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# The Relationship between Female Girls Education Policies and Academic Performance of Female Students in Rwanda

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## Abstract

The implementation of female education policies plays a significant role in promotion of academic performance and other schooling learning outcomes. The purpose of this study therefore was to establish the relationship between female girls' education policies and academic performance of female students in Rusizi District in Rwanda. This study adopted correlation research design while structured questionnaires, interview guide and document reviews were used as data collection instruments. The target population was 283 respondents. The sample size was 166 obtained by the use of Yamane formula. The sample was obtained by the use of simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Questionnaire, interview guide and document review were used to collect the data. The findings revealed that 53.1% strongly agreed with recruiting and training gender sensitive teachers, 86.4% agreed with specifying the provision of alternative education for girls, 80.0% felt agreed with encouraging girls' participation. Thus, 77.0% felt female students received toilet support. The study recommended the government to make attention to the improvement of academic performance, education quality and pertinence in secondary schools and enable girls to achieve high level of learning outcomes. The community should abandon some harmful cultural practices faced by female students in secondary schools because they contribute to low esteem and ambitions. Secondary schools should adopt gender sensitive courses and give utter instructional materials like books and other equipment.

**Keywords:** *Education policy, Girls' education, Academic performance, secondary schools, Rwanda.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

Globally, over 60 million girls never start school, 100 million never complete primary school and more than 500 million young girls were not aware of reading and writing (Carmichael, 2015). According to Freire (2013), girl-child in developing countries lag behind in terms of education compared to men. This clearly indicates how girl-child and girls face a lot of problems of inequality which negatively affects the development of rural communities from which they come. The World Education Forum held Dakar in 2000 also noted disparities existing between girls and boys in terms of education and recommended that these disparities should be eliminated by 2005 and gender equality should be achieved by 2015 (Gardner, 2010). Worldwide, there are 582 million girls aged 10 to 19 years.<sup>4</sup> Over 85% of girls are estimated to experience poor academic performance (less than \$2 per day). Therefore, it is prominent to take into consideration female empowerment in order to enable them to have positive learning outcomes. Despite, high enrolment of female in education system, the greatest impediments for them is their adherence and promotion in secondary and tertiary education (Materu, 2013). In countries such as Bangladesh, Liberia, Tanzania and Rwanda (Calder & Huda, 2013). Approximately 25% of females in less developed countries did not attend schools (Chabaan & Cunningham, 2011). More than twelve countries, over 50 percent and in some countries 87 percent of females did not complete their primary education (Hervish & Feldman, 2011). These statistics accompanied by others highlight the deprivation, discrimination, and lack of opportunity that girls globally must contend with.

Continentially, in half the African countries included, fewer than 50 percent of girls have achieved basic literacy even after grade five (Khosla & Kalita, 2013). This is partly attributable to the fact that even where girls are enrolled in school, their attendance is often irregular at best (Maitra & Mani, 2012). Regionally, many adolescent girls in East African countries, face low educational attainment and illiteracy (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2015). At the national level, evidences from Rwanda indicates primary education completion rate was ameliorate from 52% in 2007 to 75% in 2009 with female proportion equal to 78% in comparison to 71% for male children. The promotion from primary to secondary education has also been improved from 54% in 2008 to 88% in 2009 (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2016).

The country is towing a policy that avails girl-child with equal access to education (Ministry of Education, 2014). In Rwanda, 47% of female students who were impregnated when they still in school encountering several constraints owing to the period of adolescence (Ministry of Education, 2015). If this trend continues, Rwanda could be faced with major crisis in learning institutions as more girls will be edged out of the school system due to health complications (Rwanda Education Board, 2014). Girl in Rwanda is continuously making positive strides in education parameters. This is due to the government policies that are breaking the rigors of gender equity which characterized the initial patriarch society of Rwanda. The country is towing a policy that avails girl-child with equal access to education (O’Gara, 2013). Today, girls’ enrolment in primary schools has hit a record 80 percent (MINEDUC, 2013). In Rusizi District, girls face several problems related to poor teaching methods in favour of girls, low interest in science for girls, poor point and uncondusive teaching and learning environment towards girls ‘education (Rusizi District, 2019). The inability in obtaining along with teachers and administrators, complexity modifying in the school program, classroom misconduct, poor examination grades and lack of school success are associated with poor learning conditions to girls (REB, 2019).

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Previous studies estimate that about three quarter of the girl student is at risk of academic failure (Materu, 2013). In fact, being below grade level (Birch & Wachter, 2011), low achievement test scores (Tamusuza, 2011), low rate of school completion (World Development Relief, 2011), low class attendance (Maitra & Mani, 2012), are indicators of poor performance. Although, MINEDUC (2013), puts the rate of girls' enrolment in primary schools at 97 percent, their drop-out rate of 11 percent is a cause for worry. It is on a high side compared to that of their boy's counterparts which is only 5 percent as according to ESSP (2013/14- 2017/18) Strategic Plan. Academic performance for female students in public secondary schools in Rusizi District has become poor. According to MINEDUC (2019), the last five years (2016-2019) asserts that girls who passed national examination between 2010 and 2015 did not perform well in their results, in this regard 17% only were qualified for direct entry to University, 37% of girls were able to obtain high grades in tests (Rusizi District, 2016), 39% were able to obtain first class results in home works (Rusizi, 2016 ), 50 % did not participate in class all days of courses (Rusizi District, 2016) while 18% drop out their schools without completing their studies (Rusizi District, 2016).

Therefore, the government of Rwanda and Rusizi District adopted several girls 'education policies to overcome the above cited female poor performance. In this regards, among strategies adopted were in line to the implementation gender policy and Being Platform for action to emancipate women (United Nations [UN], 2015). These strategies include: Review teaching methods (Kudari, 2016), readmission policy (Lange, 2012), repetition policy (Marwa, 2012), sanitary towels policy (Nyagosia, 2011). After adopting the above strategies an improvement in academic performance of female students were experienced in the country as shown by REB (2019). However, few studies have been undertaken to know if girls education policies adopted play a role in improving academic performance of female students. The purpose of this paper therefore, was to establish the relationship between female girls' education policies and academic performance of female students in Rusizi District in Rwanda.

### **1.2 Research Objective**

The objective of the paper was to establish the relationship between female girls' education policies and academic performance of female students in Rusizi District in Rwanda.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Academic Performance of Female Students in Secondary Schools**

The academic success stands for learning outcomes that express the level that a student had realized specific targets that have been the emphasis of action in education setting, particularly secondary schools and high learning institutions (Koskey, 2011). Therefore, academic achievement must be taken into account as a multidimensional concept that contains different fields of studying. Due to the domain of academic performance is very large changing and encompassing different learning outputs. In developing countries, learning outcomes contribute more to the life of students, academic success as assessed by GPA by standardized assessment aimed at selecting objective like SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) examined if a student will have a change to enter into high learning institution from secondary schools (Kudari, 2016).

The high correlation between academic performance and socioeconomic development has been one of the most important factors for carrying out assessing international studies on academic performance including PISA (program for international students Assessment, undertaken by OECD (Nyagosia, 2011). Results of these researches provide evidences on different measures of a national academic performance, these evidences are employed to discuss and strong point and weak points of national education system and to direct education rules and regulations (Omolo & Simatwa, 2010). Provided the person and community role of academic success, it is not amazing that it is the study ultimate goal in several domain. The researcher of the present study understood students' academic performance as the degree to which the learner, has attained educational goals. The present study considered grades obtained in national examination, school internal test marks, and marks obtained in assignment (homework's) as elements that meant school academic performance.

## **2.2 Gender Party Net Enrolment in education**

Much as education is vital for development, its accessibility is still punctuated by gender inequalities in some parts of the world, Sub Saharan Africa inclusive (Devers, 2012). Developing countries still face varying levels of offering girl-child the same education opportunities as men (Dyer, 2014). Other natural calamities such as war put aside, Goldstein (2010), observe that, girls' access to education is still affected by factors related to traditional cultural practices of gender discrimination, religion, economic status, age and geographical location. The result of this is that, 2/3 of the world's girl- child population below 18 years of age are not in school (O'Gara, 2013). According to the report on MDGs implementation (2013), gender parity is being implemented at the primary level in developing countries. Unfortunately, only 2 among 30 countries attained an almost similar target all levels of education. This is influencing the rise in the rate of female Income Generation in the non- agricultural formal sector, which the report puts at 40 percent today.

## **2.3 Grade obtained in National examinations**

Samuel (2013). Some countries do not have a public examination system, leaving it up to individual schools to certify the achievements of their students (Shoko, 2010). There has been the products of resources and procedures. In this research, senior six national living examination outcomes emanate from government education policies, capacity building, household economic status and students and techniques procedures. Clear and pertinent results determined in this research have been the proportion of girls' attendance, academic performance in national exams, percentages that are denoted in the context of policies, procedure and results. School attendance and learning outcome rely on the quality of sources, process and results (Nyalusi, 2013).

## **2.4 Class participation**

Studies were carried out on institutional performance and a number of performance measurements were advanced (Imenikhe *et al*, 2010). Most of them are relied on financial indicators (Kanyabi & Devi, 2012) and non-financial measures (Hilman & Mohamed, 2011) and others were relied on a mixture of financial and non-financial indicators (Kimani *et al.*, 2010). Previous researches have been conducted among universities in order to assess their performance and these studies took into consideration teaching and learning indicators (Asif & Searcy, 2014). Furthermore, other scholars focused on income produced from research projects and consultancy activities (Asif & Searcy, 2014) and dome evidences relied on students and other practitioners' level of satisfaction

with education services ( Education Criteria for Performance Excellence [ECPE],2011), little attention was provided to academic indicators including reputations, chance of getting job for graduate, faculty ratio and field medals.

## **2.5 Class retention**

The index measurement of student academic success had focused on adequate studies and high position in ranking of schools (Dawo & Simatwa, 2010). Secondary schools with high performance obtain more revenue than those with low performance that can give performers with viable advantage that could encourage schools with low performance (Marmolejo, 2015).

## **2.6 Girls education policies**

Education as a term has been defined differently by various scholars. It is interesting however, that all the varied definitions bring out the notion that education is a process of learning which equips an individual(s) as Freire (2013) writes, with values and norms of a society where (s) he lives. Omolo and Simatwa (2010) adds that it as well includes improving what they learn and transferring it to the next generations. This is manifested in the article 26 of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights. The aforementioned article grants education as basic human rights for all children because it improves their talents and interests in the most basic ways. Some of these basic ways include providing literacy skills for communication which enables adapting to new innovations that result into sustainable development in society (Barakat, 2011). Through this therefore, education shapes progressive opinions in life which Gardner (2010), commends as drivers of development in society. Education has been seen on the greatest sector for empowering female children as it was evidenced by two international conferences on women. These are Cairo and Being Conferences. Therefore, special emphasis has focused on education as one of sector where discrimination was evident for females. This was evidenced by low rate of girl enrolment into primary, secondary and tertiary education.

The provision of opportunity to have access to basic education for female and young girls is considered as one of their mainstreaming strategies which enable them to make selection for their living conditions. However, the convention on the rights of children and the convention on the removal of all forms of discrimination against women take it serious as a basic and fundamental human rights (Scully, 2014). The above forms the basis of Bruns (2014), appeal to governments to always work for an enabling environment as can allow equal access to education with no forms of discrimination. “Educate a woman, educate a nation” is a commonly used expression in Africa reflecting the need for girls’ education. An educated woman will promote a society’s standard of living through fighting retrogressive cultural practices like which cause early marriages and radical behaviour as according to Rani (2010). Uneducated girl-child are therefore, as Scully (2014) writes, less empowered in terms of fighting poverty for girl’s performance as participation in such endeavours depend on knowledge possession. Bearing this in mind and the fact that girl-child are the majority population, the World Bank (2013) report, recommends emphasis on educating girl-child in developing countries to accelerate development of rural areas. The Bank’s statistics show that a country’s annual per capita income growth can increase 0.3 percent when it increases the level of girls’ enrolment by 1 percent ( Rettner, 2011).

## **2.7 Readmission Policy**

Past studies pointed out that school head teachers permitted female who had pregnancies to return to school and continue their studies. The adoption of this policy facilitated them to have a second opportunity to rectify the errors they had committed and school head teachers permitted them to return. This is a driver from not to drop out from schools and this contributed to their academic success. Female students do not have financial support from their relatives and family members to overcome from the growing problem of expulsion, schools in public institutions enable them to return to schools. Most of states in Africa, adopted readmission policy to facilitate female students. Specifically, both Botswana and Ivory Coast had endorsed re-admission policy (Okafor, 2012). According to Sommer (2011), it was felt that in the context of Uganda female students are given change to return to school. With this change the attendance rate implied to rise and school principals are eager to mobilize parental involvement in readmitting girls after delivering and establishing a favourable for entire involvement in education (Mkalagale, 2013). A study of Nyagosia (2011) felt that in the work that one common situation that female repeat classes and Ministry of Education permed them to endure their education after school dropout owing pregnancies (MINEDUC, 2019). Results are relevant with the observations of O’Gara (2013) who felt that most of secondary schools in Uganda permit females who are pregnant to return to school in order to have access on second education opportunities? This policy increased the rate of enrolment. This did not contradict with the findings of Koskey (2011) accepted with the present research when they demonstrated that Botswana and Ivory, however, female are re-entered to secondary schools after giving birth but this relies in the willingness of school head teachers in some schools in Africa.

## **2.8 Repetition Policy**

Another affirmative action program used to enhance female promotion in secondary school. This refers to the fact that repletion is a change adopted to promote female education in order to reassume their responsibility. School head teachers contribute to the enhancing of direct promotion that may be joint with other assessments that equipment fees to increase the learning outcome (Koskey, 2011). On the utilization of repetition program by head teachers to increase female education, it assessed that are female who taken to do repetition when other are ameliorate to the next grade in Rongo Ndhiwa as this evidenced by schools by director of studies and female of were not denied the right to continue their studies (MINEDUC, 2029). From the results it has been felt that representative of parents did not encourage a repletion policy in secondary schools. This research did not contradict Oigara (2011) that evidenced that while the repetition policy is contrary to public policies. However, enabling female students to repeat the grades necessitates a completion on their participation but limited by insufficient assets. Results evidenced that more double day secondary schools affected female students as more are observed being to school from its establishment (Oigara, 2011).

## **2.9 Free Tuition Policy**

Free tuition policy is a change give to improve female participation in secondary and tertiary education adopted by head teachers. A study of Rani (2010) evidenced that one of the current programs adopted is free secondary education fees in order to rise the number of female students who attend schools. The promotion of female education is more like to facilitate states to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It was evidence that this did not contradict Materu (2013)

who asserted that one of the current policies adopted countries is the adoption of mix day schools. World Bank (2011) argues that some countries are now introducing free tuition fees Based on a report published by UNESCO (2011), the global , involvement in Above education is on the rise. Europe is the expectation, 70% of young persons are joined in advanced secondary education. The improvement in admission can play a significant role to sustainable development. Most of studies on free basic education argued that the abolition of school fees and other costs associated with school equipment and materials are more likely to influence the accessibility to secondary school education for girl- children.

A report elucidated by the World Bank emphasized on the existence of five types of education costs in secondary schools. Most countries that charge school fees charged it unofficially. There are also other school-based activity fees that families still have to pay (Materu,2013). However the elimination of fees has had a significant impact on their schooling situation. A study conducted on other prevailing or associated with school equipment and materials observed that making secondary education free and obligatory, did not helped poor households to overcome all challenges from additional expenses. A study carried out in Uganda indicated that it is an obligation to purchase exercise textbooks, pens, pencils, food, clothes, assisting school activities lead to Ugandan parents to pay extra and heavy school expenders which is a challenge to poor families who cannot find the means to support these additional expenditures. School feeding program, (SFP) have become one of the most popular social protection program for increasing access to BE opportunities in developing countries in recent times. It has multiple objectives of increasing enrolment; improve child health and enhancing their competencies. According to the World Food Program (WFP) (2013), SFP has reached about 360 million children by 2013. Several studies have revealed a positive correlation between SFPs on one hand and GER, school attendance, reduction in drop-outs and test- performance in numeracy and arithmetic skills at the primary level of education (Ngesu, *et al*,2012). In Burkina Faso and Uganda, SFP increased enrolment in school by some 6–26 % and the figure tends to increased depending on how deprived a particular area is (WFP, 2013).

## 2.10 Sanitary Towels Policy

Studies evidenced that in an attempt to enhance academic performance of girls and to increase their school enrolment, education stakeholders must ensure the conduciveness of school environment and infrastructure in order to facilitate their teaching and learning process (Shadreck, 2012). However, secondary schools were considered as havens of people worldwide, they were argued to experience insecurity cases (Omolo & Simatwa, 2010). A study carried out by Sommer (2011), indicated that girls necessitate physical protection with school setting as well as at home. However, school infrastructure near their families contribute more increase girl security, enrolment and performance in their studies (Steinberge *et al.*, 2011). The greatest impediment to girl education is related to sanitary and health facilities especially in rural areas (David, 2014). When schools have adequate and suitable sanitation facilities, girls are comfortable and secure from any diseases and shame.

A study conducted by Kudari (2016) on a sample size of 81 girls in three secondary schools demonstrated that girls adopt clean, bright and coloured toilets. In secondary schools where there were not water or toilet paper, menstruating girls argued to be absent, specifically for the first two days of their menstruation in order to escape the toilets (Birth & Wchter,2011). Moreover, the same research evidences that girls feels their privacy challenged when utilizing toilets with

broken doors, due to the fact of using them in company of friends. The research take into consideration, the location of toilets far the schools terrifying hence leading to insecurity and may be utilized by invaders for invaders for vending selling drugs. There is a need to construct adequate toilet, using toilet paper (Kudari, 2016). In Kenya, 56% of schools had appropriate water and sanitation facilities which evidenced to be pertinent for attracting girls' enrolment in secondary schools (Birch & Wachter, 2011). These scholars argued that poor sanitation facilities impact girl than boy, and of course constrains learning process of girls. Girls can abandon their studies owing to poor security and sanitation. According to Dawo and Simatwa (2010), the crucial expectation for sanitary towels for use during menstruation must be spoken by the government providing them in order to increase girl enrolment and performance in secondary schools.

### 3.0 Research Methodology

The study employed correlation research design in order to find out the extent to which girls' education policy can be correlated with academic performance of female students in public secondary schools. The target population was 283 respondents. The sample size was 166 obtained by the use of Yamane formula. The sample was obtained by the use of simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Questionnaire, interview guide and document review were used to collect the data. The data management of this study was maintained by using SPSS version 24.

### 4.0 Research Findings

The study sought to establish the relationship between girls' education policies and academic performance of female students in public secondary schools in Rusizi district in Rwanda. The study findings were presented in sub sections.

#### 4.1 Determination of education policies used by school principals in promotion of girl education

**Table 1: Readmission Policy**

Readmission Policy	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Standard Deviation
	%	%	%	%	%		
Enabling young mother to return to school	2.1	3.2	20.2	33.0	41.5	3.36	.57
Providing alternative education for girls	2.8	1.4	11.4	37.0	49.4	4.01	.56
Taking special measures to reach the most disadvantaged girls	0.0	2.4	10.4	30.5	56.7	4.20	.55
Providing alternative education for overaged girls	1.5	3.2	18.3	30.0	47.0	3.22	.58
Encouraging girls participation and activism for education	0.0	5.2	14.8	27.7	52.3	3.14	5.2

Children have not been included from school owing to familial duties or homework that is more often to girls allocated to girls than boys. In this regards, 64.5% of respondents provided positive

responses concerned with the enabling young mother to return to school as depicted in Table 1. The school plan is flexible, therefore, it turns for two hours a day, six days a week, the times are set by local parents and school calendar is applied to fit local concerns. Consequently, program special focus on girls' enrolment, near 70% of children in non-formal schools giving basic education for older children are female. Interestingly, 86.4% agreed with the statement by specifying that providing alternative education for girls was adopted by studied schools. The way to reach girls who have been dropping out of schools as well as other groups like working children and children in disputes is through education centres established outside of the formal school system. Finally, 80.0% of respondents confirmed that schools have adopted the strategy of stimulating female involvement and activism for education. This study did contradict with the findings of (Birch & Wachter, 2011). Therefore, authors argued that female students may be the most adequate and motivating advocates of children friendly education if they are given the chance. Therefore, not only has female's enrolment increased, but there has also been a shift in the way girls are perceived, from passive victims, vocal and involved them.

**Table 2: Repetition Policy**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Standard Deviation
Repetition Policy	%	%	%	%	%		
making the classroom more girls sensitive	1.0	0.2	9.0	20.4	53.1	3.79	.43
Train teaching staff members who are sensitive to girls rights	0.0	1.6	20.0	25.3	53.1	3.72	.50
promoting health in schools	0.0	3.0	19.0	29.0	49	3.69	.50
Eliminating gender bias	1.2	10.4	27.5	20.0	40.9	3.61	.51

The making classroom more child-centred and gender-sensitive and rooted in the life environment of the community. There is a need to rely on participatory teaching and learning with play and study creativity combined. Findings summarized in Table 2 indicated that 53.1% of respondents strongly agreed with the fact that to recruit and train staff members who are sensitive to gender and child rights and give them a constant living wage was adopted to promote gender sensitive classrooms. However, 49.0% of respondents strongly agreed that the studied schools are promoting health in schools. Furthermore, 40.9% strongly that studied schools are eradicating gender bias from textbooks and leaning materials. This study is relevant in comparison with the findings from a study conducted by Omolo and Simatwa (2010). In this regards, every encourage in its own way the approach of secondary schools that wants to attain effective learning in safe, health gender sensitive and child-cantered situation. Besides the obsolete value to girls, the thoughtful revision, classroom materials and lesson plans is increasing their quality and relevance to the lives of all children.

**Table 3: Elimination of schools fees and other indirect costs**

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Sd
	%	%	%	%	%		
Admission requirements are minimal	30.0	14.6	20.0	10.9	24.5	2.8	1.5
Parents are obliged to send children to school	14.6	1.8	5.5	8.1	70.0	4.1	1.5
Children are encouraged to register in any class	23.6	18.2	12.8	20.0	25.4	3.1	1.6
When government tool responsibility of tuition ,access to education improved	37.3	10.0	6.4	27.2	19.1	2.8	1.6
There was gender parity in enrolment and completion rates	28.2	10.9	1.8	17.2	41.9	3.3	1.7
Absolution of school fees increased GER in secondary schools	17.3	3.6	0.0	34.5	44.6	3.8	1.5
Capital grant policy introduced facilitated access to education	0.0	9.1	0.0	42.7	48.2	4.2	0.8
The school has many children	10.9	1.8	9.1	11.8	66.4	4.2	1.3

Results from Table 3 evidenced that 30.2% of respondents with 2.8 mean and 1.5 Sd strongly disagree that the admission requirements are minimal in nine years basic education in Huye district. However, 69.8% of respondents mean equal to 4.1 and SD equal to 1.5 strongly agree that parents are obliged to send children to school in the context of implementing the policy of education for all. In addition, 25.1% of respondents on a mean of 3.1 and a standard deviation of 1.6 strongly agree that children are encouraged to register in any class. In the same vein, 37.2% of respondents, 2.8 mean and 1.6 standard deviation strongly disagree that when government tool responsibility of tuition, access to education improved. Therefore, 37.6%, mean=2.6, Standard Deviation=1.6 strongly disagreed that when government tool responsibility of tuition, access to education improved. According to a study conducted by Nyoni (2017) refers to supervision and rules as moderate levels of parents all support. The study further sought the parents' opinion on the home study environment. Further, the researcher investigated where else, apart from the study room, children used to do their studies. Findings show that 42.0%, mean=3.3, Standard Deviation=1.7 strongly agreed that there was gender parity in enrolment and completion rates. It was certain that 44.6% of mean=3.8 and Standard Deviation=1.5 strongly agree that absolution of school fees increased GER in secondary schools. Furthermore, 48.4% of respondents, mean= 4.2 and Standard Deviation=0.8 strongly agree that Capital grant policy introduced facilitated access to education. Parents were asked whether they took their children for educational tours. Finally it was evidenced that school have many children. In this regards, 66.7% of respondents with a mean of 4.2 and standard deviation equal to 1.3 strongly agree that schools have many children due to the introduction of nine and twelve years basic education.

**Table 4: Sanitary towels policy**

Sanitary towels policy	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation
	%	%	%	%	%		
provision of water	2.8	1.4	11.4	37.0	49.4	4.01	.56
provision of pads	0.0	3.0	19.0	29.0	49.0	3.69	.50
Provision of soaps	1.2	10.4	27.5	20.0	40.9	3.61	.51
provision of toilet services	1.5	3.2	18.3	30.0	47.0	3.22	.58
provision of hostels	0.4	11.1	12.1	29.2	47.2	1.32	.69

Results presented in Table 4 indicates that 86.4% agree with the statement that there is a provision of water to female students among selected secondary schools in Rusizi District as an effective responses to the lack of water for sanitation to female students. Carmichael (2015) reiterates that it was very crucial to preserve that females necessitate adequate environment like the time of menstruation. Schools gave to them all sanitation equipment. Moreover, 77.0% of sampled population evidenced that females’ students were given toilet equipment, it was only 3.33% of sampled population who did not access to sanitation materials. However, 76.4% accepted that they were able to access to sanitation equipment. In this regards, the study is relevant with the findings of (Chinyani, 2013). Scientific evidences demonstrated that the provision of sanitation materials lead to high level of female academic success.

#### 4.2 Assessment of the Level of Female Students Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools

Academic performance of female students was evaluated according to improved net enrolment and gender parity, improved national grades, improved school test grades, improved class participation and improved class retention.

**Table 4: Net Enrolment Rates for Secondary Students in Rusizi District from 2017 to 2019**

Years	Number of Students				Total
	Boys	%	Girls	%	
2017	815	68.3	378	31.7	1193
2018	846	61.5	529	38.5	1375
2019	985	50.3	972	49.1	1957

The republic of Rwanda (2020) testified that in 2020 census 49,386 (48.75%) are male and 51,945(51.26%) are girls between ages of 15 to 19 years in Rusizi. These females were considered to be in secondary schools. This study is pertinent to the study findings of (Maganga, 2016). These authors took into consideration their findings on a meta-analysis of 369 researches related to academic performance grades of over one million boys and girls from 30 countries. This indicates that most children who are considered to be in secondary schools are not there. The aforementioned years the rates was changing despite the girls education policies.

**Table 5: Attendance of Female students in secondary schools**

Years	Class Participation from Monday to Friday		At least one Absenteeism per week		Dropout rate		Total Number
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
2017	200	52.9	120	31.7	58	15.3%	378
2018	422	79.7	78	14.7	29	5.4%	529
2019	930	95.6	36	3.7	6	0.8%	972

In this regards, it was indicated that in 2017, the 52.9 participated in class from Monday to Friday, 31.5 were absents at least one day a week while dropout rate was 15.3% as shown un Table 6. Furthermore, in 2018, 79.7% of female students participated in class from Monday to Friday, 14.7% were absents at lea once a week and 5.4% dropped out of schools. Finally, in 2019, most females, 85.6% participated in class from Monday to Friday, only 3.7 were absents once a week while the dropout rate was at 0.8% of enrolled girls.

**Table 6: Female re-entrance**

Years of returning to school	N	%	Trends
2017	39	6.2	-
2018	151	23.9	17.7
2019	443	70.0	46.1

In this regards, it was indicated that in 2017, 6.2% of girls has returned to school as depicted in Table 7. Therefore, in 2018 23.9% of female students returned to school, in 2019, 14.7% were absents at lea once a week and 5.4% dropped out of schools. Finally, in 2019, 70.0% returned to school.

**Table 7: Certificate of Secondary Examination**

Year		60-73	50-59	40-49	30-39	20-29	0-19	
2017	N	4	6	11	17	13	12	61
	%	6.5	9.8	18.0	27.8	21.3	16.6	100.0
2018	N	7	4	10	7	11	27	67
	%	10.4	5.9	14.9	10.4	16.4	42.0	100.0
2019	N	11	16	17	14	10	7	75
	P	14.6	21.3	22.6	18.6	13.3	9.2	100.0

**Source: Form Four REB Results 2017 – 2020**

Information presented Table 8 evidenced that only 6.5 of female students were able to obtain between 60 and 73 marks in national exams, in 2018 those who obtained these marks are only 10.4%, while in 2019 was only 14.6% .The study concurs with the observation of (Nyalusi, 2013), where the US bureau data to indicate that in 2012, 71% of girl high school graduates had gone to university in comparison with 61 percent of boys. In 1994, the number become 63% and 61% respectively. Unfortunately, it occurs that the trend among teaching staff members was to allocate to Zero% for late job.

**Table 8: Male-Female Good and Poor Achievers in Respective Schools**

Year	Relatively Good Performing Schools					Relatively Poor Performing Schools					
	Schools	Sex	Students who sit for exam	Passed in Exam	Female-Male passed-Ratio	Schools	Sex	Students who sit for exam	Passed in Exam	Female-Male passed-Ratio	
2019	Ecole Secondaire Gishoma	M	60.9	31.3	2:1	Ecole Secondaire Nkombo	M	68.1	8.2	3:1	
		F	39.1	15.4				F	31.9		2.8
2018	Groupe Scolaire Gihundwe	M	77.8	49.5	4:1	Ecole Secondary Bugarama	M	56.7	13.8	6:1	
		F	22.2	11.9				F	43.3		2.4
2017	Mururu Teacher Training Center.	M	70.3	52.2	3:1	Ecole Secondary Bugarama	M	69.0	17.3	5:1	
		F	29.7	16.5				F	31.0		3.2
		F	32.6	16.4				F	26.0		4.0
		F	32.1	19.8				F	24.8		2.1

The district comprised of 5 are Ecole Secondaire Nkombo, Ecole Secondary Bugarama, Ecole Secondaire Gishoma, Groupe Scolaire Gihundwe and Mururu Teacher Training Center. The rate of female student’s academic performance are discussed with their male in respective secondary schools in the district. In 2018, female students who sat for the exam only 2.8% are promoted to in secondary schools as presented in Table 9. To conclude that in accords the five years in the entire district in higher attainment or low success, the female success are poor. In this district, the success of 10% grade female students in respective schools does indicate any pertinence amelioration in these years as indicated by Ford, (2011) in accords the five years in the entire district in higher attainment or low success, the female success are poor.

**Table 9: improved school test grades in selected public secondary schools in Rusizi District, 2017 – 2019**

Year	No of students sat	No of students passed	No of students failed	% Passed	% Failed
2017	3,405	2,300	1,105	67.55	32.45
2018	5,571	3,275	2,296	58.79	41.21
2019	4,875	3,132	1,743	64.2	35.8

The results presented in Table10 depict that in 2017 the number of students who sat for national examination are 5,441 and only 1,555 students passed for division One to Four by 28.6%, while 3,886 students failed by 71.4%. So in 2012 the pass rate of secondary school students was very poor. When a researcher received this data from to District Education Officer also he interviewed him about the performance of secondary school in 2016, a researcher asked the DEO as why the results of the year 2012 of form four national examination have been bad and unconvincing , the DEO replied that: “The existing of community schools in each county are provided some

*challenges, with this not only the municipality of Dodoma town but has affected many areas, this is because the community schools is new so the Government introduced these schools to reduce the nuisance of education and support for each student obtain secondary education because previously secondary schools were too few, so everything a successful challenges must be made available”.*

In 2017 females students in sitting for four national assessments in are 4,732 and 2,651 students passed for division One to Four by 56%, while 2,081 students failed by 44%, so in this year the result of form four national examinations in academic performance rose up by 56% passed, this year 2017 the pass rate of secondary education rose for 56%, an DEO in an interview said that: “*We strive to increase teachers who are qualified and that is why the results of secondary schools of 2013 rose by 56 percent, before that many counties schools had no enough teachers and that is why the Government was making efforts to increase teachers in secondary schools, so in 2017 concerns the shortage of teachers in secondary schools declined”.*

During 2018, the number of students who sat for form four national examination in Dodoma Municipality are 3,405 and 2,300 students passed by 67.55%, while 1,105 students failed by 32.45%. In an interview between DEO and the researcher, DSEO Said: “*In the year 2018 the pass rate of secondary schools in the municipality of Dodoma was moved up to the percentage Of 67.55, this is due to the efforts made by the Government to increase teachers from the universities, and we seek to work together with the heads of the schools to prevent truancy of students and to provide quiz, test and home work for students in order to keep them busy with their studies, which in long run led to negative impacts in academic performance”.*

In 2019 it is indicated that the number of students who sat for form four national examination in Rusizi are 5,571, among from those students it showed that 3,275 students passed by 58.79%, whereby 2,296 students failed by 41.21%. This is the year where the results of form four national examinations was drop up as a percentage 58.79 compare with the year of 2018. The researcher tried interviewing DEO why results was drop, DSEO claims that: “*Actually in this year the results of form four national examinations was slightly drop, we discovered that this is the year where there were a large in sitting in form four national assessments compare with previously years, in this year many students passed and many failed, but also the provision of permission for teachers to enhance education led to a slight deficit of teachers especially in science, we advised the Government to increase the number of teachers in secondary schools in order to conform with the ratio between students and teachers”.*

In 2019 the number of students who sat for national examination form four in Rusizi District are 4,875 and only 3,132 students passed by 64.2%, while 1,743 students failed by 35.8%. This year the pass rate for students of form four national examinations jumped to 64.2 percent compared to 2015. In the conversation between researcher and DEO, DEO said that: “*The Government increase of teachers in secondary schools, also the number of students who d the number sat for form four national examinations was slightly decreased where the students were 4,875 compared to 2015 where the students were doing national examinations were 5,571. This gave us a pictures that when there is a large number of students and then there is a few teachers, the pass rate of secondary school will drop, that is why now day we are trying to keep a good ratio between*

teachers and students, that every teacher must carry two or one subject, and each class should have not more than 60 students”.

The academic performance of secondary schools students in Rusizi varies annually to a large extent due to the fact that, every year government employ new teachers and they come up with their new style of teaching, others are not qualified and experience of teaching, also some time teachers do not cover the syllabus, moreover all years are not the same and not every year the students will have the same size of learning scope. The findings are in line with that of Melack (2014), he cited that performance trends by different secondary schools gives us knowledge to increase the level of achievement by correcting errors over the past years. Also Freire (2013) state that the finding of general intelligence involved in part utilizing personal discrepancies in schools examination results.

**Table 10: Improved class participation**

Regular Attendance	Delays	Absenteeism	Living school without permission
47.7	15.7	16.7	19.9
53.9	13.1	12.9	15.8
63.3	11.4	11.5	13.8
77.5	9.6	8.6	4.3
81.4	6.9	3.8	7.9

The results in Table 11 shows that in 2017 delay increased to 26.4%, absenteeism increased to 26.5% while living school without permission at 33.8%. In 2018 living school without permission become 40.3, delay 36.6 remained the same while absenteeism to 38.8%. A study conducted by Maton, and Moore (2010) on social realism, skills and sociology of education: coalition of the mind United Kingdom did not observe the trend in increasing states. Results from the study contract with the findings of the present study which recognized the increasing trends of school dropout from 2017 till 2019. According to an interview held between the researcher District Education Officer of Rusizi District. He says school repetition was not low compared to those who enrolled from 2017 to 2019 and the high trends for repetition rates was evidenced between 2018 and 2019 decreased for every primary school depending on the trends of school enrolment. A study conducted by Sariola (2011) on common practicality, skills and community of education: combinations of the mind in United Kingdom did not observe the trend in increasing states. Therefore, the findings contradict with evidences of present research which recognized increasing trends of school repetition rates from 2016 till 2019.

**Table 11: Increased Female retention in public secondary schools in Rusizi**

Year	Enrolment	Drop out	Dropout rates
2017	7920	451	5.6
2018	7992	487	6.9
2019	8917	1129	12.6

Findings from the Table12 show that from 2017 to 2019 secondary schools in the context located in Rusizi district recognized school enrolment at the high level. The table show a trend in dropping out of schools and the dropout rates. In this regards, the findings confirmed the first objective

which sought the identification of the level of dropout rates. According to an interview held between the researcher District Education Officer of Rusizi District. He says “school dropout was not high compared to those who enrolled from 2017 to 2019 and the high trends for dropout rates was evidenced between 2016 and 2019 decreased for every Public secondary school relying on the trends of schools enrolment. The findings of the present study concur with the results observed in a study undertaken by Namango and Bichanga (2014) on the influence of strategic planning on academic performance using a case of public secondary schools in Kimilili-Bungoma District evidenced that the dropout was higher than 12% compared to those who remained at schools. It is apparently shown that the present research in Rusizi District have a rate at the level 6.2% which means that is low compared to that study conducted in Bungoma District. In light with the second objective of the research, the researcher concludes that in enrolment in public secondary school increased and even the dropout rates increased also. Therefore, there is a need to make appropriate strategies to overcome high dropout rates.

### 4.3 Relationship between girl’s education policies and Female Students’ Academic Performance

This connection between girls’ education policies and academic performance was established. Results were reflected by Table 13.

**Table 12: Relationship between Girls’ Education Policies and Female Students’ Academic Performance**

		Gender parity net enrolment	Attendance	Female re- entrance	Improved National Grades
Readmission Policy	Pearson Correlation	.522**	.232**	.160**	.176**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.001	.000
	N	374	374	374	374
Repetition Policy	Pearson Correlation	.556**	.284**	.189**	.325**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	374	374	374	374
Sanitary towels policy	Pearson Correlation	.553**	.887**	.873**	.864**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	374	374	374	374

Table 13 demonstrated that the correlation matrix this connection between girls education policies and academic performance of female students. Results show that Readmission policy is positively correlated class participation at .176 while repetition policy is correlated with improved test grades. Sanitary towels policy is correlated with Improved national grades at .887\*\* with improved test grades at .873\*\* and with improved homework performance at .864\*\*. This implies that the readmission policy was the most significant factor for academic performance of female students in Rusizi District. Study findings did not contradict the results of the research carried out by Sheerness and Creemers (2009) who found that the availability and adequacy of readmission policy in public secondary schools have positive correlation between with academic performance

of female students in developing countries. The researcher held interview with head teachers in order to know the way in which they provide in analysis of the relationship between girl education and academic performance in secondary schools located in Rusizi District since 2017. Therefore, results contended that three out of four head teacher said that their students were mostly able to be admitted in excellence owing to repetition policy which is conducive to them. This finding is in line with the study of Tshui and Cai (2011) who found that the use of repetition policy, gender sensitive classrooms, and supportive educational environment.

### **5.0 Summary of findings and Conclusion**

The study focused on establishing the relationship between girls' education policies and their academic performance. Results showed that readmission policy and repetition policy is positively correlated with academic performance. The study concluded that girls' education policy implementation is more like to have a strong relationship with academic performance of female students in secondary schools. This was confirmed since all independent variables were statistically significant with p value of less than 0.005.

### **6.0 Recommendations**

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations were made;

1. The government should make attention to the improvement of academic performance, education quality and pertinence in secondary schools and enable girls to achieve high level of learning outcomes.
2. The community should abandon some harmful cultural practices faced by female students in secondary schools because they contribute to low esteem and ambitions.
3. The educational environment generally should be more conducive and favourable to female students in the context of health facilities, equipment and psychological counselling and career guidance
4. Secondary schools should adopt gender sensitive courses and give utter instructional materials like books and other equipment. More mobilization and awareness campaigns are need to gender sensitive and concerns of female students.

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