

# Gender Disparities Among Tanzanian Public Schools

Esuvat Mollel<sup>1</sup>

Advisor: Dr. Anne Kelly Hoel, College of Management

## Abstract

This research analyzed Tanzania's education system and sought to find if there were a disproportionate number of males to females who continued on from primary school to secondary school. In order to gather data on this subject, research of academic preparation studies on public schools in Tanzania was analyzed. The results indicated that there was a minor disparity in the rate of males to females who successfully completed primary schooling and moved on to secondary school. However, a more prominent disparity existed in the ratio of males and females who completed secondary school, with males completing at a higher rate than females. The quality of, and access to education were the factors that contributed to this disparity. This research was needed to provide a better understanding of the academic preparation level of public school students in Tanzania so that solutions could be created to address the issues of equality and access to the education system. The preliminary research question was whether a disparity exists between girls and boys in regards to who continues on to go to high school from primary school in Tanzania.

*Keywords:* primary school, secondary school, Tanzania, education, gender disparity

## Introduction

Tanzania's education system starts with seven years of primary school followed by four years of secondary school. From there a two year certificate program and a three year university program are available options for students.

This research study seeks to determine if a gender disparity exists among students who continue on to secondary school and if an academic preparation program is needed to help bridge such inequalities. Understanding the academic preparation level of public school students in Tanzania is essential to providing effective solutions to improve the education system. Research specific to Tanzania and the rate of males to females who continue on to secondary school has not been conducted. This research will provide needed data analysis on the number of students that finish primary school

and continue on to secondary school while taking into consideration the ratio of males to females. The study will also offer a perspective as to what obstacles students in Tanzania face in regards to furthering their education and identify resources needed to help them to progress from one level of education to another.

The purpose of this research is to help better understand how to go about fulfilling a personal dream of creating an academic preparation program for schools in Tanzania. It will provide perspective as to what type of program is needed in Tanzania, or whether one is needed at all. It will help to understand the school system there and whether it plays a role in the disparity that may or may not exist between girls and boys in regards to furthering their education.

Research has shown that a disproportionate number of males to females continue on to further their education due to societal norms. Gender roles in the Tanzanian culture are specifically defined. Girls are expected to be good homemakers and know how to take care of their children and husband; as a result, more emphasis is placed on these character traits than on education.

When students finish primary school they must pass an entrance exam for secondary school. If they do not pass, they do not qualify to go on to government-funded secondary school and their only option for furthering their education is to attend a private secondary school. Many families are unable to finance private school education, so this is not a viable option for most students. Families find themselves in very complex situations because of societal norms. Many end up encouraging girls to get married or work, choosing to school their sons over their daughters to avoid a financial burden.

The preliminary research question is as follows: in Tanzania, does a gender disparity exist in who continues on to secondary school and if so, could an academic preparation program help reduce the inequality?

## Methodology

In order to gather data on this subject, quantitative research will be conducted. Academic preparation studies that have been done in public schools in Tanzania will be reviewed. Google Scholar and EBSCOHost were the two main sites used to search out scholarly articles and journal entries. Some of the key words used were "Tanzania's education system", "Schools in Tanzania", "Gender relations in School", "Access to education in Tanzania", "Quality of education in Tanzania", "The United Republic of Tanzania", etc. Articles included in the research were based on the published year, credibility, and information provided.

### The National Republic of Tanzania

Tanzania is a country in the eastern side of Africa that formed a union between the mainland territory, Tanganyika and the island, Zanzibar. It attained its independence from colonial rule in 1961. Tanzania is a developing country that is steadily gaining economic stability, though is still facing many hardships. As of 2013, approximately 28.2% of the population lives below the poverty line and approximately 40% of the adult population earns less than \$1.25 per day where nine out of ten Tanzanians earn less than \$3 per day. A lot of work is needed to improve the system as it relates to primary school completion, maternal health, poverty eradication, malnutrition, and environmental sustainability; all of these issues are United Nations Millennium Development Goals that Tanzania is lagging behind on (Worldbank.org, 2015).

### The Education System

The education system in Tanzania starts with two years of pre-primary school, seven years of primary school, four years of ordinary secondary school (ordinary level), two years of advanced secondary school (advanced level) and at least three years of higher education. For students in Tanzania, education usually starts at age seven with the academic year running from September to July. Primary education is mandated by the government and is taught in the national language of Kiswahili. However, both secondary and university level education is taught in English. Primary education ends with the Primary School Leaving Examination. This examination determines if students advance to Secondary School or are sent to vocational preparation schools (Ep-Nuffic, 2014).

Secondary education is divided into an ordinary secondary school level and an advanced secondary school level. The ordinary secondary school level is intended for the 14-17 age group, while the advanced secondary school level is intended for the 18-20 age group. Ordinary level schooling has forms one through four, and in these levels students study civics, English, Kiswahili, history, geography, physics, chemistry, biology, and mathematics. Advanced level schooling has forms five and six, where students specialize in commerce, the arts, social sciences or natural sciences, and other general studies. At the end of these levels, students take examinations for the Certificate of Secondary Education and Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education respectively (Ep-Nuffic, 2014).

Students that achieve a satisfactory result for the Certificate of Secondary Education may then attempt to obtain an Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education. In order to obtain an Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education, students are required to study 3 subjects. Examination results are expressed in letters, where the letters "A" through "E" represent a passing grade (principal pass), "S" represents a subsidiary pass (insufficient for a pass

at ACSE level, but adequate for a pass at CSE level) and "F" represents a fail (Ep-Nuffic, 2014).

### Quality of Education

Leaders in Tanzania acknowledge that there is a need to improve the quality of education that is provided in order for the nation to continue to develop. The vision of the Ministry of Education and Culture in Tanzania is as follows:

Be a nation with high level of education at all levels; a nation which produces the quality and quantity of educated people sufficiently equipped with the requisite knowledge to solve society's problems, in order to meet the challenges of development and attain competitiveness at regional and global levels (Tanzania Ministry of Education and Culture, 2011, p.1).

In 2001, Tanzania increased spending on education, financed large-scale classroom construction programs and abolished primary school fees. The number of children out of school declined from over 3 million in 1999 to around 33 thousand in 2008 (UNESCO, 2011). With this expansion of primary schooling, a sustained focus on quality education becomes crucial.

The education system in Tanzania faces numerous challenges that impact quality, such as insufficient manpower, and unequally distributed education levels. This causes excessive disparities such as gender inequality, the widened gap between the rich and the poor, and differences between rural and urban institutions such as schools. A good example is the retention and dropout rate of 2002 – 2003 which was recorded as high as 40% of the children that entered school but did not finish their primary education (Ndoye, 2008).

Despite Tanzania's commendable efforts in increasing funding for education in recent years, and being 7.1% ahead of its regional neighbors in GNP in 2008, this investment has not gone far enough to meet citizen expectations and satisfaction on quality education (UNESCO, 2011, p. 3). Most educational funding comes from the government, especially in public schools. However, parents are also involved in the development of schools through payment of various fees and levies. Parents are asked to pay fees for tuition, examination, watchmen, furniture, lunches, and anything else that the school may need. However, the poor economic status of most parents, especially those in rural villages, renders them unable to support most educational programs in schools. The major issues impacted by inadequate funding, especially in rural areas, were noted as low teacher salaries and a lack of sufficient facilities, educational equipment, electricity, clean water, and qualified staff (Tshabangu, & Msafiri, 2013, p. 5). It is not uncommon to find students crammed in run-down classrooms sitting on the floor, and over 50 of them sharing a textbook. The same is also common in some impoverished urban communities. Schools that are located in towns often get some govern-

ment attention, partly due to local political pressure on governing authorities to meet minimum standards, and the ability by most gainfully employed parents to pay fees to fund various educational programs (Tshabangu, & Msafiri, 2013).

A lack of adequate funding in education has led to lack of access to quality education, and thus preventing many Tanzanians from escaping the cycle of poverty. The state of Tanzania's economy, which is ranked as among the poorest in the world, continues to encumber quality education efforts - as most educational programs cannot be sustained efficiently (UNDP, 2010). Raising levels of quality in education may depend less on central government for direction, and a more concerted effort by school administrators working with local leaders to create a quality-conscious philosophy within schools. The government should consider addressing the unfair distribution of qualified teachers and providing adequate funding to schools to beef up infrastructure and provide adequate learning materials (Tshabangu, & Msafiri, 2013).

### Access to Education

In Tanzania, the increases in enrollment rates in primary schools called for expansion of secondary education. The Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP) had a goal of increasing the proportion of Tanzanian youth that complete secondary education. The projections aimed to achieve a 50% primary to secondary transition rate (Okkolin, Lehtomäki and Bhalalusesa, 2010). Since 2004, the net enrollment ratio has increased every year, from as low as 6 to 20.6 in 2007. Unfortunately only 17% of the students were enrolled at the official age (14 years). The net enrollment ratio for Ordinary (O-level) was 20.7 and 0.9 for Advanced level (A-level). This means that the number of students completing six years of secondary education was very small. The difference in enrollment rates between girls and boys remained quite small for O-level. For A-level girls made up only 0.6% of the net enrollment ratio (URT, 2011, p.49).

The SEDP paid attention to the poor performance in the secondary education national examinations and, consequently, set an objective to improve the quality. The students' level of performance was improved, but girls tended to have a lower passing rate than boys. Form six examinations also proved, without question, that the performance in all-boys schools or all-girls schools was better than the performance in co-education schools (URT, 2011). During the first years of SEDP implementation the dropout rates increased, and were highest in form two, where an examination was introduced. As in primary education, absence was reported as the leading cause of dropouts in secondary education, followed by pregnancy, since there was no policy on re-entry of pregnant schoolgirls after delivery (Okkolin, Lehtomäki and Bhalalusesa, 2010).

The funding of schools by parents has often created quite a burden

on many families, especially large families, single parent families, and orphaned learners. In families where parents do not yet appreciate the value of education, let alone girls' education, these financial demands weigh heavily enough to discourage them from educating their children or paying their fees. These inequalities are what also contribute to most school girls not reaching secondary education, and in some cases adversely affecting their academic performance (Tshabangu & Msafiri, 2013). In Sub-Saharan Africa, the most significant causes for not attending school, and also for not being enrolled, were the direct costs of schooling like fees, uniforms and equipment. It was easier for boys to find work and contribute to or cover the costs, whereas girls had more domestic responsibilities, and therefore, their education was more costly (Colclough et al., 2003). School-related barriers to girls' participation in education consist of the poor quality of the learning environment, irrelevant curricula, long distance between home and school, shortage of female teachers as role models, sexual harassment, and discriminative practices in school (Okkolin, Lehtomäki and Bhalalusesa, 2010).

In 1980 Tanzania's professional women gathered to form a special organization called Women Education and Development (WED), whose main goal was to enhance gender equality in education. Since then, the levels of enrollment across most mainstream sectors of education have reflected improvement in terms of quantity and access (Tshabangu, & Msafiri, 2013).

Tanzania will soon reach universal primary education, and though this is positive news, gender equality issues remain a challenge, particularly for secondary education. The gender gap in primary education has been closed - an equal number of girls continue to secondary school as boys. In contrast to this, in upper secondary school (A-level), boys still outnumber girls. Furthermore, when moving from lower to higher levels, the differences in achievements between boys and girls grow (Okkolin, Lehtomäki and Bhalalusesa, 2010).

Policies directed towards increasing a child's attendance need to be focused on the supply of schooling beyond the primary level. Given that the opportunity cost of a child's time, especially a girl's time affects attendance, policies that affect demand for child labor within the household, and those that promote substitutes for child labor should be considered (Burke, Kathleen, and Beegle, 2004).

### Results

This research sought to find if a disparity existed among males and females in regards to who continued on from primary school to secondary school. The research conducted shows that a large disparity does not exist in the transition from primary to secondary. World Bank data (2015) shows that progression to secondary school for females was at 53.9% as of 2012 and male progression was at 58.9%. Though there is a small disparity, a larger

disparity exists in the completion of secondary school. Girls tend to perform consistently more poorly than boys as they move toward completion of secondary school. The United Republic of Tanzania report (2013) stated:

In 2012, about 35.6% of boys passed compared to 26.7 % of the girls. Not only did fewer girls pass the Post-Secondary School Leaving Examination (PSLE), but those who did so, passed with lower grades. Passing with lower grades means that they may not have the capacity and knowledge to handle the academic rigor of university or trade schools. In 2012, for example, 0.5 % of the boys passed with an A grade, 6.0 % with a B grade and 29.0 % with a C grade. On the other hand 0.2 % of the girls, less than half as many as boys, passed with an A grade, 3.5 % with a B grade and 22.6 % passed with a C grade (URT, 2013, p.50).

Another alarming statistic is the number of overall students who actually pass the Post-Secondary School Leaving Examination. According to the Tanzania Human Development Report of 2014, "In the 2012 Form four results, 60% of those who sat for the exams obtained zero division; another 20% obtained division four. This means that 80% of Form four leavers failed (since division four is also categorized as failure)" (THDR, 2014, p.13). This is an alarming figure, considering that Tanzania already has a low number of students going into secondary school compared to other similar countries. According to PHC 2012, "the highest level of education attained after primary school is quite low: only 14%, 0.8% and 2.3% of all adults had attained secondary, training after secondary, and university/other levels of education respectively" (NBS, 2014, p.12). Post-secondary schools have not been able to prepare students for university education and this trend is creating a large population of uneducated adults in Tanzania.

Low overall enrollment for secondary school may be caused by the rapid deterioration in enrollment rates in primary schools. The Tanzania Human Development Report (2014) shows that entry rates for primary school are relatively high at almost 90%, but completion rates are at 54%. This means that even though enrollment is increasing, the completion ratio is not increasing in response, causing a low number of students who are able to continue on to secondary school.

The disparity is larger when comparing students from poor income groups and rich groups. According to the Tanzania Human Development Report (2014), only 40% of the children from the poor income group (and an almost equal proportion of the middle class) complete primary school, compared to 75% of the rich. "When it comes to secondary school, school-age youth in urban areas are much more likely (44%) than their counterparts in rural areas (19%) to attend secondary school" (THDR, 2014, p.15).

There are many things that must be done in order to improve the quality of education for all, as well as the accessibility of higher education for females in Tanzania. A big issue that impedes the progress of Tanzania's edu-

cation system is the language of instruction. Research showed that the majority of primary schools are taught in Swahili and students are not exposed to the English language early on, but are expected to have a good understanding by the time they are in secondary school. Secondary schools teach in English, and for students who were not exposed to the language until later in their primary schooling, it is very difficult for them to make the transition from primary to secondary. Educators and researchers agree that language is the barrier to many children's education. As Obanya (1980) states: "...it has always been felt by African educationists that the African child's major learning problem is linguistic. Instruction is given in a language that is not normally used in his immediate environment, a language which neither the learner nor the teacher understands and uses well enough" (Obanya, 1980, p.20). What many educators, researchers, and policy makers differ on is the solution. Many believe that English is a global language and a necessity to learn, so it must be taught at an early age. They believe that the language of instruction should be English beginning in primary school and continuing on, so that students are continuously exposed to it, leading to mastery of the language. However, others believe that English should be taught as a foreign language and that the language of instruction should be Kiswahili. One source states: "In order for the majority of Tanzanian people to participate meaningfully in education, education has to be conducted in the language they understand" (Zajda, 2005, pg.14). This argument has been long-standing with research backing both claims, but policy makers need to act in some way to change Tanzania's school system in regards to language of instruction. Both sides agree that teachers must be trained to improve their English, and sufficient supplementary/light reading for every student must be provided.

### Conclusion

Research shows that there is a large disparity in the ratio of males to females who complete secondary school. Focus must be placed on not only encouraging enrollment, but also attaining retention and completion for girls in secondary school. An equally important focus must be placed on helping a larger number of students to complete primary school so that they can go on to secondary school.

The barriers that girls are facing in regards to schooling are numerous. Pregnancy and early marriage are the most common reasons for girls not completing school, followed by a lack of resources to pay for school, distance from school, and having to juggle responsibilities at home with school work. In order to address the disparity found in completion of secondary school, policy changes and reforms must be made. Teachers who are sensitive to gender and child rights should be recruited and trained. Both female and male teachers should receive training in gender awareness in the classroom, as some teachers may value and encourage male participation in class

more than they value a female's participation, and may allocate school tasks along strict gender lines, leaving girls to sweep the floors or clean the toilets (Unicef, 2002). Additional female teachers should be recruited in some areas so that they can serve as role models for girls, and allow the parents to feel more comfortable with their girls going to school. There should be flexibility in terms of lesson scheduling. Schools in rural areas should take into account harvest and planting seasons where many girls are required to help when scheduling school times. Policies should be made that enable young mothers to return to school and provide a curriculum that is manageable and flexible for their needs. Alternative education for girls should be considered. Education centers established outside the formal schooling system can help educate girls who have dropped out, as well as working children and those who may not have the means to get formal schooling.

The current low levels of overall completion of primary school and falling standards of education in Tanzania are partly a result of poor teacher competencies and poor teaching motivation. Teachers have a crucial role in improving the quality of education. Improving the professional competencies of teachers and improving their living conditions and pay will help improve the quality of education. Policies must be put in place to increase teacher compensation as well to provide for a more rigorous teacher selection process. Recruiting qualified, motivated, and passionate teachers must be emphasized so that students are encouraged to pursue education as a profession (THDR, 2014).

In conclusion, research indicates that some type of academic program is needed besides that of formal schooling to help students who have dropped out, or failed examinations. Research also shows that a small disparity does exist, as it relates to the ratio of males and females who progress to secondary school, but focus should be placed on the disparity between males and females as it relates to completing secondary school. This research was aimed at past studies that have been conducted and analyzed. Future research must be conducted that involves the collecting of real-time data that surveys students, teachers, and families in Tanzania as they account for their views on the education system and what must be done to advance it. More research must also be conducted to focus on what specific types of academic programs would be most beneficial and what means there are to implement them.

### References

- Burke, Kathleen, and Kathleen Beegle. "Why children aren't attending school: The case of Northwestern Tanzania." *Journal of African Economies* 13.2 (2004): 333-355.
- Colclough, C. Al-Samarrai, S. Rose, P and Tembon, M. 2003. Achieving Schooling for All in Africa. Ashgate, England Ep-Nuffic. "Education System Tanzania." EP-Nuffic (2014): n. pag. Web.
- Legotlo, M. and PC. Westhuizen, 1996. "Coming on board; problems facing principals in Developing countries." *Educational Management and Administration*, 24(4): 401-410.
- "National Bureau of Statistics." National Bureau of Statistics. National Statistical Office of Tanzania, n.d. Web. 19 Aug. 2015.
- Ndoye, M., 2008. Education in Africa: Knowledge makes the difference. Washington: World Bank, 2008. Print
- Obanya, Pai. General Methods of Teaching. Yaba, Nigeria: Macmillan Nigeria, 1980. Print.
- Odaga, Adhiambo, and Ward Heneveld. Girls and Schools in Sub-Saharan Africa: From Analysis to Action. Washington: World Bank, 1995. Print.
- Okkolin, Mari-Anne, Elina Lehtomäki, and Eustella Bhalalusesa. "The Successful Education Sector Development In Tanzania - Comment On Gender Balance And Inclusive Education." *Gender & Education* 22.1 (2010): 63-71. Professional Development Collection. Web. 4 June 2015.
- "Tanzania Human Development Report 2014." Economic and Social Research Foundation (2014): n. pag. Web.
- Tanzania Ministry of Education and Culture. 2010. Basic education statistics in Tanzania national 2010. Available from <http://moe.go.tz/statistics.html>.
- Tanzania Ministry of Education and Culture. 2011. Vision and mission. Available from <http://www.tanzania.go.tz/education.html>
- Tshabangu, I., 2010. Democratic citizenship education: A qualitative research journey in Zimbabwe. London: Lambert Academic Publishing.
- Tshabangu, Icarbord, and Allen Msafiri. "Quality Education in Tanzania: Perceptions on Global Challenges and Local Needs." *International Journal of*

*Asian Social Science* 3.3 (2013): 800-813.

UNESCO, 2011. The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education. Education for all (efa) Global monitoring. Available from <http://www.efareport.unesco.org>.

UNESCO/Education for All Global Monitoring Report. Publication. N.P., 2007.

United Nations Development Program (UNDP). "Human Development Report 2010: The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development." United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (2010): n. pag. Web

UNICEF. "THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN 2002." The United Nations Children's Fund (2002): n. pag. Web.

United Republic of Tanzania (URT) "Agriculture Policy." Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives, (2013): n. pag. Web

United Republic of Tanzania. "Poverty and Human Development Report." Research Analysis and Working Group (2011): n. pag. Web.

Worldbank.org,. (2015). Tanzania Overview. Retrieved 1 August 2016, from <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tanzania/overview>

Zajda, Joseph. International Handbook on Globalization, Education and Policy Research. New York: Springer, 2005. Print.

## Hegemonic Masculinity as a Predictor of Body Satisfaction

**Megan Verhagen**<sup>1</sup>

Applied Social Science

Advisor: Dr. Nels Paulson

### Abstract

The relationship between men and body satisfaction is a topic with increased traction within the academic community. However, there is currently no model in place that measures body satisfaction, and without a complete measure, it is difficult for researchers to understand what influences or predicts body satisfaction and how it influences men's lives. This research used quantitative methods to investigate the use of hegemonic masculinity as a predictor for body satisfaction. A survey containing measures for hegemonic masculinity and body satisfaction was sent to self-identifying, college-aged men (N = 63) to measure the conformance to hegemonic masculinity and its relation to body satisfaction. Results indicate that hegemonic masculinity, as it is currently measured, is not a predictor for body satisfaction. These results suggest that either the production of hegemonic masculinity has changed since measures were last produced or that hegemonic masculinity is not the production of masculinity that interacts with body image. The author discusses why an understanding of the predictors for body satisfaction in men is important and suggests what research can be produced in the future to eventually create a model that can accurately measure body satisfaction and influence the establishment of systems that decrease risk taking in men who experience body dissatisfaction.

*Keywords:* body satisfaction, hegemonic masculinity, body image, risk behaviors

### Hegemonic Masculinity as a Predictor of Body Satisfaction

While there has traditionally been less research performed to examine the effects of body image dissatisfaction in men than in women, the attention brought to the topic is growing. Schuster, Negy, and Tantleff-Dunn found in their 2011 research that there is increased objectification of male bodies in the media, similar to the fashion that female bodies have been objectified for decades (p. 76). These objectified forms of the male body can be found across various forms of media that both men and women consume including: paintings, films, sporting events, and advertising (Wienke, 2000, p.