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# INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL-ECONOMIC FACTORS ON SECONDARY SCHOOL DROPOUT AMONG GIRLS IN MARIANI WARD, THARAKA-NITHI COUNTY, KENYA

**JUDY WANGU GITARI**

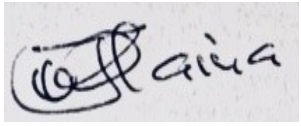
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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AT ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF A DEGREE IN MASTER OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**NOVEMBER, 2024**

## DECLARATION

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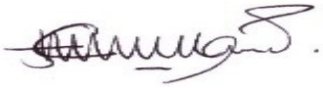
This dissertation has been brought to examination through our appraisal as the St. Paul's University supervisors.



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**DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to all those who are at the forefront towards ensuring the education of the girl child in Tharaka-Nithi and beyond.

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

My utmost acknowledgment goes to Almighty God for giving me good health, a sound mind, and the zeal to embark on this work. I also extend my acknowledgment to my university supervisors Dr. Antony Odek and Dr. Esther Marima, Their unwavering support and guidance enabled me to complete this noble task successfully. My acknowledgment also goes to my family, whose love and financial support enabled me to complete this work. Finally, I thank St. Paul's fraternity and all other parties involved for making this work a success.

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## ABSTRACT

The pronounced dropout rates among girls in secondary schools located in Mariani Ward present a formidable challenge; this situation mirrors broader issues of educational inequity that are prevalent in numerous developing regions. The primary objective was to ascertain the impact of pivotal socio-economic factors that contribute to these dropout rates in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. Although the specific objectives of the study aimed to evaluate how household income, parental education and family structure influence girls' dropout rates, the research also sought to identify additional contributing elements. Guided by the theories of Relative Deprivation and Education Marginalization, the research utilized a descriptive survey design. A sample of 385 respondents was drawn from a total population of 10,202, which included female dropouts and key informants such as head teachers, household heads and local leaders. Through a pilot study, measures of validity and reliability were conducted to ensure that the instruments were effective; however, some minor adjustments were necessary because of early findings. Data collection involved questionnaires and interviews, and the quantitative analysis was performed using SPSS version 25.Inferential statistical methods, including correlation analysis and logistic regression, were used to explore the relationships between dropout rates and the identified socio-economic factors. The analysis revealed significant positive correlations: 0.684 between dropout rates and household income, 0.547 between dropout rates and parental education status, and 0.761 between dropout rates and family structure. Logistic regression further confirmed the substantial impact of these factors on dropout rates. Key informants qualitative data corroborated these findings, highlighting the roles of financial difficulties, lack of parental support, adverse family dynamics, inadequate school facilities, and cultural attitudes towards girls' education as contributing factors. The research concludes that household income, parental education status, and family structure significantly impact girls' dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward. To address these issues, the study recommends implementing financial support programs, launching parental education campaigns, and establishing family counseling services to address dropout rates. Additionally, enhancing school facilities and addressing cultural barriers are crucial for improving girls' access to education in Mariani Ward. Overall, the research findings provide valuable guidance for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to improve girls' access to education in Mariani Ward.

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## ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| **FPE:** | Free Primary Education |
| **KCSE:** | Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education. |
| **MoE:** | Ministry of Education |
| **NACOSTI:** | National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation |
| **ODA:** | Overseas Development Assistance |
| **SSE:** | Subsidized Secondary School Education |
| **UNESCO**: | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| **UNICEF:** | United Nations Children's Fund |

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# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Overview of the chapter

Chapter one introduces this dissertation by outlining the study background, problem statement, purpose, objectives, research questions, scope, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. It serves to stage the dissertation to put the research topic into perspective.

## 1.2 Study Background

Education is a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of socioeconomic development, catalyzing individual empowerment and societal progress (UNESCO, 2021). In this pursuit of knowledge and enlightenment, girls' education, in particular, holds a unique promise. It not only equips young women with the tools to shape their destinies but also contributes significantly to the prosperity of communities and nations at large (UNICEF, 2021). In the global pursuit of gender equality and inclusive development, ensuring that girls have equitable access to education is paramount (UN Women, 2021).

Governments worldwide have made significant commitments to prioritize girls' education. Recent developments in global education policy, such as UNESCO's 'Her Education, Our Future' initiative, have brought the value of girls' education into sharp focus (UNESCO, 2020). High-level political forums, including the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and UN Women conferences, have been instrumental in advocating gender equality in education (Global Partnership for Education, 2021; UN Women, 2022). Investments in girls' education have surged, supported by international partnerships, government policies, and private sector initiatives like the 'Girl Rising' campaign and the Malala Fund, which focus on improving access to education for girls in developing countries (Malala Fund, 2021; Girl Rising, 2020). "Consequently, high-level political forums such as the Global Education Summit and the United Nations General Assembly have been instrumental in advocating for gender equality in education. These forums have led to significant commitments, including the Global Partnership for Education's pledge to prioritize girls' education.

As a result, investments in girls' education have surged, often supported by initiatives from corporations like Nike's 'Girl Effect' and the 'Educate Girls' campaign, which focus on empowering girls through access to education (Global Education Summit, 2021; United Nations, 2020). Notable examples include the UK-based "Department for International Development's Girls Challenge," where a substantial portion of overseas development assistance (ODA) in 2020 was allocated to promote gender equality (UNICEF, 2021). This shift towards greater investment in gender equality

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coincided with a decrease in ODA targeting general education, underscoring the global priority of girls' education.

Education plays a crucial role in fostering social and economic development worldwide, with governments increasingly recognizing its potential to transform communities. In Indonesia, significant strides have been made in expanding access to education, particularly for girls, but challenges related to socio-economic disparities remain persistent (Suryadarma & Jones, 2021). The country's "Program Indonesia Pintar" initiative, aimed at increasing school enrollment, has made progress, yet rural regions still experience higher dropout rates among girls due to poverty, early marriage, and cultural attitudes (World Bank, 2020).

Similarly, in Peru, efforts to improve educational access for girls have been driven by programs such as "Juntos," a conditional cash transfer program that aims to reduce poverty and promote school attendance (Jones et al., 2018). However, socio-economic barriers continue to contribute to school attrition, particularly in remote areas where poverty is widespread, and the opportunity costs of education are high for girls (UNICEF, 2019).

In conflict-affected regions such as Syria, the educational landscape is dire, particularly for girls. The ongoing civil war has disrupted schooling for millions of children, with girls disproportionately affected by the conflict, displacement, and security concerns (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Reports indicate that over one-third of school-age girls in Syria have dropped out of school, a situation exacerbated by child marriages and economic hardships (UNESCO, 2020).

Both developed and developing countries accord a high priority to education, recognizing the substantial difference in productivity between educated and uneducated individuals. Education equips individuals with essential skills for personal and societal development, allowing them to lead healthier lives, provide for their families, and contribute to their nations' economic development. It is widely acknowledged that education is a cornerstone of development at all levels (UNICEF, 2021; Abu-Saad, 2016). In Africa, many sub-Saharan countries have undertaken efforts to provide free primary education. Initiatives like the reintroduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in Nigeria and the elimination of school fees for public secondary schools in Tanzania have been implemented to enhance access to education. However, despite these efforts, challenges persist. For instance, while FPE in Nigeria was reintroduced to increase access to education, a substantial

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number of school-age girls remain out of school (Ajayi, 2008; UNICEF, 2021). Tanzania's elimination of school fees for public secondary schools led to increased enrollment, but it also witnessed a rise in secondary school dropouts among girls than boys, indicating a need for further research to understand this phenomenon better (Strid et al., 2021; Kakuba et al., 2021).

In Madagascar, socio-economic challenges such as poverty, food insecurity, and cultural practices significantly impact girls' education. Despite government efforts, including the "Education for All" initiative, many girls in rural areas face barriers like child labor, gender-based violence, and limited access to menstrual hygiene products, which contribute to higher dropout rates (Rakotomalala, 2019). Studies show that more than half of Malagasy girls do not complete secondary education, a figure that has remained stubbornly high due to entrenched socio-cultural norms (World Bank, 2019).

The significance of educating girls which cannot be overstated is profound. Educating girls is not merely a question of personal empowerment; it is also a vital catalyst for societal development. However, many still overlook this essential truth. Although the benefits are clear, societal norms often hinder progress. Because of these challenges, we must continue to advocate for girls' education. This is crucial, as the future depends on it.

Women's education is particularly vital because it has far-reaching effects, extending to the next generation. Mothers play an essential role in their children's education, and their level of education greatly impacts the academic achievements and overall educational outcomes of their children. Consequently, there is a substantial difference between children raised by educated and uneducated mothers (Ho et al., 2020; Strid et al., 2021; Aikman & Rao, 2012). Sustainable Development Goal 4(SDG 4), is a global initiative set by the United Nations to ensure that by 2030, every individual has access to inclusive and equitable quality education. This goal emphasizes the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities, enhancement of educational access and quality, and the advancement of gender equality within educational environments. In Kenya, SDG 4 has been pivotal in shaping the nation's educational policies and aligning them with broader developmental objectives (United Nations, 2015; Ministry of Education, Kenya, 2020).

Kenya Vision 2030 is a strategic national development framework designed to transform Kenya into a middle-income country by 2030 (World Bank, 2018). Within this vision, education is highlighted as a crucial component for driving social and economic progress. The framework

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underscores education as a key driver of socio-economic development and emphasizes its role in enhancing the country's human capital (Government of Kenya, 2007; World Bank, 2018). The vision places a strong emphasis on delivering quality education that equips individuals with the essential skills and knowledge necessary for driving innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development (Brissett & Mitter, 2017). It is committed to improving access to education, enhancing educational quality, and aligning educational programs with the evolving requirements of the labor market.

In the realm of education, both SDG4 and Kenya Vision 2030 share common objectives. They underscore the importance of ensuring equitable access to education and providing high-quality learning opportunities. Kenya has made substantial progress toward these goals through initiatives such as Free Primary Education and Free Day Secondary Education, which have significantly increased enrollment rates (Nazar et al., 2018). Furthermore, efforts have been directed at enhancing the quality of education through curriculum reforms and comprehensive teacher training programs, thereby aligning education with the contemporary needs of the workforce.

Both SDG4 and Kenya Vision 2030 place significant emphasis on tackling gender disparities in education. Their shared goal is to guarantee that both girls and boys receive equal access to educational opportunities; thus, promoting gender equality and empowering women. Various efforts have been made to dismantle obstacles that impede girls' education (such as cultural norms, early marriages and insufficient facilities). Initiatives like the Elimu ni Jibu program in Kenya have proven to be instrumental in improving girls' access to education and reducing gender disparities (Gichuhi et al., 2022). However, challenges remain, because societal attitudes can be deeply entrenched. Although progress has been noted, there is still much work to be done.

Despite the global and national efforts to advance girls' education, including initiatives and policies aimed at reducing gender disparities in schooling, the dropout rate among girls in secondary schools in Kenya remains significantly higher than that of boys (FAWE, 2022). This issue is particularly pronounced in Tharaka-Nithi County, where local data reveal that girls are disproportionately affected by dropout rates due to social-economic factors, reflecting a gap between national educational objectives and regional realities (Tharaka-Nithi County Government, 2023). This disparity highlights that while national strategies focus on increasing school enrollment,

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additional localized interventions are needed to address specific barriers faced by girls in Tharaka-Nithi County and ensure their continued participation and success in education.

The high dropout rates among girls in secondary schools in Kenya are particularly concerning given the Kenyan Constitution's emphasis on the right to education and its mandate for equal access. The Constitution highlights the importance of education as a fundamental right and includes provisions for free primary education to enhance accessibility (Kenya, 2010). Despite these legal frameworks and initiatives aimed at increasing educational opportunities, such as Free Primary Education (FPE) programs, the persistently high dropout rates suggest that these measures have not fully addressed the underlying barriers that contribute to school attrition, especially among girls in more marginalized regions like Tharaka-Nithi County (Wanjiku, 2021). This indicates a need for more targeted strategies that align constitutional provisions with local educational challenges to effectively reduce dropout rates and promote sustained educational attainment. Various programs and initiatives, such as Free Primary Education (FPE) and Secondary School Expansion (SSE), have been introduced to boost enrollment and transition from primary to secondary school.

The government offering FPE and SSE aims to ensure that children across the country have an opportunity to develop themselves through education and contribute positively to the building of the Kenyan Economy (Muyaka, 2018). The statistical abstract (2020) shows an increase in the number of secondary schools from 8,958 in 2007 to 10,567 in 2020, which offers a government's effort to improve the learning facilities in Kenyan. The government has also increased the number of teachers by 18,700 in 2019 to manage the government's ambitions of ensuring a 100% transition from primary school to secondary school. In the 2019/2020 fiscal year, the allocation for bursaries in Nairobi County was increased from KSh 1 million to KSh 4.5 million per ward (Ministry of Education, 2020). This substantial rise in bursary funding is a strategic effort by the Kenyan government to address financial barriers that hinder students' ability to transition from primary to secondary education. By enhancing financial support through bursaries, the government aims to alleviate economic constraints that might otherwise prevent students from continuing their education, thereby contributing to the overarching goal of achieving a 100% transition rate from primary to secondary school (Government of Kenya, 2020).

Despite these efforts, dropout rates, particularly in secondary schools, remain a significant challenge. The government has expanded school infrastructure, increased the number of teachers,

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and allocated resources for bursaries and scholarships to enhance access to education. Yet, dropout rates in Kenya, especially in secondary schools, persist. Mariani Ward in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya, exemplifies this issue, with girls experiencing disproportionately high dropout rates. This situation underscores the presence of other factors that contribute to girls' dropout rates, necessitating further UNICEF, 2021).

The County Government of Tharaka-Nithi is actively working towards enhancing educational sustainability through several measures. Notably, in the 2019/2020 financial year, the county allocated KSh 30 million to its bursary program to support students financially (Tharaka-Nithi County Government, 2020). Additionally, the county recognizes top-performing schools with awards, which aims to foster a competitive and supportive educational environment. Despite these initiatives, girls' dropout rates as compared to boys in secondary schools within Tharaka-Nithi remain concerning high compared to national averages (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). This issue is particularly pronounced for girls in Mariani Ward, where dropout rates are significantly elevated, reflecting a critical area of concern within the county's broader educational challenges (Tharaka-Nithi County Government, 2020). The research specifically addressed this gap by examining the unique socio-economic factors affecting girls in Mariani Ward and how these factors contribute to the higher dropout rates, thereby providing targeted insights for policy improvements and support mechanisms.

**1.3 Problem Statement**

Worldwide, 129 million girls of school going age are out of school, and 75% of them are at secondary level (World Bank, 2021). Girls in conflict affected countries are even more at risk, they are twice as likely to drop out of school compared to those in peaceful countries. Only 49% of countries have achieved gender equality in education and only 24% have achieved it at the secondary level. Poverty, gender based violence and early marriages are some of the key drivers of this problem. Ngesu et al., (2020) also found that low income families prioritize boys' education over girls. Lack of safety and hygiene in schools also prevents girls from continuing with education. In Kenya, the national secondary school dropout rate stands at 16.8% (MoE, 2020); however, this figure fluctuates across different counties, with impoverished areas exhibiting notably higher dropout rates. Data collected from Mariani Ward in Tharaka-Nithi County indicates that girls in secondary school have experienced an average dropout rate of 23.26% over the past five years—this is considerably greater than the 21.46% rate observed for boys. Such statistics illustrate how

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girls are particularly susceptible to leaving school, which consequently restricts their future opportunities, including access to higher education and employment. Factors contributing to these dropout rates include poverty, early marriage and inadequate sanitation facilities in schools (UNICEF, 2020). Although these issues are prevalent, addressing them is essential for improving educational outcomes.

There is a lot of research on girl's education globally and nationally but limited on the specific factors that contribute to higher dropout rates among girls for instance in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County. Existing studies focus on general trends and don't delve deep enough into localized socio-economic factors that affect girl's education in specific areas. This study seeks to fill this gap by looking at how household income, parental education and family structure contribute to dropout rates among girls in Mariani Ward. By doing so the study will provide insights into targeted interventions that can reduce dropout rates and promote gender equality in education within the local context

### 1.4 General objective of the study

The primary aim of the study was to analyze the influence of social-economic factors on girls' drop-out rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya.

### 1.5 Specific Objectives of the Study Objectives

The specific objectives of the proposed research were as follows.

i. To analyse the influence of household-level of income on the girls' drop-out rates from secondary school in Mariani Ward.
ii. To asnalyse the influence of parental education status on girls' drop-out rates from secondary school in Mariani Ward.
iii. To analyse the influence of family structure on girls' dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward.

### 1.6 Research Questions

i. What is the influence of household level of income on girls' drop-out rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward?
ii. What is the influence of parental education status on girls' drop-out rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward?
iii. What is the influence of family structure on girls' drop-out rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward?

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### 1.7 Significance of the Study

The research holds great significance for various stakeholders in the field of education. It can offer valuable insights into the socioeconomic factors influencing girls' dropout rates in secondary schools in Mariani Ward. This information will empower these stakeholders to develop targeted strategies aimed at reducing girls' dropout rates in this specific region.

Furthermore, the research findings can provide essential guidance to government authorities and policymakers. They will gain a better understanding of the socioeconomic determinants contributing to secondary school dropout, which, in turn, can inform the development of effective policies to address these challenges. These insights will help identify the specific socioeconomic factors leading to girls dropping out of school, enabling organizations like the Girl Child Network (GCN) to design local-level intervention policies to increase girls' enrollment in secondary schools. Additionally, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can find these findings valuable in making informed decisions about their investments in girls' education.

Lastly, the research can contribute to the existing knowledge on the factors influencing girls' dropout rates from secondary school by focusing on the socioeconomic determinants in the context of Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. It introduces a new perspective by considering the experiences and viewpoints of the dropouts themselves, a dimension often overlooked in previous studies that have primarily concentrated on the perspectives of school administrators, students, and parents. This comprehensive approach will provide a more holistic understanding of the issue and offer new insights for addressing girls' dropout rates in secondary education.

### 1.8 Scope of the Study

The study investigated the social-economic factors (household-level of income, parental education status and family structure) of girls' drop-out rate from secondary schools in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. The study surveyed those girls who dropped out of secondary schools. The choice of the area is based on statistical reports that indicate that girls are dropping out of school more than boys. At the same time, as a result of the county being in a rural area, there are heavy influences of cultural factors and that is the reason why the study aimed to unveil these reasons from a household perspective. Since it is a developmental research, the unit of analysis was the households because that is the place where most decisions on education are made. The study was conducted between July and August 2024.

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### 1.9 Study Limitations and Delimitations

As per Hussein's insights (2016), research limitations encompass challenges that are inherent to the research process and are often beyond the researcher's control. These limitations have the potential to significantly impact the quality of the research findings.

A significant limitation of this research was the difficulty in surveying secondary school dropouts who are actively involved in various community activities. Administering questionnaires to this group proved challenging due to time constraints inherent in the academic framework. To overcome this obstacle, the research adopted a pragmatic approach by selecting the most accessible participants and streamlining the follow-up process. This involved simplifying the follow-up procedure by making follow-up calls to encourage respondents to complete the questionnaires.

Additionally, the study involved secondary school dropouts, potentially leading to language barriers. To overcome this hurdle, the research recommends the recruitment and training of research assistants who guided the respondents in the questionnaire completion process.

On the delimitations of the Study, this study focused specifically on examining socioeconomic factors household income level, parental education status, and family structure affecting girls' dropout rates from secondary schools within Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. The choice of this ward is due to its relatively high dropout rates among girls, attributed to socioeconomic and cultural factors prevalent in this rural setting. The study surveyed only those girls who had already dropped out of secondary school, making households the primary units of analysis, as most educational decisions occur at this level. This study was conducted over two months (July-August 2024), allowing for a timely snapshot of the current dropout situation. Other factors affecting dropout rates, such as school-based factors or peer influence, were not included, as they were outside the study's intended focus on household-level socioeconomic determinants.

### 1.10 Definition of Terms

**Completion:** refers to fulfilling the requirements of the four years of secondary school, which is determined by sitting for the KCSE.

**Education:** the recognized formal process of acquiring knowledge values and skills over a specified period. In simple terms, it is the process that assists in forming the mind of individuals, their behaviors, and skills to acquire knowledge.

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**Factors:** these are variables that cause significant impacts on the phenomena. In this study, factors such as poverty, early marriages, and lack of interest in education are considered factors, i.e., what influenced girls to drop out of secondary school.

**Secondary school drop-out**: those who enrolled in form one out but failed to complete form four due to different reasons

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# CHAPTER TWO
# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Overview

Chapter Two records a review of existing literature on girls dropping out. It is arranged in two major parts. Part one provides the theoretical background for this research; here major theories underlying this research are reviewed. The second outlines the empirical review; here, past research on girls drop-out are reviewed and gaps identified which the proposed research will fill. The chapter ends with developing a conceptual framework that was followed in conducting the proposed research.

## 2.2 Theoretical Background

The section reviews three of the significant education theories used to explain variables in this research. This includes slow-income family socialization theory, Structural strain theory, and Academic mediation theory. The three theories concern school drop-out and explain using different predictors, including structural and individual reasons.

### 2.2.1 Relative Deprivation Theory

The Relative Deprivation Theory is a sociological concept that addresses the feelings of discontent and frustration that individuals or groups may experience when they perceive that they are worse off or has less than those to whom they compare themselves. This theory does not have a single founder or a specific date of origin, as it has developed over time through contributions from various scholars in the fields of sociology and social psychology. One of the early proponents of the Relative Deprivation Theory was Samuel Stouffer, who conducted research on the theory during the mid-20th century. Stouffer's work focused on the impact of relative deprivation on attitudes and behaviors, particularly in the context of social and economic inequalities.

In light of the research objective to investigate the influence of household-level income on girls' drop-out rates in Mariani Ward, it is imperative to establish a foundational theoretical perspective. The Relative Deprivation Theory, as proposed by Stouffer in 1949, offers valuable insights into this issue. This theory posits that individuals compare their circumstances with those of others in their social group and experience a sense of deprivation when they perceive disparities. Such disparities can lead to feelings of frustration, anger, and a perception of injustice. In the context of girls' school dropouts, this theory suggests that girls may discontinue their education

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when they believe they are not receiving equal learning opportunities compared to their male counterparts, or that their education is less valued.

Research findings have supported the idea that gender inequality within the education system can indeed contribute to girls dropping out of school. Studies conducted in Ghana and Pakistan, for example, found that girls who perceived gender inequality and discrimination in education were more likely to leave school compared to their male counterparts. These findings emphasize the role of perceived relative deprivation in influencing girls' decisions to drop out. Furthermore, the concept of intersectionality, as described by SW (2014), adds depth to our understanding. It suggests that individuals experience multiple forms of oppression and discrimination, which intersect based on their social identities, such as gender, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. In the context of girls' education, intersectionality implies that girls from marginalized groups may face various intersecting forms of oppression, leading to a heightened perception of relative deprivation. For example, a girl from a marginalized ethnic background with a low-income status may perceive fewer educational opportunities compared to her non-marginalized male peers, further contributing to her decision to drop out.

Effective interventions addressing relative deprivation can lead to improvements in girls' education outcomes. Programs promoting gender equality, providing equal educational opportunities, and acknowledging the intersectional nature of oppression can reduce the perception of relative deprivation among girls, motivating them to remain in school. Additionally, research has demonstrated that relative deprivation theory can shed light on the impact of social and economic factors on girls' school dropout. For instance, a study conducted in India revealed that girls from economically disadvantaged backgrounds were more likely to discontinue their education. These girls also perceived their parents as assigning less value to their education compared to their male siblings, further exacerbating their likelihood of dropping out.

Cultural factors also play a role in girls' perception of relative deprivation in education. In some cultures, girls are expected to prioritize domestic responsibilities over education, contributing to the perception that education is less valued for them than for boys. Early marriage and traditional gender roles can further limit girls' educational opportunities, leading to their decision to drop out. It's essential to note that relative deprivation theory suggests that individuals do not solely evaluate their educational opportunities based on their circumstances but also by comparing themselves to their peers and societal expectations. Therefore, girls dropping out of school may not only compare

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their education opportunities to those of their male peers but also to wider societal expectations regarding gender roles.

Thus, the Relative Deprivation Theory offers a valuable framework for comprehending the multifaceted factors contributing to girls' school dropout. These factors encompass gender inequality in education, social and economic elements, cultural expectations, and broader societal norms. Interventions targeting these factors can mitigate the perception of relative deprivation among girls, ultimately improving their educational outcomes. Such interventions may involve policies promoting gender equality, and equal educational opportunities, addressing socio-economic inequalities, and challenging cultural and societal gender role expectations.

Relative Deprivation Theory primarily focuses on individual and psychological aspects of perceived inequality and deprivation. While it offers insights into how individuals perceive and react to disparities, it may not fully account for the structural and systemic factors contributing to girls' dropout rates. In the context of this study, economic disparities and gender-based discrimination may be influenced by broader structural issues such as government policies, educational infrastructure, and cultural norms. The theory might not provide a comprehensive understanding of these structural factors and their role in girls' dropout rates.

Relative Deprivation Theory indeed reveals some limitations when applied to understanding girls' dropout rates from secondary school. While it offers valuable insights into how individuals perceive inequality and react to disparities, it tends to emphasize psychological and individual factors rather than systemic or structural influences. One significant limitation is the theory's focus on personal perceptions of inequality, which may not fully account for the broader social, economic, and cultural factors that contribute to girls dropping out of school. For instance, girls in rural areas might not only drop out due to feeling deprived compared to their male peers but also because of external barriers such as poverty, inadequate school infrastructure, or cultural norms that prioritize early marriage or domestic responsibilities over education. Relative Deprivation Theory, with its emphasis on personal comparisons, does not fully capture these larger structural issues.

Additionally, while the theory explains how individuals may feel frustrated or dissatisfied when comparing themselves to others, it does not adequately address how institutional policies or systemic gender biases affect educational opportunities. In regions where educational resources are scarce or gender-based discrimination is prevalent, these structural factors may exert a more significant influence on dropout rates than feelings of relative deprivation alone. Thus, although

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Relative Deprivation Theory provides an important lens for understanding personal dissatisfaction and its impact on behavior, it falls short of addressing broader systemic forces like economic inequality, cultural expectations, and inadequate educational policies. These structural factors must be considered to fully grasp why girls drop out of school, especially in areas with deeply ingrained gender inequalities. This makes the theory more suitable for explaining individual attitudes rather than providing a comprehensive framework for understanding the full range of factors contributing to girls' dropout rates in Mariani Ward.

### 2.2.2 Marginalization Theory

Marginalization theory is a concept that has evolved and does not have a specific single origin or a single proponent. It draws on various social and political theories that address the processes of exclusion and disenfranchisement in society. Marginalization theory serves as a valuable framework for understanding how certain social and economic factors can contribute to the exclusion and disenfranchisement of specific groups within society. In the realm of education, this theory helps shed light on how marginalized individuals, such as girls in Mariani Ward, may face systemic barriers that hinder their educational progression. This theoretical review aims to provide insights into how marginalization theory is relevant to the study's focus on girls' dropout rates and the social-economic determinants affecting them. Marginalization theory posits that individuals or groups can be pushed to the margins of society due to various intersecting factors, including socioeconomic status, gender, and access to resources. In the context of education, this theory illuminates how girls in Mariani Ward may face multiple layers of marginalization, including economic constraints, gender-based disparities, and cultural norms. These factors can combine to limit their access to quality education and lead to higher dropout rates.

Rendering to Giroux (1983), the concept of education within the framework of marginalization theory revolves around the idea that educational systems can either contribute to or mitigate the marginalization of specific groups in society. Marginalization encompasses the exclusion of individuals or groups across social, economic, and political dimensions, limiting their access to resources, opportunities, and participation in decision-making processes. This theory places a interest on how educational systems can either perpetuate or combat marginalization, recognizing education as a powerful tool for empowering individuals and communities to break free from poverty and marginalization. Unfortunately, marginalized groups, such as girls, often

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encounter obstacles that hinder their access to education, leading to early school dropout (Apple, 2013).

Gender-based discrimination is a prominent means through which education systems can marginalize girls. In many societies, girls often face pressure to prioritize domestic responsibilities over pursuing education, resulting in restricted learning opportunities (Deepti & Tiwari, 2019). Gender-based discrimination can also manifest within the classroom, where girls may receive less attention from teachers or be discouraged from pursuing certain subjects (UNESCO, 2017). These experiences can leave girls feeling marginalized within the educational system, potentially leading to school dropout.

Another way through which education can contribute to the marginalization of girls is through structural inequalities. For instance, girls from low-income households may encounter barriers to accessing quality education due to the high cost of schooling, inadequate school infrastructure, and long distances to travel to school (Mukherjee & Samanta, 2018). Similarly, girls belonging to marginalized ethnic or linguistic groups may face language barriers in the classroom and may lack access to educational materials in their native language (UNESCO, 2017). These structural inequalities can further marginalize girls within the educational system and may drive them to consider dropping out.

Nevertheless, education within the framework of marginalization theory suggests that education can also serve as a tool to combat marginalization by promoting social justice and equity within the educational system (Apple, 2013). Achieving this involves addressing the structural inequalities and discrimination that marginalize girls in education. Policies that promote gender equality in education, such as ensuring equal opportunities for girls and boys and challenging gender stereotypes in the classroom, can help reduce gender-based discrimination (UNESCO, 2017).

Similarly, policies designed to tackle social and economic inequalities, including providing financial support to low-income families and establishing schools in remote areas, can ensure that all girls have access to high-quality education (Mukherjee & Samanta, 2018). Lastly, policies that encourage the use of local languages in the classroom and provide access to educational materials in minority languages can help address linguistic barriers to education (UNESCO, 2017).

Marginalization theory can sometimes oversimplify the experiences of marginalized groups by not fully considering intersectionality. In the case of this study, it's important to recognize that

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girls' experiences of marginalization may be influenced by multiple intersecting factors, including gender, economic status, ethnicity, and more. The theory might not adequately account for these intersecting dynamics. One significant limitation is that Marginalization Theory often fails to fully address the complex and overlapping factors that contribute to marginalization. In reality, marginalized girls may experience multiple layers of disadvantage, including gender discrimination, economic hardship, cultural expectations, and language barriers. These intersecting issues create a more complex reality than the theory typically accounts for, as it tends to focus on broad social and economic exclusion rather than the unique ways these factors combine in individual cases.

Additionally, the theory emphasizes how educational systems perpetuate exclusion through structural inequalities and discriminatory practices, but it may not adequately address the cultural norms and social dynamics that also play a critical role. For example, in Mariani Ward, cultural expectations for girls to prioritize household duties or marry at a young age may influence their decisions to leave school. These cultural pressures, alongside economic barriers, form a web of challenges that Marginalization Theory may not fully capture. Another limitation of the theory is that it often portrays marginalized individuals as passive victims of exclusion, failing to recognize the agency and resilience many girls demonstrate. While the theory provides a framework for understanding how systemic forces contribute to marginalization, it may overlook the fact that girls in marginalized communities can actively seek ways to overcome barriers to education. This gap limits the theory's ability to provide a complete picture of how girls navigate educational challenges and pursue opportunities despite the obstacles they face. Thus while Marginalization Theory offers important perspectives on exclusion, it does not fully capture the multi-dimensional nature of the factors driving girls' dropout rates. The theory's focus on broad societal issues may miss the intricate interplay of cultural, economic, and social factors that affect marginalized girls' education. It also fails to recognize the active role these girls may take in resisting exclusion and seeking educational opportunities. Therefore, while the theory is useful, it has limitations in explaining the full range of experiences and challenges faced by marginalized girls in education.

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**2.2.3 Human Development Theory**

The Human Development Theory, put forward by economist Mahbub ul Haq and Nobel laureate Amartya Sen in the 1990s, offers a comprehensive lens through which to analyze the social-economic determinants of girls' dropout rates in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County,

Kenya. This theory, originating from the Human Development Report published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), fundamentally focuses on the improvement of people's well-being and their ability to lead lives they value.

The Human Development Theory places individuals and their well-being at the center of development efforts, emphasizing the significance of human capabilities and freedoms. In the context of your study, it is crucial to recognize that education is a fundamental aspect of human development, enabling individuals to enhance their capabilities and improve their living conditions. The theory posits that the expansion of human choices and freedoms is a key indicator of development, including the ability to access quality education.

To fully delve into the objective of understanding the influence of family structure on girls' dropout rates in Mariani Ward, the Human Development Theory emerges as a fundamental framework. The Human Development Theory is a conceptual lens designed to unravel the intricate process of individuals' growth and development over their lifetimes. This theory places emphasis on how various aspects of development social, cognitive, emotional, and physical are shaped by interactions with the environment and biological factors (Grusec & Hastings, 2015). In the context of girls' school dropouts, the Human Development Theory can provide insights into the factors driving their decisions to leave school prematurely and the long-term implications of such decisions on their development and well-being.

According to the Human Development Theory, individuals are subject to a myriad of influences, stemming from both biological and environmental factors, which mold their development across time (Grusec & Hastings, 2015). Family structures stand out as pivotal determinants that play a profound role in how children navigate the challenges within their surroundings. In the case of girls' school dropouts, research has consistently highlighted a multitude of factors contributing to their early departure from school. Factors such as poverty, family responsibilities, and societal expectations act as constraints that limit girls' access to education and contribute to their choice to discontinue their schooling (Kabeer, 2019; Rughoo & Kid, 2016). Gender-based discrimination and various forms of violence, including sexual harassment and assault, further exacerbate this problem by creating hostile learning environments, which ultimately influence girls to abandon their educational pursuits (UNESCO, 2017).

Furthermore, the Human Development Theory posits that dropping out of school can have far-reaching implications for the future development and well-being of girls. For instance, leaving

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school prematurely can curtail opportunities for further education and employment, resulting in enduring consequences for their economic and social welfare (UNESCO, 2017). Additionally, school dropout can increase the risk of early marriage, early pregnancy, and exposure to gender-based violence, thus further constricting their prospects and perpetuating a cycle of poverty and marginalization (Kabeer, 2019).

Thus, the Human Development Theory offers a valuable framework for comprehending the complex issues underpinning girls' school dropouts and the ramifications of such decisions on their future development and well-being. By prioritizing initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality, addressing poverty, and fostering economic empowerment, and creating secure and supportive learning environments for girls, policies and programs can work toward ensuring that all girls have equal opportunities to access quality education and unlock their full potential.

A major weakness of the Human Development Theory, particularly in the context of studying girls' school dropouts, is its relatively broad and abstract nature. While the theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding human development, it may lack the specificity needed to address the unique challenges and circumstances that contribute to girls leaving school prematurely. Specifically, the theory's focus on the interplay between biological and environmental factors may not sufficiently address the gender-specific issues that girls face in education. For instance, it may not directly account for the deep-rooted societal norms and expectations that often lead to gender-based discrimination, violence, and disparities in educational opportunities. The theory may not provide detailed guidance on how to address these specific challenges, which require targeted interventions to promote gender equality and girls' access to education.

## 2.3 Empirical Review

### 2.3.1 Household Level of Income and Girls Dropout

The level of household income significantly influences students' access to education, as it incurs potential costs, both direct and indirect (Mduma et al., 2019). Direct costs encompass expenses like school fees and students' basic needs, while indirect costs include expenditures on uniforms, books, transportation, and the opportunity cost of having students in school. Household income is a crucial factor in determining when children begin school, how regularly they attend, and when they complete or drop out of their education (Injendi & Jephthar, 2020).

Smith et al. (2022) conducted an Australian study to investigate the association between home income and secondary school dropout rates among girls. The study used both quantitative

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data from national education databases and qualitative interviews with school counselors, parents, and students. Key findings revealed a substantial link between lower home income and greater dropout rates among girls. Financial constraints, such as the inability to pay school fees and extracurricular activities, were highlighted as significant hurdles. Furthermore, the study discovered that lower-income households frequently had reduced parental involvement due to financial stress and inadequate resources, which linked to greater dropout rates. The study also found that schools with low-income communities had fewer resources, aggravating the educational obstacles these pupils faced. Smith et al.'s findings inform the current study by emphasizing the importance of home income in impacting girls' educational performance, which is consistent with the socioeconomic difficulties reported in Mariani Ward. However, the Australian setting may not fully reflect the socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of a developing region such as Kenya. The current study tackles this issue by focusing on Tharaka-Nithi County's specific socioeconomic characteristics and investigating other hurdles such as insufficient educational facilities and cultural views. By combining a greater range of local perspectives and accounting for contextual variables, the current study gives a more nuanced understanding of the factors influencing girls' dropout rates in Mariani Ward, as well as specific recommendations for targeted interventions.

An Asian study by Mduma et al. (2019) identified poverty as a primary reason for school-aged children not attending school in India. The research, conducted in the Burdwan District of India with approximately 180 families, categorized families by their income levels, with the lowest income families associated with agro-occupational groups. The study revealed that school dropout rates were highest among the agro-occupational group, primarily due to parents' negative attitudes toward education. Parents in economically disadvantaged families in agro-occupation groups often prioritize immediate monetary gains from their children's labor over the long-term benefits of investing in their education. However, this study's limitation is that it predominantly focuses on poverty as the sole socio-economic factor influencing student dropout rates and assumes that both girls and boys are affected similarly by poverty. Consequently, there is a need to investigate other socio-economic determinants that affect students' dropout rates, with a specific focus on gender disparities. The research sought to address these gaps by exploring the socio-economic causes of girls' dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward, Kenya.

In another Asian study conducted by Wodon et al. (2018), the challenges associated with not educating girls in Afghanistan were examined. The research highlighted that uneducated

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women contribute to an increased dependency ratio in the country. Uneducated women are reliant on their husbands for basic needs, resulting in a higher number of dependents in society. These women often do not engage in income-generating activities, leading to low-income families. This scenario was particularly evident in Ak Toba Village, Afghanistan, where low levels of education among women were linked to rising child mortality rates. However, this research primarily focuses on the consequences of not educating women in a country and overlooks the barriers that prevent women from accessing education. The study addresses this by investigating the socio-economic factors affecting girls' dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward, Kenya.

From an African perspective, Ketija (2018) conducted a study on the socio-economic factors determining children's dropout rates in Tanzania. The research compared dropout rates in three primary schools in Babati Town Council, Tanzania. The findings indicated that dropout rates were higher in primary schools situated in less privileged areas. Ketija (2018) explained that children from less privileged areas often come from low-income families. These families struggle to cover the latent costs associated with education, leading their children to drop out of school. Some parents are unable to provide for their families, compelling their children to leave school and engage in income-generating activities to support the family. However, this study is limited by its focus on primary schools and the assumption that both girls and boys are equally affected by poverty. The rates of girls' dropout are higher than those of boys, warranting further investigation into this phenomenon. The research sought to fill these gaps by exploring the socio-economic determinants of girls' dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward, Kenya.

In Kenya, Muthoki (2015) examined the household-based factors influencing girls' dropout rates from mixed-day secondary schools in Kibwezi Sub-County, Makueni County. The research involved a survey of 228 girls and nine teachers, purposively selected from 14 mixed-day secondary schools in Kibwezi Sub-County. The findings revealed that girls from low-income households were more likely to drop out of secondary schools. These families struggled to cover school fees and other indirect educational costs, leading to girls leaving school. Additionally, Muthoki (2015) argued that parents from low-income families prioritized immediate material gains from marrying off their daughters over the potential benefits of educating them. Consequently, low-income families often married off their daughters at a young age, compelling them to discontinue their secondary education.

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### 2.3.2 Household Education Status and Girls Dropout

The educational background of households significantly influences children's likelihood of remaining in school (Chikhungu et al., 2020; Lloyd et al., 2000; Patel et al., 2018). Parents with lower levels of education may not fully appreciate the importance of education, and this lack of awareness can influence their children's retention in school. For instance, Patel et al. (2018) found that uneducated parents may not prioritize their daughters' education, contributing to higher dropout rates among girls from less privileged family backgrounds.

A study conducted by the World Bank (2019) across 55 countries worldwide focused on women's education and revealed a strong connection between mothers' education and their children's educational attainment. The research demonstrated that as a mother's level of education increases, so does the educational achievement of her children. Additionally, the study highlighted that educated women are more likely to enroll their daughters in school, thereby doubling the benefits to society. It suggests that empowering women through education is essential. However, this research is limited in its specific focus on the importance of educating women and does not delve into the challenges faced by girls in education, such as high dropout rates. The research sought to investigate the socioeconomic factors influencing secondary school dropout rates, bridging this knowledge gap.

Looking at the American context, a study by Lloyd et al. (2000) examined the relationship between parental education and their children's education in the United States. It found a strong correlation between parents' level of education and their children's educational achievements. Educated parents tend to invest more time and resources in their children's education because they understand the benefits of schooling. This study involved 300 parents conveniently selected from Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles, characterized by higher social classes. However, the limitation lies in the regional bias, as it predominantly focuses on one social class. Therefore, further research in various regions is needed to confirm the generalizability of these findings.

In Bangladesh, similar findings on the impact of parental education on children's academic outcomes were reported by Farah and Upadhyay (2017). The study highlighted that educated parents often have higher income levels, allowing them to provide quality education for their children. It relied on extensive survey data from the Bangladesh demographic survey of 2011 and revealed that children from low-income families with parents having lower education levels experience higher dropout rates. This research, too, is limited by its extensive data survey method,

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raising questions about the analysis approach. Moreover, both studies assumed that gender plays an insignificant role in determining school dropout, which contradicts Farah and Upadhyay's (2017) findings that girls had relatively higher dropout rates than boys in Bangladesh. The research sought to address these gaps by investigating the socioeconomic determinants of girls' dropout rates from secondary schools.

Chikhungu et al. (2020) identify the critical role of parental education in shaping girls' educational outcomes in Malawi, revealing that girls from more educated households are less likely to drop out of school due to increased parental support and appreciation for education. Conversely, those from less educated backgrounds often face greater dropout risks due to insufficient understanding of education's value and lower levels of parental involvement. This study underscores the importance of enhancing parental engagement and awareness to support girls' continued education. However, the research has limitations, including a lack of detailed examination of how specific aspects of parental education and engagement contribute to dropout rates. Additionally, the study primarily focuses on educational outcomes without exploring other socio-economic factors that may interact with parental education to affect dropout rates. The present study addresses these gaps by incorporating a broader range of socio-economic determinants, such as household income and family structure, alongside parental education. By employing binomial logistic regression and correlational analyses, this study provides a more comprehensive view of how various socio-economic factors interact to influence girls' dropout rates. Furthermore, the study includes qualitative data from interviews with key informants and affected individuals, offering deeper insights into the specific impacts of parental education and other socio-economic factors. This multifaceted approach not only refines the understanding of the role of parental education but also enhances the study's ability to inform targeted interventions and policies designed to address the complex realities faced by girls in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya.

Patel et al. (2018) provide a detailed analysis of the impact of household education status on girls' dropout rates in India. Their study reveals a significant correlation between parental education levels and girls' retention in school, particularly emphasizing the influence of maternal education. Girls from households where mothers lack formal education face notable challenges, including diminished encouragement and support, lower academic expectations, and occasionally direct resistance to their education. The study underscores that educated mothers are more likely to

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actively support their daughters' educational pursuits, thereby creating a supportive environment that helps reduce dropout rates. This highlights the crucial role of investing in maternal education as a means to improve girls' educational outcomes.

Despite its valuable insights, Patel et al.'s study has limitations. It primarily focuses on the role of maternal education without thoroughly examining how other socio-economic factors, such as household income or family structure, might interact with parental education to affect dropout rates. Additionally, the study does not explore how different educational interventions might specifically impact girls' retention. The present study addresses these gaps by incorporating a wider range of socio-economic variables, including household income and family dynamics, alongside parental education. By using a comprehensive approach that includes both quantitative and qualitative data, this research provides a more nuanced understanding of how various factors interplay to influence girls' dropout rates. This broader perspective enables the formulation of more targeted interventions that address multiple dimensions of the problem, including enhancing parental support and improving overall socio-economic conditions to promote girls' continued education.

In the Kenyan, a study carried out by Budiharso & Tarman(2020) in Kilifi County examined parent-related factors influencing girls' retention rates. It emphasized the significant role of a mother's education level in retaining girls in secondary schools. The study incorporated data from 351 respondents, including five principals, 16 teachers, and 330 students. Notably, approximately 50.9% of the students indicated that their parents' highest level of education was primary school, suggesting a lack of educational role models at home. Many students voiced complaints about the absence of academic guidance from their parents, which resulted in negative attitudes and low morale.

Among principals and teachers, 90% agreed that most parents were not actively involved in their children's education, leading to high dropout rates due to insufficient follow-up. However, this research is limited by its utilization of three sets of data, raising concerns about how the research variables were controlled across these different sample populations. Additionally, the study focused on Kilifi County, warranting the need for similar research in other areas to verify the generalizability of these findings. The study addressed this gap by investigating the socioeconomic factors determining girls' dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya.

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### 2.3.3 Family Structure and Girls Drop-out

There is a substantial bulk of literature that establishes a strong connection between family structure and girls' school dropout rates (Chenge et al., 2017; Park et al., 2020; Uddin, 2021). Many of these studies underline the impact of family responsibilities on girls' dropout decisions. For instance, Chenge et al. (2017) highlight that in rural areas and households where one or both parents are absent due to work or other factors, girls often take on responsibilities at home and, consequently, are more likely to drop out of school. Moreover, Uddin's (2021) research indicates that girls who have working mothers may need to assume additional household responsibilities, which can hinder their ability to continue their education. These findings align with those of Fatima et al. (2021) in Pakistan, emphasizing that girls often shoulder more domestic chores, which can disrupt their learning process and lead to school dropout.

Vázquez-Nava et al. (2019) conducted a study in Mexico focusing on high school dropouts and identified a significant association between family structure and dropout rates. Their research, which involved 765 adolescents who had discontinued their education, revealed that about 64% came from non-intact families. These family structures were linked to delinquent behavior in school, contributing to low academic performance and increased risk of expulsion. Notably, among female participants, early pregnancies, often resulting from delinquent behaviors and inadequate parental guidance, were a significant factor in school dropout. While this study provides valuable insights into the impact of family structure on dropout rates, its focus on a single location and assumptions about uniform effects across genders indicate the need for further research to confirm the generalizability of these findings. The present study addresses these gaps by exploring the socioeconomic determinants of girls' dropout rates in Mariani Ward, Kenya.

Additionally, a study by Kumar et al. (2017) utilized data mining techniques to predict education dropout in India. Their analysis revealed that family structure was a prominent contributor to education dropout, as mentioned in 98% of the reviewed articles. Social-economic factors such as poverty, early marriages, and inadequate parenting emerged as leading causes of education dropout. However, the study's limitations include its exclusive focus on the Indian context and the assumption that predictors of dropout are uniform across all educational levels, which contradicts the higher dropout rates often seen in high school. This underscores the need for further research specifically targeting the predictors of high school dropout rates. The present study

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sought to bridge these gaps by analyzing the socioeconomic determinants of girls' dropout rates from secondary schools.

From an African perspective, Ketija's (2018) study on school dropout in Tanzania emphasized the essential role of family structure in school dropout. A comparison of dropout rates among three primary schools in Bahati Town Council, Tanzania, showed that the school with the highest number of students from incomplete families also had the highest dropout rates. This indicates that family structure might significantly influence school dropout rates. Similarly, Afia et al. (2019) identified parenting practices during children's adolescence as a significant factor contributing to school dropout in Uganda. Their research demonstrated that children from households marked by family violence, alcoholism, and divorce were more likely to drop out of school. However, both studies were limited to primary schools and assumed uniform dropout rates across genders, highlighting the need for further research to confirm such generalizations. The research sought to address these limitations by investigating girls' dropout rates in Mariani Ward, Kenya.

In Kenya, family size has been linked to dropout rates from secondary schools (Nzina & Mulwa, 2019; Ochieng & Nairobi, 2020). Ochieng and Nairobi's (2020) study, conducted in Kisumu West District, found that girls from larger families (comprising more than five members) were at a higher risk of dropping out of school. A similar trend was observed by Nzina and Mulwa (2019) in Makuu Sub-County, Makueni County, Kenya, who discovered that girls from larger families had higher dropout rates. Although these studies included a significant number of respondents, the complexity of data analysis and potential research biases related to the extensive data samples raise questions. Furthermore, these studies assumed that dropout rates were consistent across all genders, which contradicts the higher dropout rates often observed among girls. The research sought to bridge these gaps by investigating the socioeconomic determinants of girls' dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya.

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**2.4 Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework is a map visualization of the relationship between the research variables(Manjunatha & Gangadhar, (2018). It represents the researcher's synthesis of the research variables as informed by the reviewed literature. The reviewed literature has proposed three major social-economic determinants of girls' drop-out rates from secondary schools, i.e., household level of income, household level of education, and family structure. This will form the independent

variables in this research. The independent variables will be intervened by academic outcomes, g, and low morale to cause girls to dropout. Figure 2.1 summarizes the conceptual framework developed for this research.

**Independent Variables**

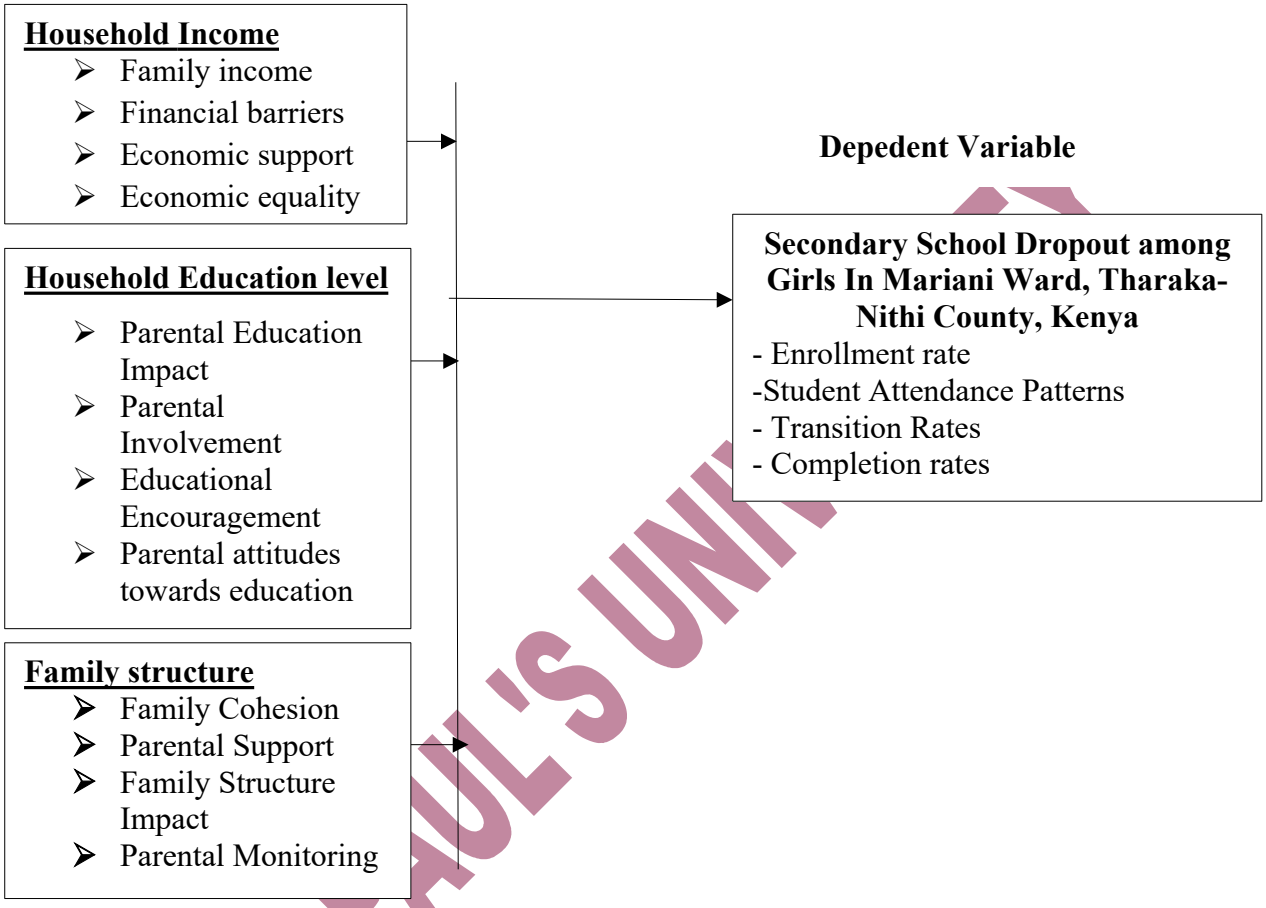



Figure 2.1 **Conceptual Framework**

**Source: Author (2023)**

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### 2.4.1 Internalization of Research Variables

**Household Level of Income**

A family's income at the household level plays a significant role in determining the educational outcomes for children, particularly impacting girls who might be more prone to dropping out of school. A low household income can pose challenges in paying for school-related expenses, such as fees and uniforms, leading to children missing essential educational opportunities. This financial strain contributes to poor academic performance as children may miss crucial learning experiences, fall behind in their studies, and lack the necessary resources to excel academically (Adeyemo & Ojo, 2017).

Additionally, hidden educational costs, including expenses for transportation and learning materials, also influence children's educational achievements. If families cannot afford transportation to and from school, it leads to absenteeism, adversely affecting academic performance (Adeyemo & Ojo, 2017). Similarly, inadequate access to learning materials like textbooks can hamper a student's ability to keep pace with their studies and perform poorly in exams (Nasir & Sammons, 2016).

Furthermore, when families prioritize child labor due to financial constraints, this decision can significantly hinder children's learning opportunities. Children engaged in labor activities, whether at home or outside, often miss school, resulting in higher absenteeism and lower academic performance (Adeyemo & Ojo, 2017). Additionally, child labor can diminish the time and energy children can allocate to their studies, subsequently contributing to lower academic performance and weaker engagement with their education.

**Household Level of education**

In shaping children's perspectives on education, role models within the household play a crucial role. Parents who highly value education and make it a priority for their children can serve as positive role models, motivating and supporting their children in their academic pursuits. Conversely, parents with limited education themselves may not prioritize their children's education or provide the necessary guidance and support. This can result in lower academic performance, higher absenteeism, and weaker connections with school (Nguyen et al., 2018).

Additionally, educational guidance within the household significantly influences a child's academic success. Well-informed parents who understand the education system and can guide and support their children help them overcome challenges and achieve academic excellence. However,

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if parents lack knowledge about the education system or don't prioritize education, their children might miss valuable learning opportunities, leading to poor academic performance and increased absenteeism (Adeyemo & Ojo, 2017).

Furthermore, negative attitudes towards education within the household can profoundly impact children's academic success. When parents don't value education or display pessimistic views about schooling, their children might adopt similar attitudes. This can result in disinterest and detachment from school, causing higher absenteeism, lower academic performance, and a weaker bond with education (Nguyen et al., 2018).

**Family Structure**

Household chores have a considerable impact on a child's academic performance. There's a gendered expectation where girls are often assigned more household chores compared to boys. This disparity can result in increased absenteeism and reduced study time, affecting the academic performance of girls (Ahmed & Salim, 2014). Furthermore, the physical and mental fatigue induced by these chores can impede a child's ability to concentrate and retain information, consequently leading to poor academic performance.

Large family sizes can also affect a child's academic performance. In families with limited resources and parental attention, children, especially in larger families, might receive less support and attention for their academic endeavors. This lack of support leads to lower academic performance among children in such settings (Nwankwo & Eke, 2015). Additionally, larger family sizes might result in overcrowded living spaces, impacting a child's mental health and well-being, which can contribute to increased absenteeism and reduced academic performance.

**2.5 Summary of literature review and research gaps**

The literature highlights key socio-economic factors that influence girls' dropout rates, such as household income, parental education, and family structure. Studies showed that poverty significantly affects school retention, with many girls dropping out due to the financial burden of schooling costs. Parental education, especially maternal education, was associated with higher school retention, as educated parents are more likely to prioritize their children's schooling. Additionally, unstable family structures contribute to girls leaving school early due to increased domestic responsibilities.

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However, gaps remain in the research. There is limited focus on how poverty uniquely impacts girls' education in rural Kenyan settings like Mariani Ward. Furthermore, the specific influence of maternal education in these contexts is understudied. While family structure is acknowledged as a factor, more research is needed on how extended family or foster care arrangements impact girls' schooling in rural areas. Finally, many studies identified barriers but lacked practical, context-specific interventions to address the dropout issue in these regions. This study sought to fill these gaps by exploring the local socio-economic dynamics of Mariani Ward and proposing targeted solutions to improve girls' school retention.

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# CHAPTER THREE
# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Overview

Chapter three of the research report outlined the methodology employed for carrying out the intended study. The chapter commences by presenting the research design that will be utilized, the target population, the sampling approach, research tools, and the validity and reliability of these instruments. Finally, the chapter concludes by examining the ethical considerations associated with the proposed research.

## 3.2 Research Design

Research design encompasses the framework and structure used to plan and conduct research activities (Robson, 2002). It's an integral part of research as it entails the strategy, the conceptual framework, identification of the subject of study, and the methodologies employed for data collection and analysis. The research design specifically chosen for this study was descriptive survey design, a method used to collect data to depict a population, a particular phenomenon, or a situation. This method is deemed appropriate for the research because it focuses on collecting data related to the socio-economic determinants of a phenomenon, enabling exploration in both qualitative and quantitative aspects (Creswell, 2014). Investigating social and economic factors that influence decision-making is best suited for this design as it facilitates gathering detailed information regarding the socio-economic influencers of school dropout rates among secondary school girls.

To explore the knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to the education of girl children in Tharaka Nthi County, Kenya, a descriptive research design was employed. This design was complemented by qualitative data collection methods, including Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). While a descriptive research design typically involves quantitative approaches, integrating qualitative tools such as KIIs provided a deeper, insider's perspective on the community's experiences and perceptions. This approach allowed for a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the subject matter. The use of qualitative methods is supported by Myers (2009), who emphasizes their suitability for capturing individuals' subjective interpretations. By combining descriptive and qualitative methods, the research design effectively addressed both the breadth and depth of the study objectives.

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The study investigated the social-economic factors (household-level of income, parental education status and family structure) of girls' drop-out rate from secondary schools in Mariani Ward,Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. The study surveyed those girls who dropped out of secondary school. The choice of the area is based on statistical reports that indicate that girls are dropping out of school more than boys. At the same time, as a result of the county being in the rural area, there are heavy influences of cultural factors and that is the reason why the study aimed to unveil these reasons from a household perspective. Since it is a developmental research, the unit of analysis was the households because that is the place where most decisions on education are made. The study conducted between july and August 2024.

**3.3 Research Site**

This study was conducted in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. Tharaka Nithi County, is one of Kenya's newly devolved counties (see Appendix 1). Situated in the former Eastern Province, Tharaka Nithi is one of the country's 47 counties. It is predominantly inhabited by the Chuka, Mwimbi, Mathambi, and Tharaka communities, who form part of the larger Ameru ethnic group. The county spans an area of 2,609 square kilometers and has a population of approximately 393,177 people. The county headquarters are located in Kathwana, a central and accessible location chosen through consensus among delegates from the three constituencies: Maara, Tharaka, and Chuka/Igamba-Ngombe. The region's economy is primarily driven by tea and coffee farming, subsistence agriculture, dairy farming, and livestock rearing. Tharaka Nithi shares its borders with Isiolo, Meru, Embu, and Kitui Counties, positioning it strategically for both agricultural and economic activities. The county comprises 15 wards spread across the three constituencies, including Mukothima, Chiakariga, Nkondi, Marimanti, and Gatunga.

Tharaka Nithi County was selected for this study due to the high rates of school dropouts among girls as compared to boys, a significant concern in the region. Reports indicate that girls face unique socio-economic challenges that hinder their ability to complete secondary education. This study seeks to investigate the factors contributing to these dropout rates, as understanding the local context is essential for developing targeted interventions. By focusing on this area, the study sought to shed light on the socio-economic barriers to education and propose solutions tailored to the specific needs of the girls in Tharaka Nithi County.

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### 3.4 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is concerned with etymology, identity, and knowledge development (Tabuchi, 2019). In the words of Tabuchi (2019), a research philosophy can be defined as "a belief about how data about a phenomenon should be gathered, analyzed, and used." Two significant terms form the basis of research philosophy, i.e., epistemology and doxology. Epistemology refers to the things that are generally known to be true, while doxology refers to the items believed to be accurate. According to Rath and Wadhwa (2017), the purpose of scientific research is to convert what is believed to be true to what is known to be true. Two fundamental philosophical stances were taken in this research, i.e., Positivism and interpretivism in explaining the causes of girl's dropouts in school.

### 3.5 Target Population

The unit of analysis was households (females dropouts) in the County. According to the Department of Social Service of Tharaka-Nithi County, there are 10,202 households in the county (Tharaka-Nithi County Integrated Development Plan, 2018-2022). According to the Integrated County Development Plan of Tharaka-Nithi, Mariani has approximately 8,387 female adults, whereas males account for approximately 5,049 adults.

### 3.6 Sampling Technique

A cluster sampling method was employed to ensure the representation of various groups within the population. Within the target population, five clusters or sub-locations were identified based on their diverse characteristics. This method, based on probability, is chosen due to the dispersed nature of the population across different villages. The process of securing an accurate sample involves several steps. Initially, clusters were defined with the assistance of local leaders such as chiefs and village elders. These clusters represent sub-locations comprising villages sharing similar traits, each led by a village elder within the entire ward. The specific number of villages required to achieve a representative sample of 385 households were randomly determined, considering the cluster sizes and their internal variations. To select respondents within these villages, a simple random sampling technique was used. This method ensures every individual within the larger population has an equal chance of being chosen, effectively eliminating biases in the selection process.

On the other hand the key informant interviews involved local leaders, Drop out females, and head teachers as units of analysis. These individuals were chosen deliberately for their specific

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knowledge, expertise, and unique perspectives regarding the impact of socio-economic factors on the dropout of secondary school girls. Purposive sampling was used for selecting these informants, focusing on their expertise and insights related to why secondary school girls tend to drop out before completing their high school education. This approach aims to gather insights from participants who are most likely to offer valuable information or represent crucial characteristics relevant to the research, particularly shedding light on the reasons behind the dropout of secondary school girls.

### 3.7 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

From the target population of 10,202 households (females dropouts), the sample size for the study was determined using Taro (1967) formula as follows.

$$n = \frac{N}{(1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n = *Sample size*

N= *Population size (households) = 10,202*

e = *0.05(Precision level) assuming the confidence level is 95% i.e.: ± 5*

Therefore:

$$n = \frac{10{,}202}{(1 + 10202(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 384.9 = 385$$

The study also included 10 key informants who were provided detailed data for the study so as to triangulate the results; 2 teachers, 6 dropout girls/females and 2 local leaders. According to Lokot, (2021). (2010), 30 to 60 key informants are ideal for the purpose of reaching saturation point where no new information can be generated. Table 3.1 summarizes the categories of Key Informants.

Table 3.1 **Key Informants**

| **Members** | **Sample** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|
| Teachers (Head teachers) | 2 | 25% |
| Local leaders | 2 | 25% |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Drop out females | 6 | 50% |
| **Total** | **10** | **100%** |

Two local leaders were be selected from the locations randomly. The local leaders also assisted the researcher to identify the homes that have girls who dropped out. In addition, 2 teachers represented the two zones in Education sector in Mariani ward. At the same time, head teachers were selected ( one primary head and one secondary school principal). Finally, 6 dropout girls/females from each sub-location were represented.

### 3.8 Data Collection Tools

This study's data collection involved two specific tools tailored to gather insights from adult females, the primary focus of the analysis, and key informants.

#### 3.8.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were employed to gather detailed information on the issue of dropouts within the county. The questionnaires were used for female school dropouts. These questionnaires closed-ended questions designed to capture a wide range of data on their experiences and perspectives regarding dropouts. This approach aimed to provide a comprehensive view of the factors contributing to dropout rates from multiple angles.

#### 3.8.2 Interviews

In addition to the questionnaires, key informants provided crucial and detailed information. They underwent structured interview schedules covering various sections. These sections encompassed demographics to gather basic background information, an interview guide to ensure consistency and depth in responses, objectives aligned with the research goals, and an exploration of the dependent variable. This inclusive approach to data collection aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. It incorporated the viewpoints of both female school dropouts and knowledgeable key informants to enrich the study's findings. The interviews were corroborated the information obtained from the questionnaires. Besides, it enabled the researcher to collect qualitative information as well as in depth understanding of the issue being investigated.

### 3.9 Pilot Testing

In order to ensure the questionnaire's reliability and validity, a preliminary trial was conducted by administering questionnaires to 39 participants, constituting 10% of the total sample size. Within this subset, 35 were female school dropouts, while 3 were teachers and 2 were local

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leaders, forming a representative group. This pilot study took place in a neighboring Karingani ward and utilized a random sampling method, in accordance with the approach specified by Bell and Willmott (2017).

The purpose of this pilot experiment was to evaluate if the pilot test aligns with the credibility objectives of the research. The primary aim is to assess the participants' ability to effectively respond to the survey questionnaire. Additionally, this trial provided an opportunity for the researcher to gain insights into the entire process of data collection, management, and the optimal utilization of available resources. Conducting the pilot study allowed for an assessment of the research's feasibility and acceptability. The outcomes and insights derived from this pilot study formed the foundational basis upon which the subsequent comprehensive study was built, contributing significantly to determining the viability and success of the research approach.

### 3.10 Validity and Reliability

To ensure that the tools collected the right data and were internally consistent, validity and reliability of the tools were tested.

#### 3.10.1 Instruments Validity

Questionnaire validity pertains to the extent to which the obtained results from a questionnaire correspond to the actual real-world scenario. The validation of the research instruments involved assessments of content and construct validity. To ensure content validity in the data collection tool, the items were structured in a way that accurately represents the central focus of the study, as recommended by Singh (2017). The questionnaire incorporated an ample number of items to ensure a thorough coverage of the subject under investigation, thereby bolstering the tool's validity. Moreover, the formulation of questionnaire items was crafted to improve the understanding of respondents. In the pursuit of construct validity, the process involves aligning the questionnaire items with established literature and the theoretical framework. This alignment aimed to operationalize the items in a manner consistent with existing knowledge and theoretical perspectives, enhancing the overall validation of the questionnaire in the context of the research objectives. Supervisors reviewed the research instruments to ensure that each item accurately captured the study's objectives and met academic standards. Through constructive feedback, they provided guidance on refining questions to improve clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's aims.

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### 3.10.2 Instruments Reliability

As per Taherdoost (2016), the reliability of a questionnaire refers to its ability to produce consistent results when collecting information under the same conditions. To ensure that the research tools consistently generate reliable outcomes, the Cronbach's alpha test (1951) was conducted. Through piloting, this test aimed to assess the internal consistency of the instruments used in the research. The evaluation through the Cronbach's alpha test seeks to determine if the calculated coefficient falls within the accepted range of 0.7 to 1, which indicates a satisfactory level of reliability (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). Higher Cronbach's alpha coefficients typically signify stronger internal consistency of the research instruments. The computation of the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were carried out using SPSS version 25.0, enabling a thorough assessment of the research tools' reliability in yielding consistent and dependable results across multiple data collection instances. In this study, the reliability of the instruments was deemed reliable based on the results of the Cronbach's alpha test of 0.82, which was conducted during the pilot testing phase.

### 3.11 Data Collection Procedure

Before commencing the fieldwork, an official authorization letter was obtained from St. Paul's University post graduate ethics review committee, ensuring adherence to established ethical guidelines.

This letter is a prerequisite for acquiring a permit from the National Commission of Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). The NACOSTI letter is crucial as it provides the researcher access to Mariani ward in Tharaka-Nithi County for the purpose of data collection. Once the required permissions were secured, the researcher began data collection process by engaging with local leaders to brief them on the study's objectives. These discussions culminated in the local leaders' consent and collaboration in organizing the various villages based on their respective locations.

To streamline the data collection process, the researcher enlisted the support of five research assistants, comprising three males and two females. These assistants were carefully chosen and adequately trained, ensuring they met at least a minimum qualification of high school education. They underwent orientation in research protocols, focusing on proper respondent interaction techniques and effectively communicating the study's objectives.

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### 3.12 Data Analysis Procedures

This descriptive survey was employed both quantitative and qualitative methods in the analysis of the collected data. Following data collection, a systematic and comprehensive analysis will be conducted. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 25.0) was used for data analysis, particularly focusing on descriptive and inferential analysis. Quantitative data underwent coding, cleaning, and analysis using SPSS. Descriptive statistical analysis involved calculating frequencies, percentages, and their tabulation. Inferential statistical analysis utilized correlation analysis and binomial logistic regression to determine the influence of socio-economic determinants on the dropout rate of female high school students. Binomial regression, specifically suited for a binary dependent variable (dropout - **yes** or **no**)

For qualitative data, thematic and content analyses were conducted. The thematic analysis focused on identifying recurring themes and patterns within the data obtained from key informant interviews. This process involved coding techniques to categorize and analyze data. Content analysis explored the qualitative data's content to identify key concepts, ideas, or categories. Narrative analysis delved into participants' stories and narratives to offer a deeper understanding of their experiences and perspectives.

### 3.13 Ethical Considerations

The study followed rigorous ethical standards throughout its implementation. The researcher secured all essential approvals for data collection, including authorization from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), County and Sub-County Education offices and the Sub-County Social Services office. However, formal ethical approval was also obtained from St. Paul's University ethics review board, which ensured compliance with established ethical guidelines. Although the process was complex, this thorough approach was crucial because it upheld the integrity of the research.

Before participating, respondents were informed about the study's objectives and provided informed consent. To protect confidentiality, personally identifiable information, such as names and contact details, was securely stored and accessible only to authorized personnel. Data management practices included both physical and digital security measures, such as secure storage of hard copies and encryption of digital data. Findings were presented using anonymization techniques to maintain confidentiality.

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Voluntary participation was emphasized, allowing participants to withdraw from the study at any time without facing negative repercussions. The study was designed to minimize potential psychological or emotional distress, particularly when addressing sensitive topics. These measures ensured that the research was conducted with the highest ethical standards and respect for participants' rights and well-being.

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# CHAPTER FOUR

# DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

## 4.1 Introduction

This study investigated the influence of social-economic determinants on girls' drop-out rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. Specifically, the study was guided by the following objectives: analyze the influence of household-level of income on the girls' drop-out rates from secondary school in Mariani Ward, to analyze the influence of parental education status on girls' drop-out rates from secondary school in Mariani Ward and to analyze the influence of family structure on girls' dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward. The primary data was analysed in the form of descriptive statistics and inferential in determining the relationship between the social-economic determinants and girls' dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward. The results and interpretations of the analyses were described in this segment.

## 4.2 Response Rate

Table 4.1 **Study Response Rate**

| Questionnaires | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Questionnaires completed and returned | 370 | 96.1 |
| Not Returned | 15 | 3.9 |
| Total Questionnaires distributed | 385 | 100.0 |

Source: Research Data (2024)

Table 4.1 shows that study achieved a response rate of 96.1%, with 370 out of 385 distributed questionnaires completed and returned. The remaining 15 questionnaires, representing 3.9%, were not returned. This high response rate significantly surpasses the 70% benchmark considered excellent by Mugenda and Mugenda (2019).

The exceptional response rate can be attributed to several factors. Rigorous follow-up procedures and timely reminders were implemented to encourage the completion and return of the

questionnaires. The study's relevance to the participants' experiences likely increased their motivation to engage with the survey. Additionally, clear instructions and an accessible data collection process, along with ensuring confidentiality and emphasizing the importance of their responses, contributed to the high rate of completed and returned questionnaires.

### 4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

#### 4.3.1 Level of Education

The research also wanted to determine the respondents' educational level of the respondents in Mariani Ward. The attained results were deliberated and are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 **Highest Level of Education**

| Education Level | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Degree | 19 | 5.1 | 5.1 |
| Primary | 137 | 37.0 | 42.2 |
| Secondary | 124 | 33.5 | 75.7 |
| Diploma | 82 | 22.2 | 97.8 |
| Post Graduate | 8 | 2.2 | 100.0 |
| **Total** | **370** | **100.0** | |

*Source: Research Data (2024)*

The findings from Table 4.2 reveal a diverse range of educational backgrounds among female school dropouts in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. Specifically, 37.0% of the respondents had only primary education, 33.5% had secondary school education, 22.2% held a diploma, 5.1% had an undergraduate degree, and 2.2% had a master's degree. This distribution indicates that while a significant portion of the dropouts had only primary or secondary education, there were also respondents with higher levels of education, such as diplomas and undergraduate degrees.

The predominance of dropouts with primary education (37.0%) suggests that early school leavers are more likely to have only completed basic education, reflecting possibly greater socio-economic barriers at earlier stages of their educational journey. The substantial percentage of dropouts with secondary education (33.5%) indicates that dropout rates are not confined to those with minimal education but also affect those who have progressed to higher education levels, pointing to potential issues that arise as students advance in their schooling. The presence of respondents with diplomas (22.2%) and even higher degrees (7.3%) among dropouts underscores

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that the factors leading to dropout are multifaceted and can affect students across different educational stages.

This distribution aligns with findings from various studies that report differing levels of education among dropouts. For example, Vázquez-Nava et al. (2019) noted that dropout rates span across different educational backgrounds, with a considerable number from lower educational levels. In contrast, Muthoki (2015) observed predominantly lower educational levels among dropouts, highlighting a more limited scope of educational attainment in their sample. The presence of higher education levels among dropouts in this study suggests that dropout issues extend beyond just the basic educational stages, indicating that factors influencing dropout rates affect students who have progressed beyond primary education as well.

The overarching implication of these findings (1) is that socio-economic factors influencing dropout rates in Mariani Ward are intricate and affect students at different stages of their educational journey. This emphasizes the necessity for targeted interventions that address not only early educational barriers, but also those that emerge as students' progress through their schooling. It highlights the importance of comprehensive support systems that can assist students throughout their educational path this includes financial aid, parental support and academic counselling. Addressing these factors holistically is crucial for reducing dropout rates and ensuring educational persistence among girls in Mariani Ward; however, it requires a concerted effort from various stakeholders because the challenges faced are multifaceted. Although significant progress can be made, it is essential to recognize that sustainable solutions take time and collaboration.

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### 4.3.2Age of Respondents

The researcher wanted to know the distribution of the age bracket of female school girls who dropped-out in Mariani Ward. Findings were summarized and shown in Table 4. 3.

Table 4.3 **Age Bracket of Respondents**

| Age bracket | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| 18-27 | 6 | 1.6 | 1.6 |
| 28-37 | 49 | 13.2 | 14.9 |
| 38-47 | 112 | 30.3 | 45.1 |
| 48-57 | 114 | 30.8 | 75.9 |
| Above 57 | 89 | 24.1 | 100.0 |
| **Total** | **370** | **100.0** | |

*Source: Research Data (2024)*

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The age distribution of female school dropouts in Mariani Ward, as depicted in Table 4.3, reveals that a substantial proportion of respondents are in the older age brackets, with 30.3% aged 38-47 years and 30.8% aged 48-57 years. Only a small fraction, 1.6%, is between 18-27 years, indicating that many dropouts have been out of school for an extended period. This suggests that dropout issues persist over time, potentially affecting women who left school years ago.

These findings suggest that dropout rates are not confined to the younger age group but also impact older women, who may have left school due to socio-economic challenges years earlier. This trend contrasts with Muthoki (2015) which primarily focused on younger students, and highlights a broader demographic affected by dropout rates. The presence of a significant number of older dropouts in this study indicates that dropout issues extend beyond immediate educational concerns, reflecting long-term socio-economic challenges that have persisted over time.

The broad age range of dropouts underscores the enduring nature of educational challenges and suggests that socio-economic factors contributing to school dropout rates have long-term effects. This distribution implies that interventions to address dropout rates should not only target current students but also consider the needs of older individuals who dropped out years ago. This approach can inform policy and program development aimed at providing support and opportunities for re-engagement in education or vocational training for all age groups affected by dropouts. Addressing these issues holistically can contribute to better educational and socio-economic outcomes in Mariani Ward, ultimately supporting broader efforts to mitigate the impact of school dropout rates across different age groups.

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### 4.3.3 Marital Status of Respondents

The researcher wanted to know the d istribution of the age bracket of female school girls who dropped-out in Mariani Ward. Findings were summarized and shown in Table 4.4

Table 4.4 **Marital Status of Respondents**

| Marital Status | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Married | 174 | 47.0 | 47.0 |
| Single and never married | 122 | 33.0 | 80.0 |
| Widowed | 13 | 3.5 | 83.5 |
| Divorced | 36 | 9.7 | 93.2 |
| Separated | 25 | 6.8 | 100.0 |
| **Total** | **370** | **100.0** | |

*Source: Research Data (2024)*

The descriptive study in Table 4.4 above describes the marital status of respondents with the majority of the respondents 47.0% being married and 33.0% were single and have been never married. In addition to this, a minority of the respondents at 9.7% was divorced and 6.8% were separated while 3.5% were widowed. The demographic results regarding marital status reveal a varied landscape of family dynamics among the respondents. The predominance of married respondents might suggest a focus on stable family environments, while the significant presence of single, divorced, separated, and widowed individuals highlights the diverse socio-economic challenges that can influence girls' drop-out rates from secondary schools.

### 4.3.4 Religion of Respondents

The study also sought to determine the respondent's religion status in Mariani ward. The obtained results were and presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 **Religion of Respondents**

| Religion of Respondents | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Christian | 315 | 85.1 | 85.1 |
| Muslim | 45 | 12.2 | 97.3 |
| Others | 10 | 2.7 | 100.0 |
| **Total** | **370** | **100.0** | |

*Source: Research Data (2024)*

Findings in Table 4.5 indicate that the majority of respondents of female school girls who droped-out in Mariani Ward 85.1% are practicing Christianity while only 12.2% are practicing Muslim. The religious demographics of the respondents, with a significant majority practicing Christianity (85.1%) and a smaller portion practicing Islam (12.2%), provide essential context for understanding the socio-economic determinants influencing girls' drop-out rates in Mariani Ward. The predominance of Christian respondents suggests that most cultural and socio-economic factors will be within a Christian context, but it is crucial to consider the distinct influences and practices within the Muslim minority as well. This comprehensive understanding helps tailor educational interventions and policies to address the specific needs and challenges faced by both religious groups, ultimately aiming to reduce drop-out rates among female students in the region.

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### 4.4 Analysis of Study Objectives

The study investigated the influence of household-level of income, parental education status and family structure on girls' dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward. The descriptive statistics for the predictor variables are presented in this segment.

#### 4.4.1 Household-level of income and Dropout rates

The study assessed the influence household-level of income on girls' dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward. Four Items captured the idea of household-level of income and the participants rated their responses on a scale of 1 to 5. In this scale 1- Strongly Disagree; 2-Disagree; 3-Neutral; 4-Agree; 5- Strongly agree respectively. The results are shown in Table 4.6

Table 4.6 **Household Level of Income**

| Statement | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Household income significantly affects girls' dropout rates from secondary schools | 44% | 41% | 4% | 8% | 3% |
| Financial constraints faced by girls in your community are a barrier to their continued education. | 46% | 34% | 15% | 3% | 2% |
| Financial support programs helps in reducing girls' dropout rates due to financial challenges | 38% | 34% | 9% | 10% | 9% |
| Reducing income disparities within the community can help reduce girls' school dropout rates | 41% | 32% | 12% | 9% | 6% |

From Table 4.6 above, household level of income variable was operationalized into four sub-variables. Descriptive statistical analyses showed that approximately 85% of the respondents agreed on the statement that household income significantly affects girls' dropout rates from secondary schools. This implies household level of income contribute much in dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani ward and our real society in general. Approximately 80% of the respondents agreed with the statement that financial constraints faced by girls in your community are a barrier to their continued education. These findings underscore the importance of targeted financial support, community interventions, and government policies to reduce financial barriers

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and promote the sustained educational participation of girls. By addressing these economic barriers, the community can work towards ensuring that all girls have the opportunity to complete their education and contribute to the socio-economic development of Mariani Ward.

Also 72% of the respondents agreed with the statement that financial support programs helps reduce girls' dropout rates due to financial challenges. These findings highlight the necessity of implementing and expanding financial support initiatives to address economic barriers and ensure that girls in Mariani Ward have the opportunity to complete their education. By providing targeted financial aid and comprehensive support, stakeholders can work towards reducing dropout rates and promoting the sustained educational participation of girls, ultimately contributing to the socio-economic development of the community. Approximately 73% of the respondents agreed with the statement that reducing income disparities within the community can help reduce girls' school dropout rates. These results highlight the importance of addressing income disparities through economic interventions, comprehensive social programs, and community-based initiatives to create a more equitable environment for education.

By reducing income disparities, stakeholders can help ensure that all girls in Mariani Ward have the opportunity to complete their education, ultimately contributing to the socio-economic development of the community. The descriptive statistical analyses reveal a strong consensus among respondents that household income significantly affects girls' dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward. This finding aligns with previous research by Farah and Upadhyay (2017), affirming that economic constraints are a critical determinant of educational outcomes for girls. Addressing these financial barriers through targeted interventions, support services, and advocacy can help reduce dropout rates and promote sustained educational participation for girls, ultimately contributing to the socio-economic development of the community.

The findings from Table 4.6 above are confirmed by key informant discussions, which revealed that household income level affects girls' ability to stay in school. In the key informant discussions, one female parent explained,

> "*Low-income households often prioritize basic needs over education, which results in girls being pulled out of school to assist with household chores or to work and contribute to the family income*."

A community leader similarly observed,

> "*For many low-income families, the opportunity cost of sending a girl to school is high. They frequently need their daughters to work in the fields, help with family businesses, or take care of younger siblings, which contribute to higher dropout rates.*"

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Overall, the study indicates a significant relationship between household income and girls' dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward, supported by both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative analysis revealed that a large majority of respondents acknowledged the impact of financial constraints on dropout rates, while qualitative insights from key informant discussions reinforced this by highlighting how low-income families often prioritize immediate economic needs over education. Previous studies corroborate these findings, emphasizing the role of economic factors in educational outcomes. Broadly, these insights underline the urgent need for financial support programs and interventions to mitigate income-related barriers, which is crucial for improving educational persistence and contributing to the socio-economic advancement of the community.

### 4.4.2 Parental education status and Dropout rates

The study assessed the influence of parental education status on girls' dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward. Four Items captured the idea of parental education status and the participants rated their responses on a scale of 1 to 5. In this scale 1- Strongly Disagree; 2-Disagree; 3-Neutral; 4-Agree; 5- Strongly agree respectively. The results are shown in Table 4.7

Table 4.7 **Parental Education Status and Dropout Rates**

| **Statement** | **5** | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parental education levels are significant on girls' dropout rates from secondary schools. | 40% | 38% | 7% | 10% | 5% |
| Parental involvement is vital in the academic lives of girls to prevent dropout. | 38% | 41 % | 9% | 8% | 4% |
| Supportive educational environment at home influence girls' educational persistence | 36% | 30% | 9% | 17% | 8% |
| Parental attitudes toward education affect girls' decisions to continue or discontinue their schooling | 32% | 40% | 9% | 7% | 12% |

From Table 4.7 above, parental education status variable was operationalized into four sub-variables. Descriptive statistical analyses showed that over 78% of the respondents agreed with the statement that parental education levels are significant in girls' dropout rates from secondary



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schools. These findings suggest that improving parental education and engaging parents in their children's schooling can be effective strategies to reduce dropout rates. By addressing both the educational and socio-economic challenges faced by families, stakeholders can work towards creating a more supportive and equitable educational environment for girls in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya.

The results, indicating that over 79% of respondents agree on the vital role of parental involvement in preventing girls' dropout, highlight the critical impact of parents' engagement in their children's education. These findings suggest that initiatives aimed at increasing parental involvement can be highly effective in reducing dropout rates. By addressing barriers to involvement and providing support and resources to parents, stakeholders can work towards ensuring that girls in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, have the necessary support to complete their secondary education successfully.

Also 66% of the respondents agreed with the statement that a Supportive educational environment at home influences girls' educational persistence. This highlights the critical role of the home environment in sustaining education. These findings suggest that initiatives aimed at improving home support can be effective in reducing dropout rates. By working on the economic, educational, and emotional needs of families, interested parties can work towards creating an environment that fosters educational persistence for girls.

Approximately 72% of the respondents agreed on the statement that Parental attitudes toward education affect girls' decisions to continue or discontinue their schooling. These findings suggest that initiatives aimed at changing parental attitudes and promoting positive perceptions of education can be highly effective in reducing dropout rates. By addressing cultural, economic, and societal factors that influence parental attitudes, stakeholders can work towards creating a supportive environment that encourages girls to complete their secondary education. These findings align with previous research by Anlimachie & Avoada (2020) where approximately 50.9% of the students indicated that their parents' highest level of education was primary school, suggesting a lack of educational role models at home. Many students voiced complaints about the absence of academic guidance from their parents, which resulted in negative attitudes and low morale.

The findings from Table 4.7 above are confirmed by key informant discussions, which revealed that parental education status affect girls' ability to stay in school. One participant steadily reported

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"*Parents with higher education levels tend to understand the value of education better and often prioritize it for their children. They are more likely to encourage regular attendance and monitor their daughters' academic progress closely.*"

Another participant said

"*Educated parents are usually better equipped to help their children with homework and study-related tasks. This support can significantly improve a girl's performance in school by reinforcing what she learns in the classroom.* Highly educated parents typically have better economic stability, allowing them to provide the necessary resources such as textbooks, tutoring, and a conducive study environment at home. This contributes to better school attendance and academic performance."

The qualitative data suggest that parental education status plays a crucial role in influencing girls' ability to remain in school. Parents with higher education levels are more likely to recognize the importance of education, actively support their daughters' academic endeavors, and create an environment conducive to learning. This support extends to providing practical help with homework and ensuring access to educational resources, which enhances school attendance and performance.

The general conclusion drawn from the current qualitative and quantitative findings, supported by previous studies, is that parental education status significantly influences girls' dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward. Quantitative data reveal that a substantial majority of respondents recognize the critical impact of parental education, involvement, and home support on reducing dropout rates. Specifically, higher parental education levels, active parental involvement, and a supportive home environment are associated with lower dropout rates. Qualitative insights further emphasize that educated parents are better positioned to provide academic support, foster positive attitudes towards education, and create an environment that encourages educational persistence.

The broad implication of these findings is that improving parental education and engagement is essential for addressing and reducing girls' dropout rates. By enhancing parental education, providing support to families and promoting positive attitudes towards education, stakeholders can create a more supportive environment for girls. This approach not only addresses educational barriers but also contributes to the broader socio-economic development of Mariani Ward by ensuring that girls have the opportunity to complete their secondary education and achieve their full potential.

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### 4.4.3 Family structure and Dropout rates

The study assessed the influence of family structure on girls' dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward. Four Items captured the idea of family structure and the participants rated their responses on a scale of 1 to 5. In this scale 1- Strongly Disagree; 2- Disagree; 3-Neutral; 4-Agree; 5- Strongly agree respectively. The results are shown in Table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8 **Family structure and Dropout Rates**

| Statement | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Family unity and cohesion play vital role in preventing girls from dropping out of school. | 40% | 32% | 8% | 8% | 12% |
| Parental support and guidance is vital in girls' educational persistence. | 41% | 31% | 15% | 7% | 6% |
| I believe that a girl's family structure impacts her decision to continue or discontinue her education | 30% | 34% | 10% | 12% | 16% |
| Parental monitoring is influential in preventing school dropout among girls | 41% | 32% | 8% | 14% | 5% |

From Table 4.8 above, the family structure variable was operationalized into four sub-variables. Descriptive statistical analyses showed that 72% of the respondents agreed with the statement that family unity and cohesion play a vital role in preventing girls from dropping out of school. These results indicate that most of the respondents agree on the significant role of family unity and cohesion in preventing girls from dropping out of school, highlighting the critical impact of a supportive family environment. These findings suggest that initiatives aimed at strengthening family cohesion can be effective in reducing dropout rates. By addressing economic, social, and emotional factors that influence family dynamics, stakeholders can work towards creating a supportive environment that encourages girls to complete their secondary education successfully.

The results also indicate that 72% of respondents agree on the vital role of parental support and guidance in girls' educational persistence, highlighting the critical impact of parental involvement. These findings suggest that initiatives aimed at enhancing parental support and guidance can be effective in reducing dropout rates. In addressing economic, educational, and social barriers that hinder parental involvement, stakeholders can work towards creating an environment that encourages girls to complete their secondary education successfully.

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The results, demonstrating that 64% of respondents agree on the influence of family structure on girls' decisions to continue or discontinue their education, highlight the significant role that family dynamics play in educational persistence. These findings propose that initiatives aimed at supporting different family structures can be effective in reducing dropout rates. Through addressing economic, emotional, and social factors that influence family stability thus creating an environment that encourages girls in Mariani Ward to complete their secondary education successfully. Similarly, 74% of respondents agreed on the influence of parental monitoring in preventing school dropout among girls, highlighting the critical impact of active parental oversight. These findings suggest that initiatives aimed at enhancing parental monitoring can be effective in reducing dropout rates.

The findings from Table 4.8 above are confirmed by key informant discussions, which discovered that family structure influences girls' ability to stay in school. The school head-teacher reported :

> "*Girls from single-parent families often face higher dropout rates due to economic constraints and limited parental supervision and support. The single parent may struggle to balance work and provide adequate academic support.*"

The key informant discussion underscores that girls from single-parent households experience higher dropout rates due to economic constraints and insufficient parental supervision and support. The conclusion drawn from the key informant discussion is corroborated by the quantitative data presented in Table 4.8, which reveals that family structure significantly influences girls' dropout rates from secondary schools. The data suggest a clear relationship between family structure and dropout rates, particularly highlighting the challenges faced by girls from single-parent families. The quantitative analysis shows a substantial impact of family structure on educational outcomes, aligning with the qualitative insights that economic constraints and limited parental supervision contribute to higher dropout rates. This correlation emphasizes that girls from single-parent households are more likely to face difficulties in maintaining consistent school attendance and academic performance, which ultimately leads to higher dropout rates. Therefore, both the qualitative and quantitative findings collectively highlight the critical need for targeted support and interventions to address the specific challenges faced by students from single-parent families. These findings for family structures align with Reynolds and Ou (2011) that cohesive and united family environments provide emotional and psychological stability for children, which is linked to higher educational engagement and persistence. They further asserted that supportive

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family environment often correlates with higher school attendance and lower dropout rates among girls, as stable family relationships foster a sense of security and motivation to succeed academically.

## 4.5 Inferential statistics

### 4.5.1 Correlation Analysis between Household-level of income and Dropout rates

Household-level of income was operationalized into four ordinal items, and a Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationship between household income and girls' dropout rates from secondary schools. The correlation analysis as shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9**Correlation Analysis between Household-level of Income and Dropout Rates**

| | | **Level of income** | **Dropout rates** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Level of income** | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .684** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 370 | 370 |
| **Dropout rates** | Pearson Correlation | .684** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 370 | 370 |

Table 4.9 displays the results of the correlation analysis between household-level income and girls' dropout rates from secondary schools. The Spearman's rank correlation coefficient is 0.684, and the p-value is 0.000, which is below the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. This indicates a significant positive correlation between household-level income and dropout rates.

The strong positive correlation suggests that lower household income is associated with higher dropout rates among girls in Mariani Ward. As income levels decrease, the likelihood of girls dropping out of secondary school tends to increase. This relationship highlights the impact of economic constraints on educational persistence. Lower income households may struggle to cover school-related costs and may require girls to contribute to family income, which can lead to higher dropout rates.

This finding is consistent with previous research, which has demonstrated that economic constraints are a significant factor contributing to school dropout rates. For example, studies by Farah and Upadhyay (2017) have highlighted how financial difficulties can impede educational persistence, leading to higher dropout rates. Similarly, Muthoki (2015) found that economic

challenges disproportionately affect students from low-income households, resulting in increased dropout rates. The significant correlation in this study underscores the critical need for targeted financial support and interventions to mitigate the impact of economic barriers on education. By addressing these financial pressures, stakeholders can work towards reducing dropout rates and improving educational retention among girls in this community, aligning with broader efforts to promote equitable educational opportunities.

### 4.5.2 Correlation Analysis between Parental education status and Dropout rates

Parental education status was assessed using four ordinal items, which were analyzed by calculating the overall median of the responses. This approach was chosen because the data were measured on an ordinal scale, making the median the most appropriate measure of central tendency for summarizing the responses. This methodology is crucial in this study as it accurately reflects the central tendency of respondents' perceptions of parental education status, ensuring that the analysis captures the relevant trends and associations with dropout rates. The findings from this analysis are summarized in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10**Correlation Analysis between Parental education status and Dropout rates**

| | | **Parental education status** | **Dropout rates** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Parental education status** | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .547** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 370 | 370 |
| **Dropout rates** | Pearson Correlation | .547** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 370 | 370 |

Table 4.10 presents the results of the correlation analysis between parental education status and girls' dropout rates from secondary schools. The Spearman's rank correlation coefficient is 0.547, with a p-value of 0.000, which is below the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. This indicates a significant positive correlation between parental education status and dropout rates.

The strong positive correlation suggests that as parental education levels decrease, the dropout rates among girls in Mariani Ward tend to increase. This relationship implies that lower parental education is associated with higher dropout rates. Specifically, parents with lower educational attainment may have a reduced capacity to support and encourage their children's educational endeavors, which can contribute to higher dropout rates. The use of the median in

summarizing the ordinal data from the four items accurately reflects the central tendency of respondents' perceptions of parental education status, ensuring that the analysis captures the core trends and associations relevant to dropout rates.

Qualitative data from the study further supports these findings. One participant observed, "*Parents with lower education levels often struggle to provide the necessary academic support, which can lead to their children falling behind and eventually dropping out*." Another participant noted, "*Educated parents are more likely to be involved in their children's education, offering guidance and resources that help prevent dropout*."

These qualitative insights underscore the critical role of parental education in influencing educational outcomes and highlight how lower educational attainment among parents can limit their ability to support their children's academic success.

These findings align with previous research, which underscores the critical role of parental education in influencing students' academic persistence. Studies have consistently shown that parents with higher education levels are more likely to prioritize their children's education and provide essential academic support (Farah & Upadhyay, 2017). In contrast, lower parental education often correlates with diminished academic guidance and support, which can lead to increased dropout rates.

Overall, the findings from Table 4.10 confirm the significant impact of parental education status on girls' dropout rates. This reinforces the importance of targeting interventions that improve parental educational support and resources. By enhancing parental education and engagement, stakeholders can help reduce dropout rates and support the continued educational participation of girls in Mariani Ward.

### 4.5.3 Correlation Analysis between family structure and Dropout

Family structure as a variable had four items which were in ordinal form and were transformed by taking the overall median of the responses. The median of the scale of 1 to 5 was the most appropriate because the data was on an ordinal scale. Table 4.11 below summarizes the findings.

Table 4.11 **Correlation Analysis between family structure and Dropout**

| | | **Family structure** | **Dropout rates** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Family structure** | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .761** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |



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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | N | 370 | 370 |
| **Dropout rates** | Pearson Correlation | .761** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 370 | 370 |

Table 4.11 presents Spearman's rank correlation analysis, showing a test statistic value of 0.761 with a corresponding p-value of 0.000. Given that the p-value is below the significance level of 0.05, there is strong evidence to suggest a high association between family structure and girls' dropout rates from secondary school in Mariani Ward. This result indicates a significant positive relationship, implying that variations in family structure are closely linked to increased dropout rates.

The strong positive correlation between family structure and dropout rates suggests that variations in family dynamics, such as single-parent households or complex family arrangements, are closely associated with higher dropout rates among girls. Qualitative data from the study supports this conclusion, with one respondent noting, "*The lack of a stable family environment made it very difficult for me to stay focused on my studies*," while another added, "*Being raised in a single-parent household with limited resources was a significant challenge that affected my ability to continue with school*." The transformation of family structure data into an ordinal scale and the use of median values were suitable, providing a robust measure of this relationship and reinforcing the significant influence of family dynamics on educational outcomes.

These findings imply that interventions aimed at reducing dropout rates should consider family structure as a critical factor. Support programs tailored to specific family dynamics, such as counseling and resources for single-parent families or families with complex arrangements, could help mitigate the dropout risk. Additionally, these insights underscore the need for targeted support strategies that address the challenges faced by families with adverse structures. By addressing these specific family-related challenges, policymakers and educators can develop more effective strategies to improve school retention and educational outcomes for girls, particularly in contexts with similar socio-economic and family-related challenges

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### 4.6 Model Parameter Estimates

#### 4.6.1 Parameter Estimates on the influence of social-economic determinants on girls' drop-out rates

This section employs binomial logistic regression to assess the influence of socio-economic determinants on girls' dropout rates, a binary outcome categorized as "yes" (dropout) or "no" (no dropout). Binomial logistic regression is appropriate here due to the binary nature of the dependent variable, allowing for the modeling of the probability of dropout based on various predictor variables. The model estimates the odds of dropout associated with changes in predictors such as household-level income, parental education status, and family structure. Table 4.12 summarizes these parameter estimates, offering insights into how each socio-economic factor affects the likelihood of girls dropping out of school and highlighting areas for potential intervention.

Table 4.12**Model Parameter Estimates on the influence of social-economic determinants on girls' drop-out rates.**

| | B | Df | Sig. | Exp(B) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Household-level of income | 1.657 | 1 | .015 | 5.244 |
| Parental education status | 1.451 | 1 | .011 | 4.267 |
| Family structure | 1.221 | 1 | .024 | 3. 391 |
| Constant | 1.121 | 1 | .001 | 3.068 |

From the parameter estimates summarized in Table 4.12, several key insights into the factors influencing girls' dropout rates from secondary school in Mariani Ward emerge. Firstly, the coefficient for household-level income is 1.657, with a p-value of 0.015. This result indicates that a one-unit increase in household income is associated with a 5.244 times higher likelihood of girls dropping out of school. The positive and statistically significant coefficient reflects a strong association between lower household income and higher dropout rates. This finding underscores the critical role of economic constraints in educational persistence, suggesting that financial hardships significantly contribute to the increased dropout rates observed among girls.

In addition, the coefficient for parental education status is 1.451, with a p-value of 0.011. This suggests that a one-unit increase in parental education status correlates with a 4.267 times higher likelihood of girls dropping out of secondary school. The result highlights the substantial influence of parental education on dropout rates. Higher levels of parental education are typically associated with better academic support and encouragement. Conversely, lower parental education

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may limit parents' ability to provide such support, thereby increasing dropout rates among their children.

Furthermore, the coefficient for family structure is 1.221, with a p-value of 0.024. This implies that girls from certain family structures face a 3.391 times higher likelihood of dropping out of school. The positive and statistically significant coefficient indicates that variations in family structure, such as single-parent families or complex family arrangements, have a notable impact on dropout rates. Family dynamics significantly affect educational stability and support, contributing to higher dropout rates.

Lastly, the constant term has a coefficient of 1.121 with a p-value of 0.001. This result suggests that additional, unexamined factors beyond the socio-economic determinants analyzed also influence dropout rates. The positive coefficient (1.121) indicates that these other factors have a 3.068 times higher likelihood of affecting dropout rates. Identifying and understanding these additional factors will be crucial for developing comprehensive strategies to improve school retention and better support girls' educational outcomes.

The probability of the agreeing that the three social economic determinants have a positive influence on girls' drop-out rates from secondary school with reference to disagreeing is given by the binomial logistic regression model.

$$\log\frac{(P)}{(1-P)}=1.121+1.221(\text{Family Structure})+1.657(\text{Household Income Level})+1.451(\text{Parental Education Status})+\varepsilon$$

The findings from the binomial logistic regression analysis provide significant insights into the impact of socio-economic factors on girls' dropout rates from secondary school in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. The analysis reveals that lower household income, lower parental education status, and certain family structures are all positively associated with an increased likelihood of girls dropping out of school. Specifically, each of these factors significantly contributes to higher dropout rates, with the coefficients indicating that lower household income is associated with a 5.244 times higher likelihood, lower parental education status with a 4.267 times higher likelihood, and certain family structures with a 3.391 times higher likelihood of dropout.

These findings are consistent with previous research highlighting the crucial role of socio-economic factors in educational outcomes. For instance, studies have shown that financial constraints and limited educational support from parents often result in higher dropout rates (Muthoki, 2015; Anlimachie, & Avoada, 2020). In the present study, qualitative data further

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supports these results, with direct quotes from interviews indicating that financial difficulties and inadequate parental support are significant contributors to school dropout. One respondent mentioned, "*The lack of financial support from my parents made it impossible for me to continue my education*," while another stated, "*My parents' low educational background meant they couldn't help me with my schoolwork*."

Overall, binomial logistic regression analysis(Parameter Estimates) provides a detailed understanding of how socio-economic factors affect girls' dropout rates from secondary school in Mariani Ward. It confirms that lower household income, lower parental education, and certain family structures are strongly linked to higher dropout rates, aligning with previous research. However, this study uniquely quantifies the impact of each factor, notably finding household income to have the most significant effect, with a 5.244 times higher likelihood of dropout. These insights highlight the urgent need for targeted financial support, improved parental engagement, and tailored family services. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of exploring further unexamined factors to develop effective, context-specific strategies for reducing dropout rates.

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# CHAPTER FIVE

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the main findings of this study on the influence of social-economic determinants on girls' drop-out rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. It describes how household-level of income, parental education status and family structure influence girls' drop-out rates from secondary school in Mariani Ward. The chapter relates' findings and draws conclusions and makes recommendations and suggestions for further research centered on the findings.

## 5.2 Summary of Key Findings

The general objective of the study was to analyze the influence of social-economic factors on girls' drop-out rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. The specific objectives were to assess the influence of household-level of income, parental education status and family structure on girls' drop-out rates from secondary school in Mariani Ward. The survey conducted among female school dropouts in Mariani Ward revealed that the majority had attained at least a high school level of education, with 37.0% having primary education, 33.5% secondary education, 22.2% diploma level, 5.1% undergraduate degrees, and 2.2% master's degrees. This suggests that despite dropping out, many respondents were relatively literate and capable of providing valuable insights for the study. The age distribution showed a predominance of older adults, with 30.3% aged 38-47, 30.8% aged 48-57, and 24.1% over 57 years, while younger age groups were less represented. This demographic skew underscores the need for future studies to engage younger respondents more effectively to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issues.

Marital status data indicated that 47.0% of respondents were married, 33.0% single, 9.7% divorced, 6.8% separated, and 3.5% widowed, highlighting a diverse range of family dynamics influencing girls' education. Predominantly Christian (85.1%) with a smaller Muslim representation (12.2%), the religious context is essential for tailoring interventions to reduce dropout rates. The varied socio-economic challenges faced by different marital and religious groups illustrate the complex interplay of factors affecting educational outcomes. These insights are crucial for developing targeted strategies to support girls' education in Mariani Ward.

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### 5.2.1 Household Level of Income

The findings in Table 4.6 reveal a clear consensus among respondents that household income plays a significant role in girls' dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward, with over 85% agreeing on this point. Financial constraints were widely acknowledged as a key barrier to continuing education, as noted by over 80% of respondents. Furthermore, around 72% agreed that financial support programs can help address these challenges, underscoring the need for implementing and expanding such initiatives to reduce dropout rates and improve educational access for girls.

Additionally, over 73% of respondents believe that reducing income disparities within the community can help mitigate girls' school dropout rates. Key informant discussions further support these findings, revealing that low-income households often prioritize basic needs over education, leading to girls being pulled out of school to assist with household chores or work. These insights underscore the importance of targeted financial support, community interventions, and government policies to reduce financial barriers and promote sustained educational participation among girls, ultimately contributing to the socio-economic development of Mariani Ward.

### 5.2.2 Household Education Status

The findings presented in Table 4.7 indicate a strong consensus among respondents regarding the significant impact of parental education levels and involvement on girls' dropout rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. Over 78% of respondents agree on the importance of parental education levels, suggesting that improving parental education and involvement can effectively reduce dropout rates. Additionally, over 79% of respondents emphasize the vital role of parental involvement in preventing girls' dropout, highlighting the critical impact of parents' engagement in their children's education. Moreover, approximately 66% of respondents acknowledge the influence of a supportive educational environment at home on girls' educational persistence, underscoring the importance of initiatives aimed at improving home support to reduce dropout rates. Further, about 72% of respondents agree that parental attitudes toward education affect girls' decisions to continue or discontinue their schooling, suggesting the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at changing parental attitudes and promoting positive perceptions of education to mitigate dropout rates. These findings align with previous research and are

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confirmed by key informant discussions, emphasizing the need to address educational, economic, and cultural factors to create a supportive environment that encourages girls to complete their secondary education successfully.

### 5.2.3 Family Structure

The findings from Table 4.8 indicate a strong consensus among respondents regarding the significant role of family structure, unity, parental support, and monitoring in preventing girls from dropping out of school in Mariani Ward. Approximately 72% of respondents agree on the importance of family unity and cohesion, highlighting the critical impact of a supportive family environment in reducing dropout rates. Moreover, 72% also emphasize the vital role of parental support and guidance, suggesting that initiatives to enhance parental involvement can effectively mitigate dropout rates. Additionally, 64% of respondents acknowledge the influence of family structure on girls' decisions regarding education, proposing that initiatives supporting different family structures can help reduce dropout rates by addressing economic, emotional, and social factors. Similarly, approximately 74% agree on the influence of parental monitoring, indicating the effectiveness of initiatives to enhance parental oversight in reducing dropout rates. These findings are corroborated by key informant discussions, which reveal the challenges faced by girls from single-parent families and underscore the importance of family dynamics in girls' educational persistence. Overall, addressing economic, social, and emotional factors within families can create a supportive environment that encourages girls in Mariani Ward to complete their secondary education successfully.

The binomial logistic analysis further confirms the influence of these factors on girls' dropout rates, with estimate coefficients indicating a significant positive influence for household-level income, parental education status, and family structure. Additionally, the constant value suggests the presence of other unidentified factors positively influencing dropout rates. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of socio-economic determinants affecting girls' educational outcomes, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions addressing household income, parental education, and family structure to mitigate dropout rates effectively.

## 5.3 Conclusion of the Research Study

In conclusion, the research study conducted among female school dropouts in Mariani Ward sheds light on various socio-economic factors influencing educational outcomes in the community. The study concludes that lower household-level income significantly increases the likelihood of girls dropping out of school in Mariani Ward. The analysis reveals that financial constraints are a



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critical barrier to educational persistence, underscoring the need for targeted economic support programs to alleviate the financial burdens faced by families.

Secondly, the findings indicate that lower parental education status is strongly associated with higher dropout rates among girls. Families with less educated parents, particularly mothers, often provide less academic support and encouragement, which negatively impacts girls' educational outcomes. This highlights the need for initiatives that enhance parental education and engagement in their children's schooling.

The third conclusion is that variations in family structure, such as single-parent households or complex family dynamics, contribute significantly to dropout rates. Girls from such family structures face greater challenges that affect their educational stability and support. The findings emphasize the necessity for tailored support services addressing the specific needs of different family structures.

## 5.4 Recommendations of the Research Study

Based on the findings of the research study, several recommendations can be made to address the socio-economic factors contributing to girls' dropout rates in Mariani Ward. First of all, targeted financial support programs ought to be executed to alleviate the economic barriers faced by families, particularly those with lower household incomes. This could include scholarships, stipends, or subsidies to cover school fees, textbooks, uniforms, and other educational expenses. Additionally, income-generating activities or vocational training programs could be provided to parents to improve their economic stability and ability to support their daughters' education financially.

Secondly, initiatives to enhance parental involvement and support should be prioritized to create a conducive home environment for girls' education. This could involve workshops or seminars for parents on the importance of education, effective parenting strategies, and how to support their daughters academically and emotionally. School-based parent-teacher associations (PTAs) could also be strengthened to facilitate communication and collaboration between parents, teachers, and school administrators in addressing issues related to dropout prevention.

Furthermore, community-based interventions should be developed to promote family cohesion, positive parental attitudes towards education, and supportive social networks. This could include community outreach programs, mentorship initiatives, and awareness campaigns to change societal norms and perceptions regarding girls' education. Religious and traditional leaders could also play a vital role in advocating for girls' education and challenging harmful practices such as

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early marriage or gender-based discrimination. By fostering a supportive community environment that values and prioritizes girls' education, dropout rates can be reduced, and girls can be empowered to pursue their educational aspirations and contribute to the socio-economic development of Mariani Ward.

## 5.5 Areas for Further Studies

To enhance our understanding of the factors influencing girls' dropout rates in Mariani Ward, several areas for further research are recommended. First, conducting longitudinal studies would allow researchers to track girls' educational journeys from primary to secondary school, pinpointing critical moments of dropout and the long-term effects of socio-economic status and family dynamics.

Secondly, qualitative research methodologies like in-depth interviews and focus groups can be utilized to collect rich narratives from girls, parents, teachers and community members. These insights would reveal the complex socio-cultural and gender-related barriers that contribute to dropout rates; thus, facilitating the development of more tailored interventions. Furthermore, comparative studies that examine dropout rates across diverse communities could uncover specific contextual factors influencing educational outcomes. By contrasting areas with similar demographics, however, differing access to resources may be observed. Researchers can highlight the unique challenges faced by different communities because they provide a nuanced understanding of the educational landscape.

Lastly, cross-cultural comparisons with regions or countries experiencing similar educational challenges could provide valuable perspectives on effective strategies to support girls' education and promote gender equality. Together, these research avenues could inform evidence-based policies and programs aimed at addressing the root causes of girls' dropout rates in Mariani Ward and beyond.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix I: Consent Form

**TITLE OF THE STUDY: SOCIAL-ECONOMIC FACTORS AND SECONDARY SCHOOL DROPOUT AMONG GIRLS IN MARIANI WARD, THARAKA-NITHI COUNTY, KENYA**

**Consent to take part in research**

The researcher is a student at St. Paul's University carrying out research on Social-Economic Factors Affecting Girl's Drop-Out Rates from Secondary School in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya

The information provided will be treated in confidence and only used for the purpose of academic purpose. Kindly go through the consent form and only sign if you are comfortable with the conditions provided.

- I…… voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer

any question without any consequences of any kind.

- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the student's dissertation, conference presentation and published papers
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they

may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.

- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained by the researcher until the exam board confirms the results of their dissertation.

Signature of research participant

---------- ---------- Date----------

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

---

Date----------

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**Appendix II: Introductory letter**

Dear Respondent,
My name is Judy Wangu, a student at St. Paul's University, Limuru. I am carrying out a study on **'the Social-Economic Factors Affecting Girl's Drop-Out Rates from Secondary School in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya'**. I kindly request you to fill this questionnaire as a way of collecting the data needed. The information that you will give will be used for research purposes only.

**Appendix III: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GIRLS/FEMALES DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL**

Tick one box where appropriate

**SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

1. **Highest Level of education**

   Primary [ ] Secondary [ ] College/Diploma [ ] Degree [ ] Post Graduate [ ]

2. **Marital Status:**

Married ( ) Single and never married ( ) Widowed ( ) Divorced ( ) Separated ( )

3. **Indicate your age bracket:**

18-27 ( ) 28-37 ( ) 38-47 ( ) 48-57 ( ) and above 57 ( )

4. What is your religion? [tick where appropriate]

   Christian [__] Muslim [__] others (specify) …….

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**SECTION B: HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

This section seeks information on household income of of the girls who dropped out of high school. Rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements (1- Strongly Disagree; 2- Disagree; 3-Neutral; 4-Agree; 5- Strongly agree).

| | **Statement** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Household level of income** | | | | | |
| 1. | Household income significantly affects girls' dropout rates from secondary schools | | | | | |
| 2. | financial constraints faced by girls in your community is a barrier to their continued education. | | | | | |
| 3. | Financial support programs helps in reducing girls' dropout rates due to financial challenges | | | | | |
| 4. | Reducing income disparities within the community can help reduce girls' school dropout rates | | | | | |

.....

.....

.....

.....

**SECTION C: PARENTAL EDUCATION STATUS**

This section seeks information on household education status of of the girls who dropped out of high school. Rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements (1- Strongly Disagree; 2- Disagree; 3-Neutral; 4-Agree; 5- Strongly agree).

| | **Statement** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Household Level of education** | | | | | |
| 1. | Parental education levels are significant on girls' dropout rates from secondary schools. | | | | | |
| 2. | Parental involvement is vital in the academic lives of girls to prevent dropout. | | | | | |
| 3. | Supportive educational environment at home influence girls' educational persistence | | | | | |
| 4. | Parental attitudes toward education affect girls' decisions to | | | | | |

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| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | continue or discontinue their schooling | | | | | |

**SECTION D: FAMILY STRUCTURE**

This section seeks information on family structure of the girls who dropped out of high school. Rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements (1- Strongly Disagree; 2- Disagree; 3- Neutral; 4-Agree; 5- Strongly agree).

| | **Statement** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Family structure** | | | | | |
| 1. | Family unity and cohesion play vital role in preventing girls from dropping out of school. | | | | | |
| 2. | Parental support and guidance is vital in girls' educational persistence. | | | | | |
| 3. | I believe that a girl's family structure impacts her decision to continue or discontinue her education | | | | | |
| 4. | Parental monitoring is influential in preventing school dropout among girls | | | | | |

**SECTION E:** GIRLS' SECONDARY SCHOOLS DROPOUT

**Do you think that** social-economic determinants influence girls' drop-out rates from secondary schools in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya?

Yes [ ] No[ ]

**THANK YOU**

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**Appendix IV Interview Guide For KIIs**

The following interview guide was used to engage teachers and educational officers participating in the research. Their experience in the educational field was guided them towards digging deeper into the issues and offer the potential solutions to be considered.

1. In your experience, how does the household income level affect girls' ability to stay in school?
2. Can you share any specific examples or cases where household income directly influenced a girl's decision to drop out?
3. Are you aware of any financial support programs available for students in Mariani Ward?
4. How does the education level of parents impact their daughters' school attendance and performance?
5. Have you observed any differences in dropout rates between girls with highly educated parents and those with less educated parents?
6. How involved are parents in their children's education in this community?
7. What strategies do you use to engage parents in supporting their daughters' education?
8. How does the structure of a family (e.g., single-parent, extended family, polygamous family) impact girls' dropout rates?
9. What recommendations would you make to improve the secondary education system in Mariani Ward and reduce the drop-out rates of girls

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## Appendix IV Approval Letter

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Private Bag 00217 Limuru, Kenya
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Tel Office: +254 (0) 20- 2020505/10
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(0) 736-424440

**REF: SPU/205/2024** **Date: 29th July 2024**

**TO: Judy Gitari**
**St. Paul's University**

**Dear Judy,**

==========

**REF: Social-Economic Factors Affecting Secondary School Dropout among Girls in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya**

==========

Greetings,

This is to inform you that SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee has reviewed the above-named research proposal. **Your ERB approval number is 214, for the period between 29th July 2024 – 29th July 2025 (1 year).**

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments) will be used.
ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.
iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to SPU-Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee within 72 hours of notification
iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to *SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee* within 72 hours

v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.
**viii. Please note that it is within the ISERC's mandate to monitor your research and to do random visits to the site. All research is subject to post approval monitoring.**

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) ***https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke*** **and also obtain other clearances needed.**

Yours sincerely,

**Dr. Daniel Nzengya, PhD Chairperson**
**SPU- Institutional Scientific & Ethics Review Committee**

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY
(ISERC)
APPROVAL WITH
CONTIGENCIES
RESEARCH
DIRECTORATE
INSTITUTIONAL SCIENTIFIC ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

ST. PAU

**Appendix V: Research Permit**

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: 300823

Date of Issue: 12/August/2024

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Ms.. Judy Wangui Maina of Saint Paul University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Tharaka-Nithi on the topic: SOCIAL-ECONOMICFACTORS AFFECTING SECONDARY SCHOOL DROPOUT AMONG GIRLS IN MARIANI WARD, THARAKA-NITHI COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending : 12/August/2025.

License No: NACOSTI/P/24/38645

300823

Applicant Identification Number

Director General NATIONAL COMM... SCIE...

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**Appendix VI: Postgraduate Approval Letter**

# ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Private Bag 00217 LIMURU, KENYA
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**BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**

30th July, 2024

**National Commission for Science and Technology,**
**P.O. BOX 30623-00100,**
**Nairobi.**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: RECOMMENDATION FOR JUDY WANGU GITARI – MDSLMR138817 TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

This letter confirms the above-named person is a student in the Master of Development Studies (MDS) Program at St. Paul's University.

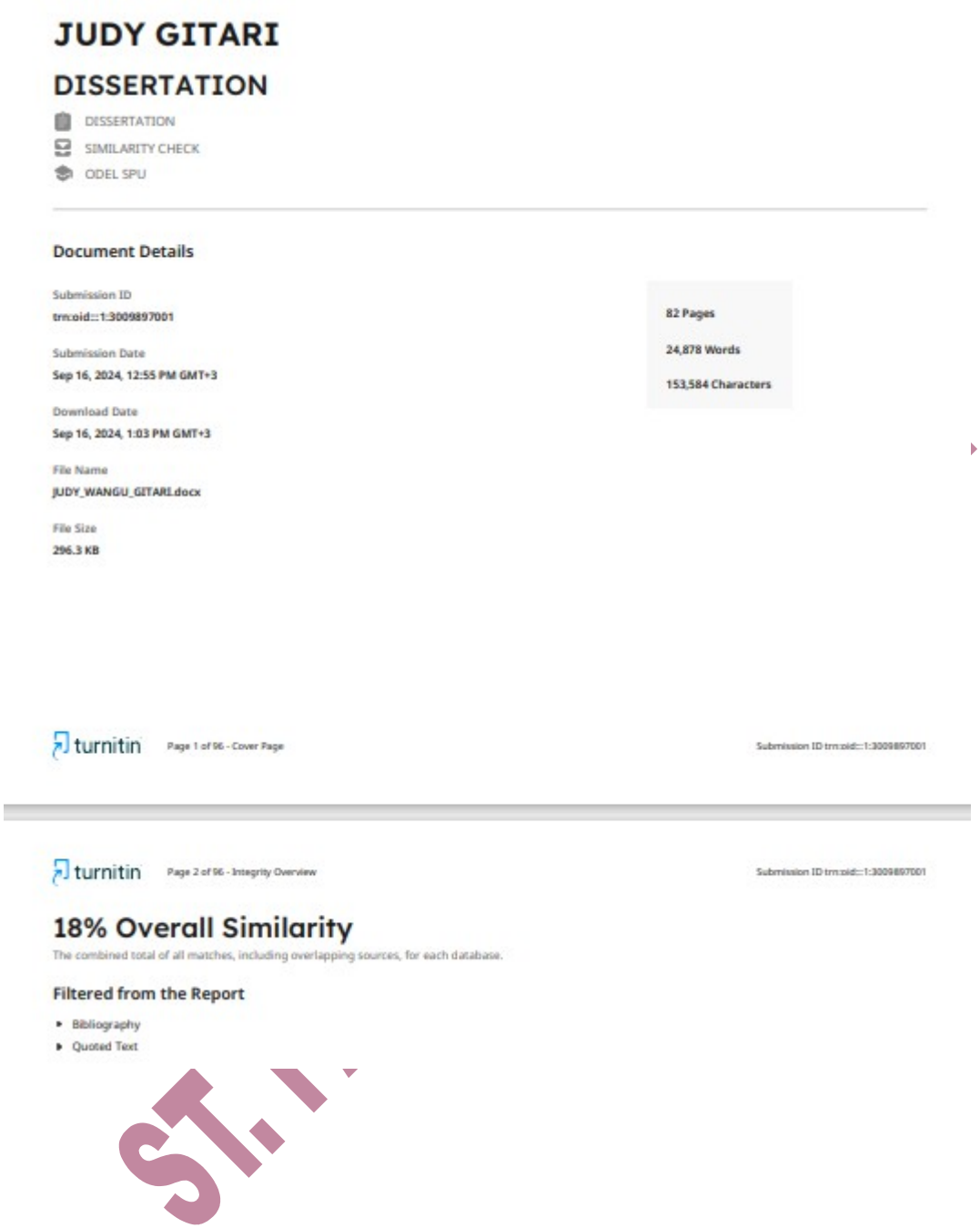
The second year consists of a major research work leading to a Thesis. The student's selected topic is:

***"Social-Economic factors affecting secondary school dropout among girls in Mariani Ward, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya."***

Kindly grant this student the required permit.

Dr. John Mutonyi
Director Board of Postgraduate Studies

## Appendix VII: Plagiarism Report



JUDY GITARI

DISSERTATION

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