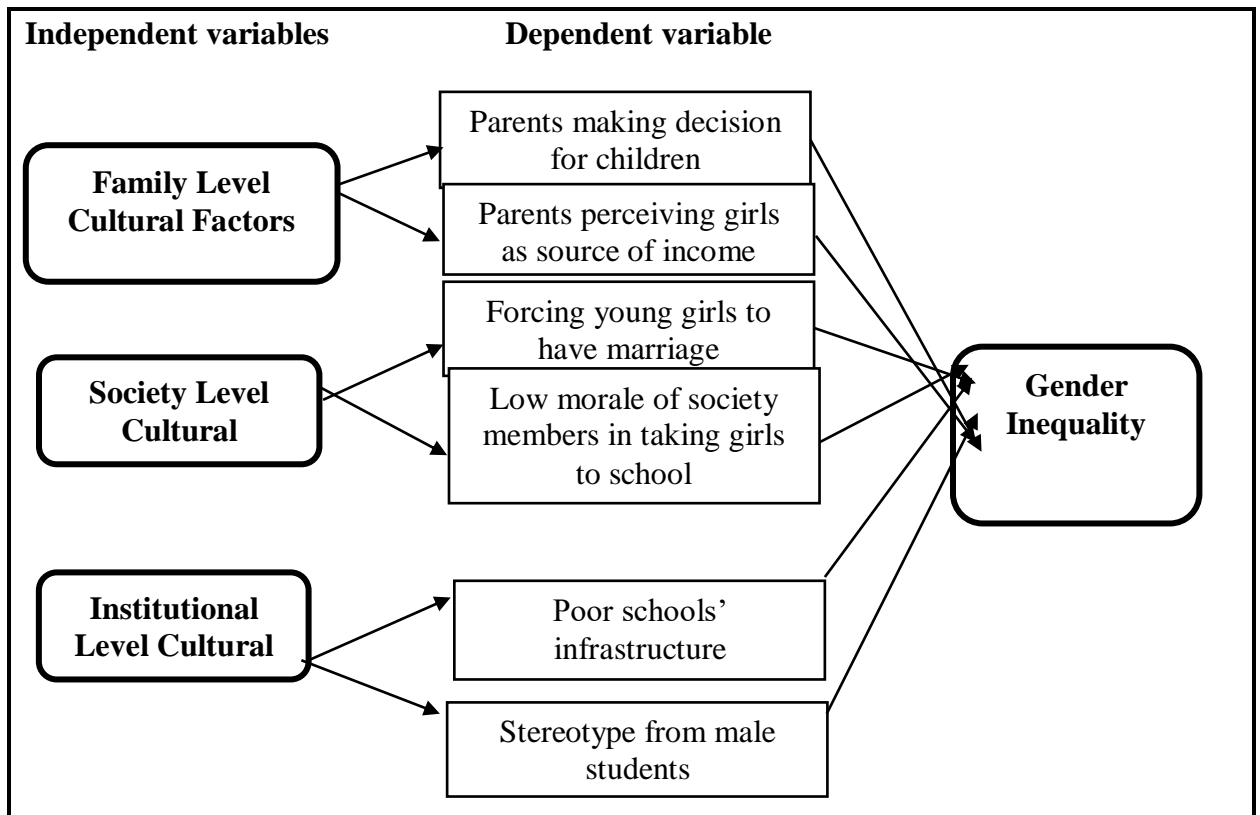


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2024)

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter details the methodology that the study will employ. It includes various subsections, such as research design, research approach, study area, target population, sampling technique, sample size, unit of analysis, data collection methods, study variables and their operationalization, data analysis methods, and research ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Philosophy

The study adopted a pragmatism philosophy, which emphasizes practical solutions to research problems by integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to address real-world issues (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In examining the cultural factors that influence gender inequality in public secondary education, pragmatism enables researchers to explore complex social dynamics by combining empirical data with lived experiences, thereby providing actionable insights.

3.3 Research Design

The study employed a convergent parallel design, the design that allows simultaneous collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, followed by comparing results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). This design is suitable for exploring gender inequality, as it facilitates the convergence of statistical trends with personal narratives, revealing complementary insights into cultural influences on education.

3.4 Research Approach

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, which facilitates a comprehensive analysis by integrating both quantitative and qualitative data (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). In examining the cultural factors influencing gender inequality, quantitative surveys can identify patterns of inequality, while qualitative interviews can delve into individual experiences. This combination offers a well-rounded understanding of the issue within public secondary education.

3.5 Study Area

This study was conducted in Kahama Municipality, situated in the Shinyanga region of Tanzania. The choice of this area is justified by its ongoing struggle with gender inequality, despite the rapid urbanization and growth of Kahama town. This urban development presents a unique opportunity to examine how changes in social dynamics might influence gender disparities.

Kahama Municipality is characterized by a diverse population, resulting from the migration of individuals from various regions who seek economic opportunities in the growing town. This interaction among people from different cultural backgrounds could potentially challenge traditional norms and attitudes towards gender roles, making it an ideal setting for exploring the complex interplay of cultural factors that contribute to gender inequality in education.

Furthermore, the persistence of gender disparities in educational access and attainment in Kahama highlights the need for targeted research. Despite the area's economic

development, cultural practices such as early marriage, household responsibilities, and prevailing patriarchal attitudes continue to limit educational opportunities for girls. By focusing on Kahama Municipality, this study aims to provide insights into the specific cultural and social factors that sustain gender inequality, thus contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the issue within the Tanzanian context. Such findings could be instrumental in informing local policies and interventions aimed at promoting gender equity in education.

3.6 Study Population

The study targeted a population of 410 individuals, encompassing students, teachers, administrators, and parents, to provide a holistic view of the cultural factors influencing gender inequality in education. Students, as the direct subjects of educational policies and practices, offer valuable insights into how these inequalities manifest in their educational experiences (UNESCO, 2020). Their perspectives highlight the practical implications of gender disparities and allow researchers to understand the impact of these inequalities on their academic performance and engagement.

Teachers and administrators play a crucial role in shaping educational environments and can provide insights into the institutional practices that either reinforce or challenge gender inequality (Leach, 2015). Their experiences and observations regarding classroom dynamics, teaching methodologies, and policy implementations are essential for understanding the systemic factors that contribute to gender disparities in education. Including parents in the study is also vital, as cultural norms surrounding gender are

often perpetuated within families and communities. Parents' attitudes and beliefs about gender roles significantly influence their children's views on education and aspirations (Buchmann & Hannum, 2001). By gathering perspectives from this diverse population, the study aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of gender inequality in public secondary schools, addressing the multifaceted nature of the issue and its roots in cultural, social, and institutional contexts. This approach not only enhances the depth of the analysis but also informs the development of more effective interventions aimed at promoting gender equity in education.

3.7 Units of Analysis

Units of analysis refer to the entities that define what is being examined in a study. They represent the specific subjects or objects under investigation, within which various factors of causality and change can be identified (Yin, 2017). In this study, the units of analysis included teachers, students, and parents, allowing for the extraction of reliable data essential for understanding the factors influencing gender inequality in education. By focusing on these three groups, the research aims to capture a comprehensive perspective on the cultural and social dynamics at play.

3.8 Sampling Technique

The study employed non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling, to obtain a suitable sample for the research. According to Bhardwaj (2019), purposive sampling, also known as judgmental sampling, is conducted based on the specific purpose of the study, allowing researchers to select members of the sample intentionally.

The sample for this study included 28 secondary schools located in Kahama Municipality. Non-probability sampling was chosen for its simplicity in sample selection, a method utilized by various researchers, including Manjunatha (2019), Bisanda (2019), and Mligo (2017).

3.9 Sample Size

3.9.1 Sample Size for Secondary schools

According to Hamisi (2017), the sample size refers to the total and limited number of elements, people, or items required for an investigation. Kothari (2008) recommends maintaining a moderate sample size when selecting participants. Hoare and Hoe (2013) suggest that the appropriate sample size should range from 10% to 30% of the target population, depending on the information to be gathered and analyzed. Therefore, a representative sample was selected from all 28 schools in Kahama Municipality, constituting 30% of the research population. This calculation yields: $30\% \div 100\% \times 28 = 8.4$, which rounds to approximately 8. Thus, only 8 schools will be included in the sample size.

3.9.2 Sample Size for Parents and Students

This study employed multistage sampling to select secondary schools for convenience. Form Four students were chosen purposively because they are more familiar with and better understand gender inequality than those in lower classes. Additionally, parents and teachers were selected purposively for the study. The students selected as

respondents were asked to distribute questionnaires to their parents, which facilitated information gathering, particularly from day scholars.

Based on statistics from Kahama Municipality, it is estimated that each school has around 120 Form Four students, resulting in a total of 960 students across the 8 selected schools. Each school is estimated to have approximately 20 teachers, leading to a total of 160 teachers for the 8 schools. The total number of parents is estimated to be 1,920, calculated by multiplying the number of students by two. Therefore, the overall population of respondents is 3,040.

To obtain a total number of students, teachers and parents to be included in data collection a proportional sampling formula used. This formula was used when the target population was greater than 1000 items/respondents (Mbogella et al., (2021). Thus, while

other values were constant the population of respondents was

$$n = \frac{\frac{Z_{\alpha/2}^2 P(1-P)}{e^2}}{1 + \frac{\frac{Z_{\alpha/2}^2 P(1-P)}{Ne^2}}{3040 \times 0.05^2}} = \frac{\frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{0.05^2}}{\frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{1}} = 341$$

To ensure that no single group (teachers, students, or parents) dominated the data regarding cultural factors influencing gender inequality, a total sample of 341 respondents was divided equally among the three groups. Each group, consisting of

teachers, parents, and students, included 114 respondents. Additionally, in each school, a total of 14 respondents from each category were required.

3.10 Data Collection Method

The data for this study was collected from primary sources using a survey questionnaire, which was convenient for distributing to respondents across a wide geographical area. The survey included questions constructed using a Five-Point Likert Scale (FOLS) to facilitate easy rating of responses, as recommended by Kazaura et al. (2016). The questionnaires were provided in two languages: English for teachers and students, and Swahili for parents. A language expert was engaged to translate the English questionnaire into Swahili while preserving its content. The survey questionnaires will be included as Appendices I, II, and III in this proposal, with Appendix I dedicated to teachers, Appendix II to students, and Appendix III to parents. Each questionnaire consists of two main sections: Demographic Information and the Five-Point Likert Scale. According to Taherdoost (2021), using a questionnaire for data collection ensures the validity, reliability, objectivity, and authenticity of the study data.

3.11 Data Analysis

Johnson (2023) defined data analysis as the process of cleaning, transforming, and modeling data to uncover useful information for business decision-making. He emphasized that data analysis is essential for extracting valuable insights from data and making informed decisions based on that analysis. To establish the relationship between diverse responses regarding the cultural factors influencing gender inequality among

secondary school students, the data collected for this study was analyzed quantitatively using descriptive analysis. This analysis aimed to provide tables and means of responses, facilitated by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.

3.12 Research Ethical Issues

This study adhered to research ethical guidelines to ensure the validity of its findings. Research ethics are typically determined by the context in which the study is conducted. For this particular study, several important ethical considerations were identified. First and foremost, the research complied with the guidelines, calendar, and standards set by the host institution, the Open University of Tanzania (OUT). Additionally, all relevant literature was consulted during the proposal development, and proper citations were included in the reference list. Furthermore, the study topic received approval from the supervisor and the institute.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS, DISCUSSIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents the analysis, discussion, and interpretation of the study findings. It is divided into two parts. Part A details the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including the gender distribution of teachers and students, the age group distribution of teachers and students, the education levels among teachers, and the level of experience among teachers. Conversely, Part B discusses the findings based on the research objectives, which include investigating family-level cultural factors that contribute to gender inequality among secondary school students, societal-level cultural factors that exacerbate gender inequality among secondary school students, and institutional-level cultural factors that influence gender inequality among secondary school students.

A. Demographic Information of the Respondents

4.2 Gender Distribution among the Teachers

The data shows that the majority of the respondents are male, representing approximately 60.9% of the total sample. In comparison, female respondents make up 39.1%.

Table 4.1: Gender Distribution of Respondents (Teachers)

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	39	60.9
Female	25	39.1
Total	64	100.0

The gender distribution of the respondents offers important insights into the composition of the teaching workforce. It underscores the necessity for continuous dialogue and action aimed at achieving gender balance in education, which is crucial for creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment.

4.3 Gender Distribution among the Students

The data reveals an equal distribution of male and female students, with each group representing 50% of the total respondents. This balance indicates a gender-neutral representation within the sample.

Table 4.2: Gender Distribution of Respondents (Students)

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	168	50.0
Female	168	50.0
Total	336	100.0

The gender distribution of the respondents provides valuable insights into the composition of the student population. The equal representation underscores the importance of fostering an inclusive educational environment that supports the diverse

needs of all students, ultimately contributing to enhanced learning outcomes and a positive school culture.

4.4 Age Group Distribution of Respondents (Teachers)

The data indicates that the largest group of respondents is aged 39 and older, accounting for 50% of the total sample. The second largest group consists of teachers aged 33 to 38, representing 37.5%, while the youngest group, aged 27 to 32, comprises only 12.5%.

Table 4.3: Age Group Distribution of Respondents (Teachers)

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
27-32	8	12.5
33-38	24	37.5
39+	32	50.0
Total	64	100.0

The age distribution of the respondents offers valuable insights into the composition of the teaching workforce. It highlights the importance of supporting and developing teachers across various age groups to improve educational outcomes, facilitate effective knowledge transfer, and promote a balanced and dynamic teaching environment.

4.5 Age Group Distribution of Respondents (Students)

The data shows that a substantial majority of respondents belong to the age group of 16-20, comprising 79.8% of the total sample. In comparison, only 20.2% of the respondents are aged 10-15.

Table 4.4: Age Group Distribution of Respondents (Students)

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
10-15	68	20.2
16-20	268	79.8
Total	336	100.0

The age distribution of the respondents offers important insights into the demographics of the student population. The substantial representation of students aged 16-20 highlights the need for developing age-appropriate educational strategies and support systems that address the needs and interests of this age group. This focus is essential for improving their educational experience and outcomes.

4.6 Education Level of Respondents (Teachers)

The data indicates that the majority of respondents hold a Bachelor's degree, accounting for 70.3% of the sample. A smaller proportion possesses a Master's degree (17.2%), while only 12.5% have a Diploma.

Table 4.5: Education Level of Respondents (Teachers)

Education Level	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	8	12.5
Bachelor Degree	45	70.3
Master Degree	11	17.2
Total	64	100.0

The distribution of education levels among the respondents offers important insights into the qualifications of the teaching workforce. It highlights the necessity for continuous professional development and emphasizes the importance of promoting higher educational attainment among teachers, ultimately aiming to improve the quality of education delivered to students.

4.7 Experience Level of Respondents (Teachers)

The data reveals that half of the respondents (50%) have between 11 and 15 years of experience, indicating a considerable level of professional maturity within the teaching staff. The second largest group comprises individuals with 5 to 10 years of experience (23.4%), while those with less than 5 years and more than 15 years of experience represent smaller proportions, at 14.1% and 12.5%, respectively.

Table 4.6: Experience Level of Respondents (Teachers)

Experience Level	Frequency	Percent
Less than Five Years	9	14.1
5 - 10 Years	15	23.4
11 - 15 Years	32	50.0
Above 15 Years	8	12.5
Total	64	100.0

The distribution of experience among the respondents offers valuable insights into the composition of the teaching workforce. It emphasizes the necessity for targeted support and development strategies that address the needs of teachers at different stages of their careers. This approach ultimately contributes to a more effective and enriching educational environment for both teachers and students.

B. Discussions of the study findings

4.8 Family-level Cultural Factors that Cause Gender Inequality among Secondary School Students

The data reveals that an overwhelming majority of students (98.8%) strongly disagree with the statement, "Parents make decisions on my behalf for everything." This response indicates that, at least within this sample, students perceive themselves as having a significant degree of autonomy and agency in their decision-making processes. While this strong sense of student autonomy is encouraging, it is crucial to examine the broader family and cultural dynamics that may still contribute to gender inequality. By

understanding these factors, educators and policymakers can develop more equitable environments that empower all students to make informed decisions about their futures.

Table 4.7: Parents Make Decision on My Behalf for Everything

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	332	98.8
DISAGREE	4	1.2
Total	336	100.0

The literature indicates that family-level cultural factors significantly contribute to the perpetuation of gender inequality among secondary school students. Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing interventions that promote equitable educational opportunities for both genders (Edström et al., 2015). By addressing cultural biases and empowering parents to support their daughters' education, meaningful change in achieving gender parity in education can occur.

Additionally, another important finding relates to parents' perceptions regarding gender inequality among secondary school students. The data shows that a substantial majority of parents (76.2%) agree with the belief that secondary school is primarily for boys. This perception has significant implications for gender inequality in education, underscoring a critical barrier to achieving gender equality: the devaluation of girls' education by parental attitudes.

Table 4.8: Parents' Perception of Secondary School as Being for Boys

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	25	7.4
DISAGREE	30	8.9
NEUTRAL	25	7.4
AGREE	256	76.2
Total	336	100.0

During the interview sessions with parents, the same question regarding cultural factors influencing gender inequalities among secondary school students was posed. One of the respondents stated,

“Our traditions require men to create more wealth of the family through different ways including education while women are required to take care of the created wealth, land, livestock and children in general. All these roles do not need more education for women, taking them to further education opportunities is a wastage of money and time for women (Respondent 02, female, 44 years)”

The literature highlights the essential role of parents' perceptions in shaping gender inequalities in secondary education. By addressing these perceptions through educational programs and community engagement, it is possible to shift attitudes and create a more supportive environment for girls' education (Asaduzzaman & Ud-Daula, 2021). Increasing awareness about the value of education for all genders can help reduce the impact of cultural biases and enhance educational outcomes for girls. Initiatives aimed at changing these perceptions through awareness programs and community involvement are crucial for fostering an environment where both girls and boys have

equal access to educational opportunities. Such a shift can contribute to dismantling entrenched cultural biases and promoting a more equitable future for all students.

Parents' perceptions regarding decision-making and gender inequality among secondary school students were examined through questionnaires completed by students. The data reveals a mixed response to the perception that parents generally decide on behalf of their children, with 27.7% agreeing, 43.8% remaining neutral, and 28.6% disagreeing. This distribution has significant implications for understanding how parental decision-making influences gender inequality in education. The interpretation of these perceptions highlights the complex dynamics that contribute to gender inequality among secondary school students. While some parents show a willingness to allow for autonomy, underlying cultural factors still affect decision-making patterns.

Table 4.9: Parents' Decisions on Behalf of Their Children

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	47	14.0
DISAGREE	49	14.6
NEUTRAL	147	43.8
AGREE	93	27.7
Total	336	100.0

The literature suggests that parents' perceptions concerning decision-making play a crucial role in perpetuating gender inequality among secondary school students. Traditional gender norms, economic factors, and community influences create a decision-making environment that often favors boys (Uddin, 2024). To promote gender

equity in education and empower all students to pursue their aspirations, it is essential to address these perceptions through targeted educational programs and community engagement. By implementing these initiatives, attitudes can be shifted, leading to equitable opportunities for all children, regardless of gender.

Parents' perceptions of girls as sources of income or as being reserved for marriage were explored. The data shows that a majority of parents (59.5%) strongly disagree with the notion that girls are primarily viewed as sources of income or destined for marriage. However, a notable portion (40.5%) either agrees (27.7%) or strongly agrees (12.8%) with this viewpoint. This mixed perception provides insight into the cultural factors that contribute to gender inequality among secondary school students. The interpretation of parents' views on girls as sources of income or as reserved for marriage reveals a complex landscape where progressive and traditional perspectives coexist. While most parents are moving toward more equitable attitudes, the significant minority that maintains traditional beliefs still presents challenges to achieving gender equality in education.

Table 4.10: Parents' Perception of Girls as a Source of Income/Reserved to be Married

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	200	59.5
AGREE	93	27.7
STRONGLY AGREE	43	12.8
Total	336	100.0

The literature emphasizes that parents' perceptions of girls as sources of income or as reserved for marriage significantly affect educational opportunities and gender equality. These perceptions are deeply rooted in traditional gender roles and cultural norms, which can constrain girls' aspirations and potential (Iddy, 2023). Addressing these cultural factors through targeted educational programs and community engagement is essential for creating an environment that supports and empowers girls to reach their full potential.

Data regarding parents' investment in girls' education was also collected. The findings indicate that a significant majority of students (62.2%) either disagree or strongly disagree with the notion that parents neglect to invest in their daughters' education. However, a notable minority (30% combined) agree or strongly agree with this statement, suggesting a concerning gap in educational investment for girls. The interpretation of parental investment in girls' education reveals a mixed landscape. While a substantial majority recognize the importance of investing in their daughters, a worrying minority still adheres to neglectful practices. Therefore, addressing these

cultural factors through targeted initiatives and community engagement is crucial for promoting gender equality in education and ensuring that all students, regardless of gender, have equal opportunities to succeed.

Table 4.11: Parents' Investment in Education for Girls

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	124	36.9
DISAGREE	85	25.3
NEUTRAL	26	7.7
AGREE	76	22.6
STRONGLY AGREE	25	7.4
Total	336	100.0

The literature highlights the vital importance of parental investment in girls' education and identifies the cultural, economic, and societal factors that influence these decisions (Nwokike & Nwadike, 2023). Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing effective interventions that promote equitable educational opportunities for all children, irrespective of gender. By addressing the barriers to investing in girls' education, it is possible to create a more inclusive and equitable society.

The same question regarding cultural factors influencing gender inequalities among secondary school students was posed during interviews with parents. Many parents in Kahama municipality identified several cultural factors affecting gender inequalities at the societal level. They mentioned issues such as forced marriage, a societal lack of motivation to educate girls, and a tendency to prioritize education for boys. Additionally,

they noted that girls are constrained by societal norms that limit their opportunities and that most societal advantages are afforded to male children. One of the respondents stated that:

"I prefer to send my sons to school because I expect them to inherit my properties and contribute to our family's wealth as a return on their education. In contrast, if I educate my daughters, they are likely to get married and enrich their husband's family instead. To me, sending my daughters to secondary school feels like a loss." (Respondent 01, male, 39 years old)

This perception is prevalent among many parents in Kahama municipality, who believe that girls are primarily destined for marriage rather than being afforded equal educational opportunities alongside their male counterparts. This mindset contributes to the prevalence of forced marriages within the community. From the moment a girl is born, parents often begin to announce her birth to inform potential suitors to prepare for future marriages. Another respondent remarked that:

"I cannot support my daughters in pursuing higher education; I believe primary education is sufficient for them. I have observed that more educated women often end up having children outside of marriage, and many do not marry at all. They tend to have children at an early age and can come across as arrogant, often disregarding our traditions. This is why many men choose not to marry them." (Respondent 03, male, 38 years old)

4.9 Society-level Cultural factors which accelerate gender inequality among secondary school students

The study explored parents' perceptions regarding the delays students face in reaching school due to various challenges. To gather this information, teachers completed a questionnaire that aimed to capture students' experiences on their way to school.

The results reveal a spectrum of perceptions among students regarding the impact of these delays. A minority of students, represented by 11 responses or 17.2%, strongly disagreed with the notion that they experience significant delays. Additionally, 13 students, or 20.3%, expressed disagreement, indicating that they do not view delays as a major issue. In contrast, the data shows that a substantial portion of students 32 respondents, making up 50.0%—agreed that they do face delays, highlighting that this is a common experience among their peers. Furthermore, 8 students, or 12.5%, strongly agreed that they encounter significant delays on their way to school.

These findings suggest a prevailing concern regarding the challenges students face in reaching their educational institutions, emphasizing the need for further investigation into the underlying factors contributing to these delays.

Table 4.12: Students' Delays in Reaching School Due to Various Challenges

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	11	17.2
DISAGREE	13	20.3
AGREE	32	50.0
STRONGLY AGREE	8	12.5
Total	64	100.0

The data indicates that most students face challenges that lead to delays in reaching school. These delays may stem from various factors, including transportation issues, safety concerns, and environmental obstacles. The high percentage of agreement among respondents highlights the necessity for further investigation into these challenges and the development of potential solutions to ensure that students arrive at school on time. The literature underscores the complex nature of the challenges that result in delays for students. Effectively addressing these issues necessitates a comprehensive approach that takes into account transportation, safety, socioeconomic factors, and community support systems (Kearney et al., 2023). Collaborative solutions involving various stakeholders are essential for enhancing students' punctuality and overall educational outcomes.

Additionally, the data regarding the challenges students encounter at school and their effect on educational motivation reveals important insights. A minority of students, represented by 11 responses (17.2%), strongly disagreed, indicating they do not perceive challenges that impact their motivation toward education. Similarly, 10 students (15.6%) disagreed, suggesting that they do not consider these challenges to be significant. A neutral group of 8 students (12.5%) expressed indecision, reflecting a lack of strong feelings about the effect of challenges on their motivation. In contrast, the majority of students, comprising 35 respondents (54.7%), acknowledged that they do face challenges that diminish their motivation to pursue educational opportunities.

Table 4.1: Generally Students Encounter Different Challenges at School that Reduce their Incentives towards Education Endeavor

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	11	17.2
DISAGREE	10	15.6
NEUTRAL	8	12.5
AGREE	35	54.7
Total	64	100.0

The findings indicate a necessity for schools to identify and address the specific challenges faced by students. By fostering a supportive environment and providing adequate resources, schools can enhance students' motivation and engagement in their educational pursuits (Owoyemi, 2024). This response underscores the importance of recognizing and mitigating barriers to learning in order to promote a more positive educational experience.

4.10 Institutional-Level Cultural Factors which Determine Gender Inequality among Secondary School Students

The data regarding whether girls receive equal treatment compared to boys at school provides important insights into perceptions of gender equality within the educational environment. The findings indicate that a small portion of respondents (14.9%, or 50 responses) strongly disagree with the notion that girls receive equal treatment. A slightly larger group (12.8%, or 43 responses) also disagrees, highlighting concerns about potential inequalities. Conversely, 16.4% of respondents (55 responses) agree that girls do experience equal treatment, although this group is smaller than those who express

disagreement. Notably, the majority of respondents (56.0%, or 188 responses) strongly believe that girls are treated equally to boys in the school environment.

Table 4.14: Generally, Girls Access Equal Treatment Like Boys at School

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	50	14.9
DISAGREE	43	12.8
AGREE	55	16.4
STRONGLY AGREE	188	56.0

While the majority of respondents believe that girls receive equal treatment in schools, the significant percentage of those expressing disagreement highlights areas that require attention. Addressing these concerns is essential for creating a genuinely equitable educational environment (Assefa & Zenebe, 2024). Ongoing evaluation and proactive measures are necessary to ensure that all students, regardless of gender, have equal opportunities for success.

The data regarding the theme "Level of Performance of Girls in Academics is Almost Equal to Boys" offers important insights into perceptions of academic performance between genders. The findings reveal that a substantial number of respondents (36.0%, or 121 responses) strongly disagree with the idea that girls' academic performance is comparable to that of boys, indicating concerns about gender disparities. A smaller group (15.2%, or 51 responses) also disagrees, suggesting that they believe girls do not perform at the same level as boys, albeit to a lesser extent. Notably, 20.2% of respondents (68 responses) remain neutral, indicating uncertainty or ambivalence about

the comparison of academic performance between genders. Meanwhile, 14.6% of respondents (49 responses) agree that girls perform at a level comparable to boys, although this group is relatively small. Finally, a minority (14.0%, or 47 responses) strongly supports the notion that girls' academic performance is almost equal to that of boys.

Table 4.15: Level of Academic Performance of Girls Compared to Boys

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	121	36.0
DISAGREE	51	15.2
NEUTRAL	68	20.2
AGREE	49	14.6
STRONGLY AGREE	47	14.0
Total	336	100.0

The findings reveal a significant perception gap regarding the academic performance of girls compared to boys, with the majority expressing doubts about equality in performance levels (Scholinakis, 2024). Addressing these perceptions is essential for fostering a more equitable educational environment. Initiatives that promote equal support and resources for all genders, along with efforts to challenge stereotypes, can help improve academic outcomes and perceptions of gender performance in education.

The data on the theme "There is a High Number of Girls in Leadership" provides insights into perceptions regarding female representation in leadership roles. The results indicate that a significant majority of respondents (62.2%, or 209 responses) strongly

disagree with the idea that there are many girls in leadership positions, highlighting a strong perception of gender disparity in leadership. A smaller group (8.6%, or 29 responses) also disagrees, further reinforcing the notion that girls are underrepresented in leadership roles. Conversely, only a limited number of respondents (7.4%, or 25 responses) agree that there is a notable presence of girls in leadership. Finally, a minority (21.7%, or 73 responses) strongly supports the idea that girls hold many leadership positions.

Table 4.16: There is High Number of Girls in Leadership

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	209	62.2
DISAGREE	29	8.6
AGREE	25	7.4
STRONGLY AGREE	73	21.7
Total	336	100.0

The findings reveal a significant perception that girls do not hold a substantial number of leadership positions, reflecting broader concerns about gender equality in leadership (Pogrebna et al., 2024). Addressing these barriers is crucial for promoting female leadership and empowerment. Initiatives that support and encourage girls in leadership roles, provide mentorship, and challenge existing stereotypes can help create a more equitable environment where girls can thrive as leaders. The data concerning the theme "Girls are Participating in Decision-Making at School" offers insights into perceptions of female involvement in school governance and decision-making processes. A summary

of the responses shows that a small number of respondents (14.0%, or 47 responses) strongly disagree with the notion that girls are involved in decision-making at school. A larger segment (32.7%, or 110 responses) also disagrees, indicating a perception that girls have limited participation in decision-making roles. A minority of respondents (7.4%, or 25 responses) remain neutral, suggesting uncertainty about the extent of girls' involvement in decision-making. Conversely, nearly half of the respondents (45.8%, or 154 responses) believe that girls are actively participating in decision-making at school.

Table 4.17: Girls are Participating in Decision Making at School

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	47	14.0
DISAGREE	110	32.7
NEUTRAL	25	7.4
AGREE	154	45.8
Total	336	100.0

The findings indicate that while there is a significant belief in girls' participation in school decision-making, considerable skepticism still exists. To enhance girls' involvement, it is essential to create supportive environments that encourage their engagement and acknowledge their contributions (Kuteesa et al., 2024). Initiatives aimed at empowering girls and promoting gender equality in leadership roles within schools can help improve both perceptions and actual participation in decision-making processes.

The data concerning the theme "The Number of Girls in Classrooms Is Almost Equal to Boys" provides important insights into perceptions of gender balance in classroom settings. A summary of the responses reveals that nearly half of the respondents (45.8%, or 154 responses) strongly disagree with the notion that the number of girls in classrooms is equal to that of boys, highlighting significant concerns about gender disparity. A small portion of respondents (7.4%, or 25 responses) remain neutral, suggesting uncertainty or indifference regarding the gender balance in classrooms. Conversely, a notable number of respondents (33.9%, or 114 responses) feel that the number of girls is indeed comparable to that of boys, although this group is still outnumbered by those who disagree. A minority (12.8%, or 43 responses) strongly supports the claim that girls are almost equally represented in classrooms.

Table 4.18: Number of Girls in Classroom are Almost Equal to Boys

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	154	45.8
NEUTRAL	25	7.4
AGREE	114	33.9
STRONGLY AGREE	43	12.8
Total	336	100.0

The findings indicate a strong belief that girls are underrepresented in classrooms compared to boys, highlighting broader issues of gender equity in education. To address these concerns, it is essential for schools and educational policies to promote gender-inclusive practices that encourage equal enrollment and participation (Daraz et al.,

2024). Initiatives aimed at raising awareness and providing support for girls in education can help improve gender balance in classrooms and foster a more equitable learning environment.

The theme "Every Day, Students Walk a Long Distance to and from School" examines the daily commuting experiences of students, particularly focusing on the distances they travel to reach school. Data collected from teachers offers insights into their perceptions of student commuting patterns. A minority of teachers (20.3%, or 13 responses) strongly disagrees with the idea that students walk a long distance to school. This perspective may arise from their observations that many students live nearby or have alternative modes of transportation. A larger group of teachers (29.7%, or 19 responses) also disagrees, suggesting that while some students may walk, they do not view the distance as particularly long. This may indicate a belief that the majority of students are not significantly affected by travel distance. A smaller number of teachers (14.1%, or 9 responses) agree that some students do walk a long distance, reflecting awareness of specific cases where students face lengthy commutes. The largest group of teachers (35.9%, or 23 responses) strongly agrees that students walk a long distance to school, a viewpoint likely informed by their understanding of the community's geography, socio-economic factors, or personal interactions with students discussing their travel experiences.

Table 4.19: Teachers' Perception of Students Walking Long Distances to and from School

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	13	20.3
DISAGREE	19	29.7
AGREE	9	14.1
STRONGLY AGREE	23	35.9
Total	64	100.0

Understanding the commuting experiences of students is essential for educators, as these experiences can significantly impact attendance, punctuality, and overall well-being. For teachers who recognize the challenges posed by long distances, it may be beneficial to advocate for support systems, such as improved transportation options or community programs, to assist students facing lengthy commutes (Bonga et al., 2024). Addressing these issues can enhance the educational environment and ensure that all students have equitable access to their schooling.

The theme "Poor Toilets Contribute to Absenteeism Among Girls on Their Menstruation Days" focuses on the impact of inadequate toilet facilities on girls' school attendance, particularly during menstruation. Data collected from teachers provides insights into their perceptions of this issue. A majority of teachers (53.1%, or 34 responses) strongly disagree with the notion that poor toilet facilities contribute to absenteeism among girls during their menstruation days. This perspective may suggest that these teachers do not observe a direct correlation between toilet conditions and attendance or believe that other factors are more influential. A substantial number of teachers (37.5%, or 24

responses) remain neutral, indicating uncertainty or ambivalence about the issue. These teachers may recognize the potential for poor toilet conditions to affect attendance but do not feel strongly enough to agree or disagree. Conversely, a small minority of teachers (9.4%, or 6 responses) strongly agrees that inadequate toilet facilities significantly contribute to girls' absenteeism during menstruation, reflecting an awareness of the hygiene and comfort challenges that girls face during this time.

Table 4.20: Poor Toilets Contribute Absenteeism among Girls in Their Menstruation Days

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	34	53.1
NEUTRAL	24	37.5
STRONGLY AGREE	6	9.4
Total	64	100.0

The findings indicate a pressing need for educators to increase their awareness and understanding of the specific challenges girls face concerning menstruation, particularly in relation to toilet facilities. Addressing poor sanitation is crucial for improving school attendance among girls. Schools would benefit from initiatives that focus on upgrading toilet facilities, providing menstrual hygiene education, and creating an environment where girls feel comfortable attending school during their menstruation days (Ahsan & Ahsan, 2023). By prioritizing these changes, schools can help ensure that all students have equitable access to education and support. The theme "Lack of Sanitary and Adequate Water Contributes to Absenteeism Among Girls on Their Menstrual Days"

explores how inadequate water and sanitation facilities impact girls' school attendance during their menstrual cycles. Data collected from teachers provides insights into their perceptions of this issue. A significant majority of teachers (60.9%, or 39 responses) strongly disagree with the notion that a lack of sanitary and adequate water contributes to absenteeism among girls during menstruation. This suggests that many educators may not recognize the direct relationship between hygiene facilities and girls' school attendance. A smaller portion of teachers (17.2%, or 11 responses) remains neutral, indicating uncertainty or a lack of strong feelings about the impact of water and sanitation on girls' attendance. A minority of teachers (12.5%, or 8 responses) acknowledge that inadequate water and sanitation facilities do contribute to girls' absenteeism, highlighting some awareness of the issue among this group. The smallest segment of teachers (9.4%, or 6 responses) strongly believes that the lack of sanitary water and facilities significantly impacts attendance, reflecting an understanding of the specific challenges girls face during menstruation.

Table 4.21: Lack of Sanitary and Adequate Water Contribute Absenteeism Among Girls In Their Menstrual Days

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	39	60.9
NEUTRAL	11	17.2
AGREE	8	12.5
STRONGLY AGREE	6	9.4
Total	64	100.0

The findings indicate a pressing need for teachers to enhance their awareness and understanding of how inadequate sanitation and water facilities contribute to absenteeism among girls (Jahan et al., 2024). Schools must prioritize improving hygiene conditions and ensuring adequate water access, as these factors are crucial for enabling girls to attend school consistently, particularly during their menstrual days. By addressing these issues, educational institutions can foster a more supportive environment that promotes equal access to education for all students.

The theme "There is Stereotype from Male Students to Girls at School on Their Performance" examines teachers' perceptions regarding the presence of stereotypes held by male students about girls' academic performance. The data collected from teachers sheds light on their views concerning gender-related stereotypes and their potential impact on students. A significant majority of teachers (70.3%, or 45 responses) strongly disagree with the notion that male students harbor stereotypes about girls concerning their academic performance. This suggests that many educators may not recognize or observe gender-based biases in their classrooms. A small number of teachers (9.4%, or 6 responses) remain neutral, indicating uncertainty or ambivalence about the existence of stereotypes; they may acknowledge that while some stereotypes exist, they are not prominent or impactful in their specific contexts. Conversely, a minority of teachers (20.3%, or 13 responses) strongly agree that male students hold stereotypes about girls' performance, reflecting an awareness of potential biases that could affect girls' educational experiences and outcomes.

Table 4.22: There is Stereotype from Male Students to Girls at School on Their Performance

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	45	70.3
NEUTRAL	6	9.4
STRONGLY AGREE	13	20.3
Total	64	100.0

The findings highlight the need for increased awareness and dialogue among educators about gender stereotypes and their impact on academic performance. While a significant majority do not perceive these stereotypes as a major issue, the insights from those who do recognize them underscore an important area for intervention (Kuteesa et al., 2024). Schools should consider implementing training programs aimed at addressing gender biases, fostering an inclusive environment that supports all students equally, and promoting positive interactions among peers. By taking these steps, educational institutions can help mitigate the effects of stereotypes and enhance academic outcomes for girls.

The theme "There is a Stereotype from Male Teachers to Girls at School on Their Performance" explores teachers' perceptions regarding the existence of stereotypes held by male teachers about girls' academic performance. The data collected provides insights into how educators perceive gender biases within the classroom context. A significant majority of teachers (73.4%, or 47 responses) strongly disagree with the idea that male teachers hold stereotypes about girls regarding their academic performance. This

indicates a general perception that male educators treat girls fairly and without bias. A smaller group of teachers (17.2%, or 11 responses) disagrees, suggesting that while they may not believe in strong stereotypes, they acknowledge the potential for some biases to influence interactions and evaluations. A small number of teachers (9.4%, or 6 responses) remain neutral, indicating uncertainty about the existence of stereotypes. They may recognize the complexities of gender dynamics but do not hold strong opinions on the matter.

Table 4.23: There is Stereotype from Male Teachers to Girls at School on Their Performance

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	47	73.4
DISAGREE	11	17.2
NEUTRAL	6	9.4
Total	64	100.0

The findings indicate that, while many teachers firmly believe that male educators do not hold stereotypes about girls' academic performance, there remains a critical need for continuous awareness and dialogue regarding gender biases in education (Mwalongo, 2024). Schools should consider offering professional development opportunities focused on gender sensitivity training, ensuring that all teachers, regardless of gender, are equipped to recognize and address any biases that may impact their students. By fostering an inclusive and fair environment, educational institutions can better support the academic success of all students. The theme "Girls are Participating in Decision

"Making at School" explores teachers' perceptions regarding the extent of girls' involvement in decision-making processes within the school environment. The collected data provides insights into educators' views about female students' engagement in leadership and decision-making roles. A small portion of teachers (17.2%, or 11 responses) strongly disagrees, indicating that they believe girls do not participate in decision-making at school. This perspective may reflect concerns about gender equity and representation in leadership roles. A modest number of teachers (12.5%, or 8 responses) remain neutral, suggesting uncertainty about the level of girls' participation. Some teachers (20.3%, or 13 responses) agree that girls are involved in decision-making, though this group is relatively small compared to those who strongly agree. The largest segment of teachers (50.0%, or 32 responses) strongly believes that girls actively participate in decision-making processes at school, highlighting a positive perception of girls' engagement and contributions.

Table 4.24: Girls are Participating in Decision Making at School

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	11	17.2
NEUTRAL	8	12.5
AGREE	13	20.3
STRONGLY AGREE	32	50.0
Total	64	100.0

The findings suggest that while a majority of teachers believe girls are actively participating in school decision-making, dissenting views highlight the need for

continued efforts to provide equitable opportunities for all students. Schools should work to actively encourage girls' involvement in leadership roles and decision-making processes to create an inclusive environment (Montoya, 2024). Initiatives such as mentorship programs, leadership training, and supportive structures can strengthen girls' engagement and ensure their voices are represented in school governance. In this way, educational institutions can foster a culture of equality and empowerment for all students.

"Number of Girls in Classroom Are Almost Equal to Boys." This theme examines teachers' perceptions of gender balance in classroom settings, focusing on whether the number of girls is comparable to that of boys. The collected data offers insights into educators' views on gender representation within classrooms. Strongly Disagree (21 responses, 32.8%): A substantial portion of teachers (32.8%) strongly believes that girls are underrepresented in classrooms compared to boys, reflecting concerns about gender equity and potential barriers to girls' education. Disagree (27 responses, 42.2%): An even larger group disagrees, suggesting a strong perception of gender disparity in classroom enrollment. Strongly Agree (16 responses, 25.0%): A smaller segment (25.0%) strongly agrees that the number of girls is nearly equal to boys, indicating that some educators perceive a more balanced gender representation.

Table 4.25: Number of Girls in Classroom are Almost Equal to Boys

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	21	32.8
DISAGREE	27	42.2
STRONGLY AGREE	16	25.0
Total	64	100.0

The findings highlight an urgent need for educational institutions to prioritize gender equity, ensuring that girls have equal opportunities to participate in classroom environments. Schools should implement strategies to enhance girls' enrollment, engagement, and retention through supportive policies, mentorship programs, and community outreach initiatives (Van de Waal et al., 2024). By recognizing and addressing the barriers that contribute to gender disparities, educational institutions can foster a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students.

The theme "There is a High Number of Girls in Leadership" examines teachers' perceptions regarding the representation of girls in leadership roles within their educational settings. The data collected offers insights into how educators view gender equity in leadership positions among students. A significant portion of teachers (31.3%, or 20 responses) strongly disagrees with the notion that there is a high number of girls in leadership positions, indicating concerns about the underrepresentation of girls in roles such as student government, clubs, or other leadership opportunities. An additional 29.7% (19 responses) disagree, further emphasizing the perception that girls are not adequately represented in leadership roles, suggesting the existence of barriers that

prevent them from taking on such positions. A small percentage of teachers (12.5%, or 8 responses) remain neutral, indicating uncertainty or ambivalence regarding the extent of girls' representation in leadership. Conversely, a minority of teachers (26.6%, or 17 responses) strongly believes that there is a high number of girls in leadership positions, reflecting a more optimistic view of their involvement in these roles.

Table 4.26: There is High Number of Girls in Leadership

Response	Frequency	Percent in %
STRONGLY DISAGREE	20	31.3
DISAGREE	19	29.7
NEUTRAL	8	12.5
STRONGLY AGREE	17	26.6
Total	64	100.0

The findings indicate a pressing need for educational institutions to prioritize the promotion of gender equity in leadership roles. To address the concerns regarding the underrepresentation of girls, schools should implement initiatives designed to encourage female students to engage in leadership activities. This may include mentorship programs, leadership training, and the creation of supportive environments that foster girl leaders (Kuteesa et al., 2024). By actively working to dismantle barriers and provide equitable opportunities, educational institutions can cultivate a culture of inclusivity and empower all students to pursue leadership roles.

In examining perceived gender inequalities in secondary schools within Kahama Municipality, many responses highlighted several issues, including the lack of girls'

participation in decision-making processes, a smaller number of girls in classrooms compared to boys, and fewer girls in student leadership positions. Additionally, there were concerns about girls' poorer academic performance relative to boys and instances of unequal treatment, with girls often being victims of mistreatment. One respondent expressed their views, stating that:

"I have three children who completed Form Four from two secondary schools in Kahama Municipality. My two daughters scored Division Zero, while my only son scored Division Two. I agree with others who decide against sending their daughters to secondary school; it feels like a waste of time and money. My daughters gained nothing from secondary school and only brought shame to the family" (Respondent 04, male, 51 years).

Another respondent was quoted when saying

"There are fewer girls than boys in classrooms because most parents do not send them to school. Many girls who complete Standard Seven do not go on to secondary school; instead, they get married. This is because even those who do attend secondary school often do not perform well academically" (Respondent 05, female, 37 years).

4.11 Summary

The findings indicate a notable sense of autonomy among students; however, cultural factors at the family level continue to perpetuate gender inequality in education. Many parents regard secondary school primarily as an institution for boys, which diminishes the perceived value of girls' education. It is essential to change these perceptions through community engagement to ensure equitable opportunities for all students.

Transportation and safety challenges significantly hinder school attendance for many girls, with over 62% acknowledging these barriers. Furthermore, more than half of the respondents indicated that school-related challenges negatively impact their motivation to learn, emphasizing the need for supportive environments that foster positive educational outcomes. Students have voiced concerns about gender inequality, particularly regarding equal treatment and participation in leadership roles. While half of the teachers perceive girls as being involved in decision-making processes, there remains skepticism about their actual representation. This situation highlights the urgent need for targeted initiatives to address gender stereotypes and promote genuine equity in education.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Overview

This chapter presents a comprehensive summary of the findings, conclusions drawn from the research, and recommendations for actionable steps that can be taken. Additionally, it includes suggestions for further studies that could expand on the current research and explore related topics in greater depth.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The findings reveal that gender inequality in secondary education within Kahama Municipality is largely influenced by cultural perceptions embedded at family, societal, and institutional levels. At the family level, parental attitudes toward education reveal a strong bias favoring boys over girls, with a significant proportion of parents viewing secondary schooling as more valuable for sons. This perception directly affects girls' access to education and academic persistence, as evidenced by the lower enrollment rates and early dropout tendencies among female students. Community norms further reinforce these disparities, where societal expectations often prioritize girls' roles within domestic or marital settings over educational attainment. These views are deeply rooted in local cultural practices, emphasizing traditional gender roles that limit girls' ambitions and undermine their academic potential. At the institutional level, the study identifies several factors within the school environment that perpetuate gender-based inequities. Girls face various challenges, such as insufficient support for menstrual hygiene and

safety concerns related to commuting, which collectively hinder regular attendance and diminish their motivation to engage in school activities. Additionally, there is a noticeable gender gap in student leadership and decision-making roles, with a large portion of teachers and students reporting that girls are underrepresented in school governance and academic leadership. Despite some improvements, entrenched stereotypes and biases from peers and educators continue to affect girls' participation and performance in school, leading to academic performance gaps and limited involvement in extracurricular activities. These findings highlight the need for community engagement programs to shift parental attitudes, policy interventions to improve school infrastructure, and gender-sensitization training for teachers to foster a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for both genders.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concludes that cultural factors at family, societal, and institutional levels significantly influence gender inequality in secondary education within Kahama Municipality. Family-level cultural norms that prioritize boys' education, combined with traditional beliefs that confine girls to domestic roles, play a major role in limiting girls' educational opportunities. This is compounded by societal expectations that reinforce early marriage for girls and undervalue their academic potential, creating an environment where gender disparities persist despite governmental efforts to promote educational equality. The challenges are further exacerbated at the institutional level, where inadequate support for girls' needs such as menstrual hygiene facilities and safe

transportation contributes to lower attendance and reduced academic performance among female students.

The study also underscores that while policy initiatives exist, their effectiveness is hindered by a lack of enforcement, particularly in rural settings like Kahama. Gender biases among teachers and students reinforce traditional stereotypes, diminishing girls' engagement in school leadership and academic pursuits. These findings highlight the complex, interconnected nature of cultural barriers to gender equality in education. To bridge the gender gap, there is a clear need for targeted interventions that address both the cultural mindset within families and communities and the structural limitations within schools. Only through an integrated approach that includes policy reforms, community education, and institutional improvements can sustainable gender equality in education be achieved. This conclusion serves as a call to action for stakeholders—educators, policymakers, and community leaders—to collaboratively create a supportive and equitable educational landscape for all students in Tanzania.

5.4 Recommendations

To address the cultural factors influencing gender inequality in secondary education within Kahama Municipality, this study suggests a comprehensive approach involving policy reforms, community engagement, and school-level improvements. Community-wide educational campaigns are essential to shift deep-rooted beliefs that prioritize boys' education over girls'. These campaigns, in the form of workshops and sensitization programs targeting parents and community leaders, can address the cultural perceptions

that limit girls' educational opportunities. By focusing on the economic and social benefits of educating girls, these programs can foster a supportive environment that champions gender equality in education.

Additionally, enhancing school infrastructure to include gender-sensitive facilities is necessary to encourage girls' attendance and retention in schools. Improved sanitation facilities, particularly those supporting menstrual hygiene, would directly address challenges that discourage female students from regular attendance. Providing safe and reliable transportation for students in remote areas would further help reduce obstacles associated with long commutes, ensuring that all students, regardless of gender, have equitable access to education. Teacher training on gender sensitivity is also vital, as it would equip educators with the skills to recognize and counteract biases within the classroom. Through training programs focused on identifying and addressing gender stereotypes, educators can help foster an inclusive learning environment that encourages girls' active participation and academic success. Such initiatives can contribute to a supportive school culture that values and promotes girls' engagement in all aspects of the educational experience.

Policy enforcement and monitoring are critical as well. Although policies promoting gender equality in education exist, their effectiveness is often undermined by inconsistent enforcement, especially in rural areas. Strengthening monitoring mechanisms to ensure adherence at all school levels will be crucial. This includes

upholding policies that prevent early marriage and school dropouts, with clear consequences for policy violations to ensure compliance and accountability.

Furthermore, schools should actively encourage and create more opportunities for girls to assume leadership roles within the educational system. By promoting female participation in student leadership and decision-making bodies, schools can empower girls academically and challenge societal norms that restrict their leadership potential. Through consistent application, these measures can help to reduce cultural barriers and foster an educational environment that supports gender equality and empowers girls to pursue their academic and professional goals with confidence.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I Study Variables and Operationalization

The research variables of this study were operationalized as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: The Research Variables, Measurements and Operationalization

S/N	factors	Constructs	Measurements
1	Family level cultural factors	i. Parents making decisions for children, ii. Parents perceiving that secondary school was for their male children only iii. Parents perceiving girls as source of income/reserved to be married iv. Parents ignoring to invest in education for their girl child	Five Options Likert Scale: 5 = Strongly agree 1= strongly disagree
2	Society level cultural factors	i. Forcing young girls to have marriage ii. Low society morale to take girls to school iii. No freedom from society norms iv. Culture of preferring boys than girls	Five Options Likert Scale: 5 = Strongly agree 1= strongly disagree
3	Institutional level cultural factors	i. Schools being too far from homes ii. Poor schools' infrastructures like water, toilets, etc iii. Stereotype from teachers iv. Stereotype from male students	Five Options Likert Scale 5 = Strongly agree, 1= strongly disagree
4	Gender inequality in Secondary School	i. Girls engage in decision making. ii. Number of girls in classroom. iii. Number of girls in leadership. iv. Level of performance in academic.	Five Options Likert Scale 5 = Strongly agree, 1= strongly disagree

Source: Researcher's construct (2024).

APPENDIX II

A SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Introduction

Dear, my name is **Lwitiko Ambindwile** perusing Master's degree of Master of Arts in Gender Studies at Open University of Tanzania. As a part of the requirements to complete the stated study, I'm undertaking research on **“Examination of Cultural Factors Influencing Gender Inequality among Secondary School Students in Tanzania: A Survey of Secondary Schools in Kahama Municipality”**. Participation in this study is voluntary and is implied by accepting the questionnaire. Also, the information to be shared will be treated confidential for research purpose only. Therefore, I am requesting you to accept and complete this questionnaire of which I will pick it very soon after completion of your response.

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE

PART I

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Instructions:_____

Tick (✓) in the boxes besides the options that describes you most.

1. Gender

- | | | |
|------------|---|---|
| (a) Male | [|] |
| (b) Female | [|] |

2. Ager group

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| (a) Between 15 and 20 years | [|] |
| (b) Between 21 and 26 years | [|] |
| (c) Between 27 and 32 years | [|] |
| (d) Between 33 and 38 years | [|] |
| (e) From 39 years and above | [|] |

3. Education level

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| (a) Certificate level | [|] |
| (b) Ordinary diploma | [|] |
| (c) First Degree | [|] |
| (d) Master degree | [|] |
| (e) PhD | [|] |

4. Experience at work

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| (a) Less than 5 years | [|] |
| (b) 5 to 10 years | [|] |
| (c) 11 to 15 years | [|] |
| (d) Above 15 years | [|] |

PART II:**QUESTIONS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

How each of the following statements describes you most? Tick (✓) besides the appropriate options/boxes whereby: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

S/N	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
	Institutional level cultural factors					
1	Every day students walk a long distance to and from school.					
2	Students delay to reach at school due to several challenges on their way.					
3	Poor toilets contribute absenteeism among girls in their menstruation days.					
4	Lack of sanitary and adequate water contribute absenteeism among girls in their menstruation days.					
5	There is stereotype from male students to girls at school					
6	There is stereotype from male teachers to girls at school					
	Generally, students encounter different challenges at school that reduce their incentives towards education endeavor.					
	Gender Inequality					
1	Girls are participating in decision making at school.					
2	Number of girls in classroom are almost equal to boys.					
3	There is high number of girls in leadership.					
4	Level of performance of girls in academic is almost equal to boys.					
	Generally, girls have equal opportunities to boys at this school					

THE END

APPENDIX III

A SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Introduction

Dear, my name is **Lwitiko Ambindwile** perusing Master's degree of Master of Arts in Gender Studies at Open University of Tanzania. As a part of the requirements to complete the stated study, I'm undertaking research on **“Examination of Cultural Factors Influencing Gender Inequality among Secondary School Students in Tanzania: A Survey of Secondary Schools in Kahama Municipality”**. Participation in this study is voluntary and is implied by accepting the questionnaire. Also, the information to be shared will be treated confidential for research purpose only. Therefore, I am requesting you to accept and complete this questionnaire of which I will pick it very soon after completion of your response.

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE

PART I**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Instructions:_____

Tick (✓) in the boxes besides the options that describes you most.

1. Gender

- | | | |
|------------|---|---|
| (c) Male | [|] |
| (d) Female | [|] |

2. Ager group

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| (f) Between 10 and 15 years | [|] |
| (g) Between 16 and 20 years | [|] |
| (h) Between 21 and 25 years | [|] |
| (i) Between 26 and 30 years | [|] |
| (j) From 31 years and above | [|] |

PART II:
QUESTIONS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

How each of the following statements describes you most? Tick (✓) besides the appropriate options/boxes whereby: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

S/N	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
	Family level cultural factors					
1	Parents make decisions on my behalf for everything.					
2	Parents perceive girls as source of income/reserved to be married.					
3	Parents perceive that secondary school is for the boys					
4	Parents ignore to invest in education for the girls					
	Generally, parents decide on behalf of their children					
	Gender Inequality					
1	Girls are participating in decision making at school.					
2	Number of girls in classroom are almost equal to boys.					
3	There is high number of girls in leadership.					
4	Level of performance of girls in academic is almost equal to boys.					
	Generally, girls access equal treatment like boys at school.					

THE END

APPENDIX IV

DODOSO KWA WAZAZI

Utangulizi

Mpendwa, ninaitwa **Lwitiko Ambindwile** ni mwanafunzi wa shahada ya pili (shahada ya uzamili) ya Sanaa Katika Mambo ya Jinsia kutoka chuo kikuu hulia cha Tanzania. Kama sehemu ya mahitaji ya kukamilisha masomo haya, Ninafanya utafiti kuhusu **“Uchunguzi wa mambo ya kitamaduni yanayo chochea kutokuwa na usawa wa kijinsia miongoni mwa wanafunzi wa sekondari Tanzania: Katika Shule za Sekondari ndani ya Manispaa ya Kahama”**. Ushiriki wako niwa hiyali na tarifa utakazotoa zitakuwa siri kwaajili ya kukamilisha lengo lililokusudiwa. Hivyo nakuomba ukubali na ukamilishe dodoso hili kisha ntachukua punde ukikamilisha kujaza.

Natanguliza shukrani

SEHEMU YA KWANZA**TAARIFA BINAFSI**Maelekezo

Weke alama ya vema (✓) kwenye sanduku sahihi .

1. Jinsia

- | | |
|--------|-----------|
| (a) Me | [] |
| (b) Ke | [] |

2. Umri

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| (a) Kati ya miaka 20 na 25 | [] |
| (b) Kati ya miaka 26 na 30 | [] |
| (c) Kati ya miaka 31 na 40 | [] |
| (d) Kati ya miaka 45 na kuendelea | [] |

3. Kazi yako

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| (a) Mkulima | [] |
| (b) Mfanya biashara | [] |
| (c) Mtumishi wa umma | [] |

4. Kiwango chako cha elimu.

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| (a) Elimu ya msingi | [] |
| (b) Kidato cha nne | [] |
| (c) Kidato cha sita | [] |
| (d) Astashahada | [] |
| (e) Stashahada | [] |
| (f) Shahada | [] |
| (g) Shahada ya uzamili | [] |
| (h) Shahada ya uzamivu | [] |

SEHEMU YA PILI**MASWALI MUHIMU KWAAJILI YA MALENGO YA UTAFITI HUU**

Onesha kiwango ambacho unakubaliana na haukubaliani kwa kuweka alama ya vema(✓) kwenye chaguo lako .Ikiwa 1 = sikubaliani kabisa, 2 = sikubaliani 3 = sina uamuzi, 4 = nakubaliana, 5 = nakubaliana kabisa

S/N	Maelezo	1	2	3	4	5
	Sababu za kitamaduni kwa ngazi ya jamii					
1	Wasichana hulazimishwa kuolwa.					
2	Jamii ina hamasa ndogo kupeleka watoto wa kike shuleni					
3	Jamii hupendelea mtoto wa kiume kupata elimu kuliko mtoto wa kike					
4	Hakuna uhuru kwa mtoto wa kike kutoka kwe kanuni za jamii					
	Kwaujumla, jamii humnyima fursa mtoto wa kike.					
	Kutokuwa na usawa wa kijinsia					
1	Wasichana wanashiriki kufanya maamuzi wakiwa shuleni.					
2	Idadi ya wasichana darasani iko sawa na wavulana.					
3	Kuna idadi kubwa ya wasichana kwenye uongozi wa shule					
4	Kiwango cha ufaulu kwa wasichana nisawa na wavulana.					
	Kwa ujumla, wasichana wana haki sawa na wavulana shuleni					

MWISHO

INTERVIEW GUIDES FOR PARENTS

1. What are cultural factors influencing gender inequalities among secondary school students at society level in Kahama municipality?

Prob: forced marriage, prioritizing to educate boy children over girl children.....

2. What are the perceived gender inequalities in secondary schools of Kahama municipality?

Prob: girls' participation in decision making at school, girls perform similarly to boys academically

.....

APPENDIX V**RESEARCH ACTIVITY AND BUDGET**

S/N	Research Activity	Estimated Costs (TZS)
1	Preparation of relevant literature	300,000
2	Field data collection	1,000,000
3	Data Analysis and Report Writing	400,000
4	Miscellaneous	300,000
5	Total	2,000,000



THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
 MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA



Ref. No OUT/PG201902617

23rd October, 2023

Municipal Director,
 Kahama Municipal Council
 P.O.Box 472,
SHINYANGA.

Dear Municipal Director

**RE: RESEARCH CLEARANCE FOR MR. LWITIKO AMBINDWILE, REG NO:
 PG201902617**

2. The Open University of Tanzania was established by an Act of Parliament No. 17 of 1992, which became operational on the 1st March 1993 by public notice No.55 in the official Gazette. The Act was however replaced by the Open University of Tanzania Charter of 2005, which became operational on 1st January 2007. In line with the Charter, the Open University of Tanzania mission is to generate and apply knowledge through research.

3. To facilitate and to simplify research process therefore, the act empowers the Vice Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania to issue research clearance, on behalf of the Government of Tanzania and Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, to both its staff and students who are doing research

in Tanzania. With this brief background, the purpose of this letter is to introduce to you **Mr. Lwitiko Ambindwile**,

Reg. No: **PG201902617**), pursuing **Master of Gender Studies (MAGS)**. We here by grant this clearance to conduct a research titled **“Examination of Cultural Factors Influencing Gender Inequality among Secondary School Students in Tanzania: A Case Study of Kahama Municipality”**.

He will collect his data at your area from 24th October to 30th November 2023.

4. In case you need any further information, kindly do not hesitate to contact the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) of the Open University of Tanzania, P.O.Box 23409, Dar es Salaam. Tel: 022-2-2668820. We lastly thank you in advance for your assumed cooperation and facilitation of this research academic activity.

Yours sincerely,

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA



Prof. Magreth S. Bushesha

For: VICE CHANCELLOR



JAMHURI YA MUUNGANO WA TANZANIA
OFISI YA RAIS, TAWALA ZA MIKOA NA SERIKALI
ZA MITAA
HALMASHAURI YA MANISPAA YA KAHAMA



Unapojibu tafadhali taja:

Kumb.Na.KMC/P.20/1/VOL IV/79


06 Novemba, 2023

Watendaji wa Kata,
Kata za Kilago na Iyenze,
S.L.P 472,
KAHAMA.

Yah: **KIBALI CHA KUFANYA UTAFITI BW. LWITIKO AMBINDWILE WA
CHUO KIKUU HURIA CHA TANZANIA.**

Tafadhali husika na mada tajwa hapo juu,

2. Ofisi ya Mkurugenzi wa Manispaa ya Kahama imepokea barua yenye
Kumb. Na.OUT/PG201902617 ya tarehe 23 Oktoba, 2023 kutoka The Open
University of Tanzania.
3. Mtajwa hapo juu anatarajia kufanya utafiti katika Kata yako. Utafiti huo
utafanyika kuanzia Mwezi Oktoba hadi Novemba, 2023. Aidha utafiti huo ni kuhusu
**"Examination of Curtural Factors Infuencing Gender Inequality among
Secondary Schools Students in Tanzania"**
4. Kwa barua hii, unataarifiwa kuwa kibali kimetolewa na unatakiwa kumpokea
na kutoa ushirikiano kwake ili aweze kukamilisha utafiti huo.
5. Nakutakia kazi njema.


Dinno W. Kikoti

