

Disparities in the Physics Academic Achievement and Enrolment in Secondary Schools in Western Province: Implications for Strategy Renewal

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Abstract

The topic of unequal outcomes for men and women in math and science has been in the public domain for some time now. This study however had special interest in physics because it is an optional science subject in most schools and taken by those confident enough to take on a third science subject. It is a key science subject expected to drive Kenya's vision 2030 initiative which aims at making the country a newly industrializing middle income country providing high quality life for all its citizens. The realization this vision calls for the harnessing of the science and technological ability of both men and women in the country; it is a collective responsibility of both genders. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This paper presents the findings of the study on disparities in achievement and enrolment in physics in Kenya with a focus in Western Province. This study was conducted in 40 secondary schools in Western Province. Out of the selected 40 schools, responses were obtained from 32 schools giving a response rate of 80%. The data collection instrument was a questionnaire. Data on enrolment and performance on physics was obtained from the respective Heads of Departments. The study revealed that there are disparities in enrolment and achievement among the different school categories and gender disparities as well. Boys' schools have had a steady lead in the enrolment and achievement on physics during the five years. The findings indicate that there is need to have a change in strategies in order to improve performance and enrolment in girls' and co-education schools.

Keywords: Disparities, Gender, Harnessing, Industrializing, Technological and unequal outcomes.

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