

# Domestic work and girl child school drop outs: A case study of selected secondary schools in Kyamuhunga town council Bushenyi district

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores demographic and contextual factors influencing educational participation, with a focus on gender disparities and causes of girl child school dropouts. A significant gender imbalance was observed, with 93% male respondents and only 7% female, reflecting patriarchal societal norms that restrict female participation. Age distribution highlighted a concentration of respondents aged 20–30 years (34%), aligning with the study's emphasis on educational challenges among youth. Marital status data showed a predominance of unmarried respondents, correlating with the high student population. Religious affiliation revealed a Catholic majority (80%), with implications for education access shaped by religious norms. Key causes of girl child school dropouts were identified as poverty (100%), lack of girl-specific needs (97%), early marriages (67%), and peer pressure (40%). Poverty emerged as the dominant factor, supported by UNICEF findings, while unmet needs like menstrual hygiene supplies and early marriages significantly impacted education continuity for girls. Additionally, domestic work was shown to adversely affect girls' academic performance and psychological well-being. The study underscores the need for targeted interventions, including empowering students, motivating teachers, and enhancing learning resources. While consistent with existing research, addressing gender imbalances and incorporating perspectives from parents and teachers could enrich understanding and inform inclusive strategies.

**Keywords:** Gender Disparities, Girl Child Dropouts, Educational Barriers, Poverty and Education, Domestic Work Impact

## INTRODUCTION

Globally, the aspiration of every family and economy, whether in developed or developing countries, is to see the growing population succeed in educational achievement [1]. Education is recognized as a critical pathway to poverty alleviation and socio-economic development [2]. However, amidst this progress, a significant portion of the population—particularly girls—becomes engaged in domestic work, a factor that often goes unnoticed but substantially disrupts their educational pursuits [2]. Domestic work, a pervasive and multifaceted issue, directly hinders girls from achieving their educational goals, contributing to school dropouts and curbing their potential for socio-economic upliftment [3]. Educational attainment varies across countries due to factors such as the education system, cultural norms, family dynamics, rural or urban residency, socio-economic conditions, and the level of national development [4]. According to the International Labor Organisation, domestic work alone affects 215 million girls globally, leading to school dropouts [5]. While some regions, such as Asia, the Pacific, Latin

America, and the Caribbean, have seen decreases in child labor, the number of youth laborers aged 15 to 17 has risen from 52 million to 62 million over recent years [6].

Girl child school dropout refers to the inability of school-age girls to access or complete education that would develop their skills and knowledge [7]. This includes formal schooling, vocational training, and health education. Education for girls and boys alike is crucial for breaking cycles of poverty and fostering socio-economic development [8]. Despite its importance, girls' education faces numerous challenges, including socio-cultural biases and economic inequalities, which often divert girls into domestic labor [9]. The primary sector in which girls' domestic labor is concentrated includes agriculture, petty commercial activities, and household chores. These responsibilities disproportionately affect girls, often leading to their exclusion from educational opportunities [10]. A significant portion of child labor is performed within family businesses or as unpaid household work, which

negatively impacts both the social and educational development of these children [11]. In Africa, many school-age girls are forced into manual labor and exploitative activities, often over their physical limits. This represents a violation of their basic human rights and hinders the development of the skills and knowledge necessary for meaningful contributions to society [12].

In Uganda, the Constitution defines a child as anyone below 18 years of age. However, this age group constitutes the majority of those engaged in domestic work, often during school hours [1]. Studies on the causes and impacts of child labor largely focus on economic factors, neglecting the critical role of education in shaping the lives of affected children [13]. The Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development emphasizes the need to address this gap, particularly the impact of diverse forms of child labor on educational attainment. In Kyamuhunga Sub-County, there is evidence of girls dropping out of school due to their involvement in domestic work, tea picking, and petty street vending [1]. These activities are detrimental to educational attainment

and have been identified as significant barriers to reducing illiteracy in the region. Although boys are also affected, girls bear the brunt of these challenges, as socio-cultural norms often prioritize boys' education over girls'. Efforts to combat child labor are limited by insufficient law enforcement and a lack of awareness among officials about child rights and the evidence needed to prosecute such cases [14]. Despite some strides made since the 1970s to promote girls' education, retention and achievement rates for girls remain alarmingly low in Uganda and other African countries. Deep-rooted biases, economic disparities, and inadequate attention to gender equality in education continue to hinder progress [15] (National Girls' Education Strategy, 2010). The broad objective of this study is to examine the relationship between domestic work and school dropouts among girls in Kyamuhunga Sub-County. This research aims to explore the factors influencing girls' participation in education and to provide insights for creating more equitable education systems that address the unique challenges faced by girls.

### METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design

The descriptive research design was used. The descriptive sample survey design enabled the researcher to use both qualitative and quantitative techniques in collecting and analyzing and presenting the data on food storage and food security in Uganda.

#### Study population, sample size and selection strategy

The study was carried out in Kyamuhunga sub county, Bushenyi District in south western Uganda. The target population was comprised of 32

respondents, who were selected as community teachers, social worker (technical personnel), and students from three selected Secondary schools of Kyamuhunga Central Secondary school, St. Marys' Secondary school and St. Pauls' Secondary schools . The study population was selected using guided by Robert Krejcie & Morgan table [16]. All the above considered groups seemed to have the relevant information on domestic work and school dropouts in Ugandan context.

**Table 1: sample selection, size and strategies**

Category of respondents	Target population	Sample size	Strategy
Students	20	19	Convenience /random
Teachers	10	10	Purposive
Social workers	1	1	Purposive
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>30</b>	

#### Data collection

The basic methods the researcher used to collect Secondary data for the study was questionnaires, direct interviews. This was applied to all the respondents.

#### The questionnaire

The questionnaires was used because it collects information from many respondents in a projected time span. All respondents were asked the same question in as much as possible, and from options, the respondents picked the best alternatives. This was applied on the community members who knew how to read and interpret.

#### Direct interview

Interview in research can be described as the conversation with the purpose of obtaining valid and valuable information during the course of conversation. This was applied to the community and prominent farmers. Clarification as well took place to enable the interviewer to reveal his/her view point.

#### Validity of the study

Before they were administered, they were scrutinized by the supervisor. This ensured that the terms used in the questionnaire and interviews were precisely defined and properly understood.

#### Reliability of instruments

An instrument is reliable if it measures consistently what it is supposed to measure. The researcher used

a pilot study of at least 15 respondents from the neighboring Mashinga sub county where there is relatively similar households in terms of what entice girls of school going age to drop out of schools un willingly.

#### Data analysis

Data collected was manually coded and entered manually since the sample size was small and manageable. This enabled the researcher to identify missing values as developed from research objectives. The researcher was able to determine the frequency and percentages. This further enabled the researcher to relate the findings qualitatively and quantitatively. Data was analyzed manually since a small sample size of 30 respondents.

#### Ethical considerations.

The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents to gain confidence. When human beings are used as study participants in research investigations, care must be exercised in ensuring the

rights of those respondents is protected. The researcher consequently respected human dignity and consent not to reveal the identity of the respondents of the study. All questionnaires were addressed with a formal consent. The researcher observed Covid 19 guidelines to avoid the spread of virus.

#### Significances of the study

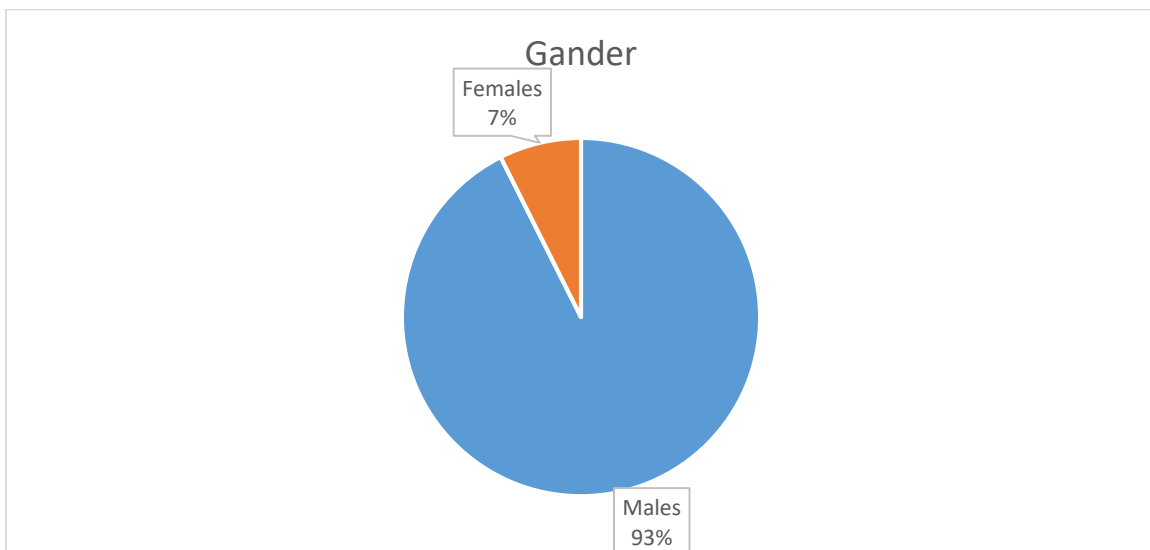
The study will assist the community in examining and adopting the appropriate food storage mechanism hence capable of fighting food insecurities. To the government, the study will help planners especially through ministry of agriculture to allocate appropriate technical and financial assistance to empower local farmers in food production. Generally, the study will play a significant role to future researchers to investigate more on fields of food storage methods, food security, food insecurity among others.

## RESULTS

### Social demographic characteristics of the respondents

#### Gender characteristics (composition)

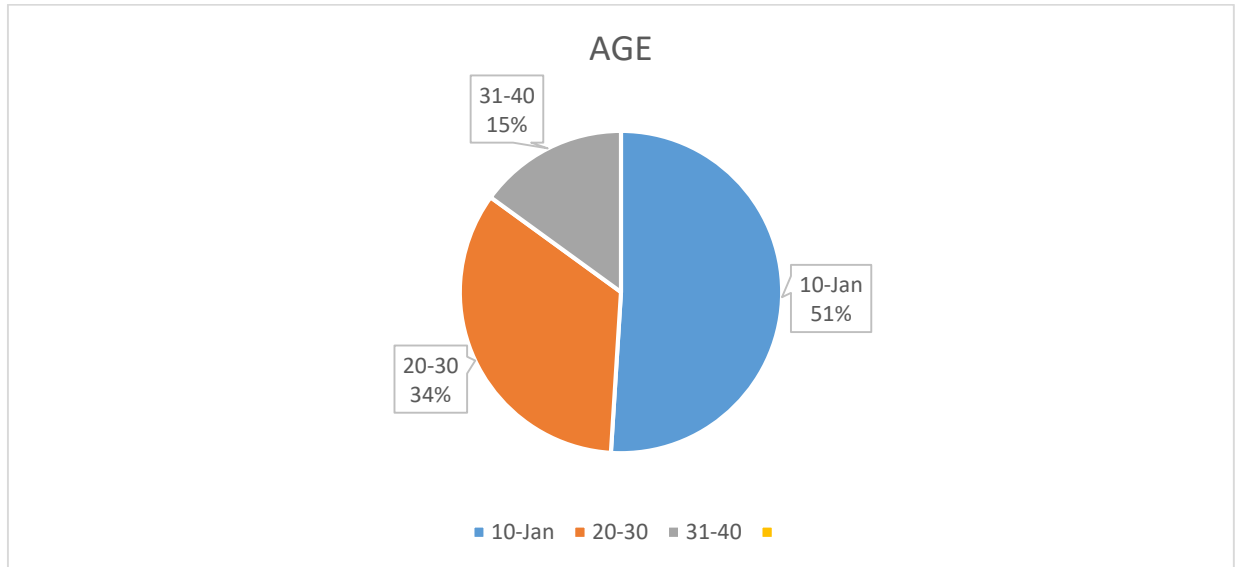
Figure 1: Sex composition of the respondents



The figure above revealed that 93% of the respondents were males while 7% were females. This

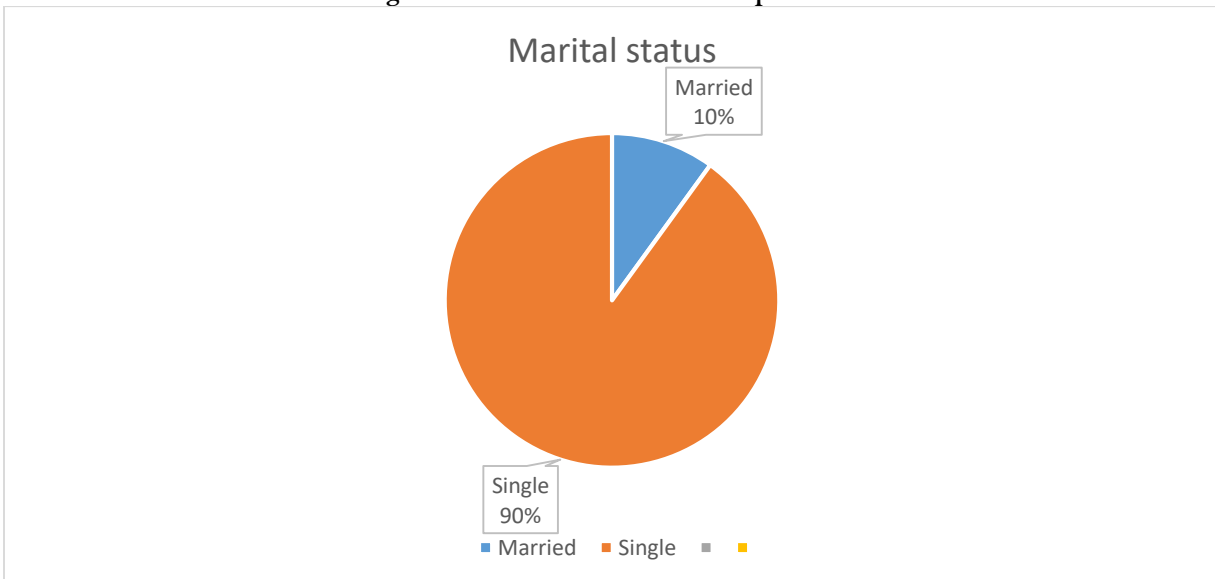
implied that majority of the respondents were males unlike females.

**Figure 2: Age bracket of the respondents**  
Only adults were considered during the study as tabulated below.



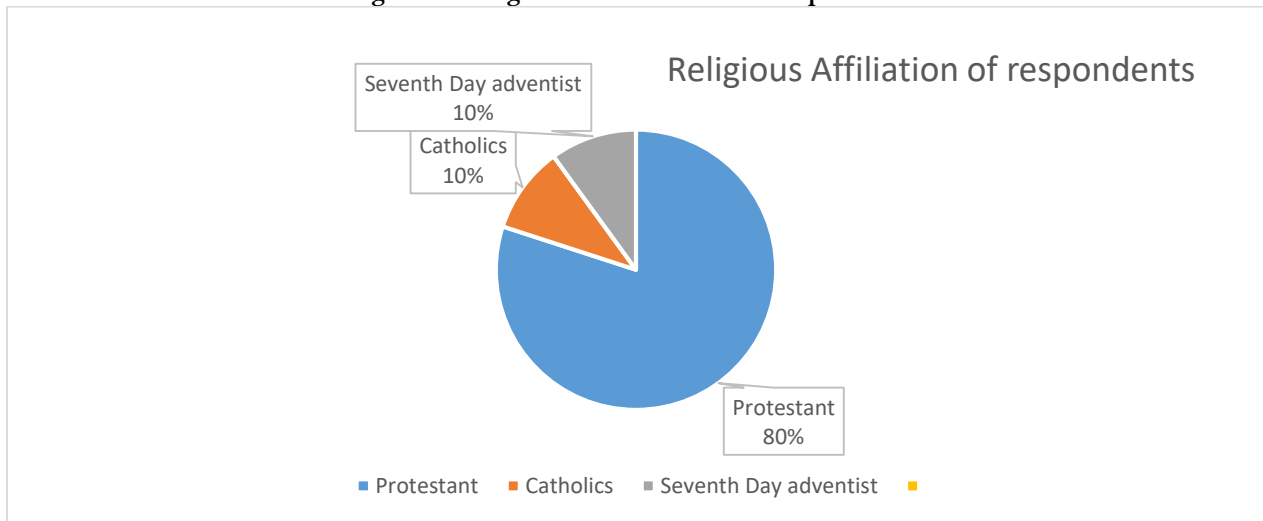
From the figure above, it was found out that 15% of the respondents were between 31-40, 15% were between 10-20 years, and 34% were between 20-30 years. This implies that the higher percentage of respondents were found to be students.

**Marital status of the respondents**  
**Figure 3: Marital status of the respondents**



From the figure above, it indicated that a bigger percentage of respondents were single while a smaller percentage were married. The high percentage of respondents being single was due to a bigger number of students who participated in the study.

**Figure 4: Religious affiliation of the respondents**

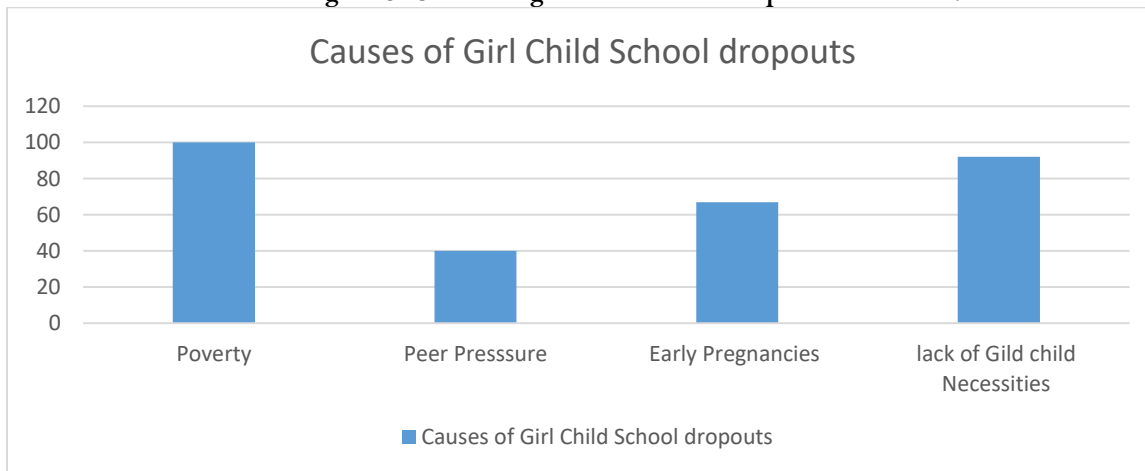


The religious affiliations of the respondents were as indicated above with Catholics 80% leading, closely followed by Protestants 10% seventh day 10.

**Causes of girl child school dropouts in schools.**

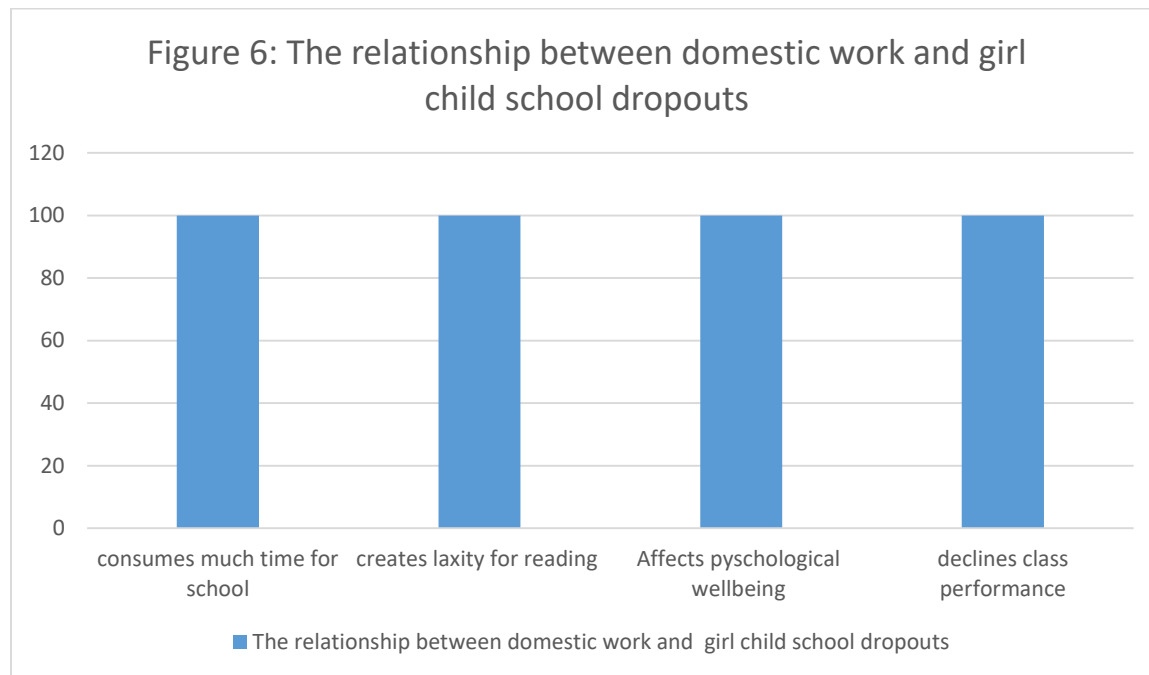
This was the objective one of the study to identify the causes of girl child school dropouts in secondary schools. . Responses solicited were tabulated in frequency and percentages as below;

**Figure 5: Causes of girl child school dropouts in schools.**



From the field data above, it was indicated that 100% agreed with poverty, 40% agreed with peer pressure,

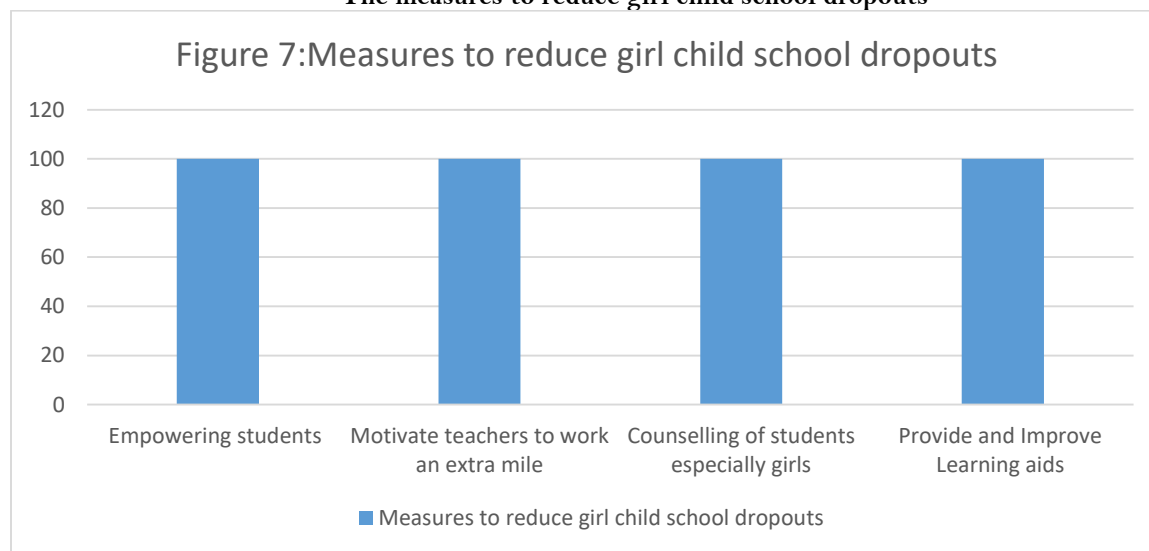
early marriages agreed with 67% and lack of gild child needs with 97%.



From the figure 6 above, it was found out that domestic work consumes much time for school, creates laxity and tiredness, and domestic work declines performance, affects psychological wellbeing

for girls, creates laxity and tiredness, and domestic work consumes much time for school.

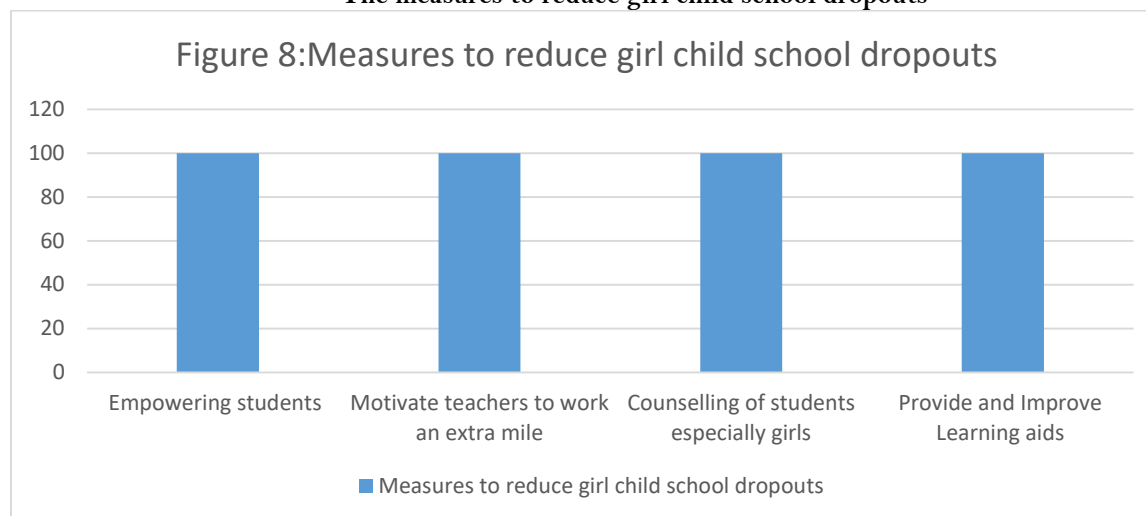
**The measures to reduce girl child school dropouts**



From the figure 7 above, it was found out that Empowering students mentally, motivating teachers to work hard, Counselling of students and providing

and improving learning aids were so paramount in improving the learning process after school re-opening.

### The measures to reduce girl child school dropouts



From the figure 8 above, it was found out that Empowering students mentally, motivating teachers to work hard, Counselling of students and providing

and improving learning aids were so paramount in improving the learning process after school re-opening.

### DISCUSSION

#### Gender Characteristics

The study revealed that 93% of the respondents were male, and only 7% were female, indicating a significant gender imbalance. This disparity could reflect a male-dominated environment in the study context, possibly influenced by cultural or social norms that limit female participation in such studies. Similar studies have found comparable patterns [17,18]. The study noted that male respondents were overrepresented in community-based surveys conducted in patriarchal societies, suggesting barriers for women such as time constraints or cultural restrictions. Addressing such imbalances is critical for inclusive research [19]

#### Age Composition

The age distribution revealed that the majority of respondents (34%) were aged 20–30 years, while 15% were aged 10–20 years, and another 15% were aged 31–40 years. The higher representation of younger age groups, particularly students, aligns with the study's objective of exploring issues like school dropouts, which predominantly affect younger demographics. Youth aged 15–25 constituted the bulk of respondents in educational research due to their direct engagement with academic institutions [19]. However, the study could benefit from including older stakeholders such as parents and teachers for a broader perspective.

#### Marital Status

The study showed that most respondents were single, correlating with the high student population (as students are often unmarried). This observation aligns with Khan et al., [20], who found that younger, single individuals are more likely to participate in studies related to educational

challenges. However, the marital status data might not fully represent broader societal dynamics and could limit insights into how family responsibilities influence school dropouts.

#### Religious Affiliation

An overwhelming majority (80%) of respondents identified as Catholics, followed by Protestants (10%) and Seventh-Day Adventists (10%). This reflects the dominant religious demographic of the study area, which can influence educational access and dropout patterns. Studies such as Thompson et al., [21] have emphasized the role of religious institutions in shaping attitudes toward education, especially for girls.

#### Causes of Girl Child School Dropouts

The study identified poverty (100%), lack of girl-specific needs (97%), early marriages (67%), and peer pressure (40%) as the primary causes of school dropouts. These findings align with existing literature. For instance, UNICEF reported that poverty is the leading cause of girl child dropouts, as families prioritize immediate financial needs over education. Similarly, Miuro et al., [22] highlighted how unmet needs like menstrual hygiene supplies severely affect school attendance for girls. Early marriages as a factor (67%) resonate with findings by Nguyen and Wodon [23], who showed a strong correlation between early marriages and educational discontinuity for girls, particularly in rural areas. Peer pressure (40%), though less significant, has been recognized as a secondary factor, as noted by Mugisha and Kobusingye [24].

## Relationship Between Domestic Work and Girl Child School Dropouts

The study revealed that domestic work leads to declines in academic performance, psychological distress, laxity, and exhaustion, consuming time that could otherwise be spent studying. This aligns with

### CONCLUSION

The findings of this study are consistent with similar research conducted in low-income settings. However, unique aspects such as the dominance of Catholics (80%) and specific dropout causes like lack of girl-specific needs highlight regional and contextual

[25], who identified the disproportionate domestic burden on girls as a major barrier to education. The study suggested several interventions, including: Empowering students mentally, motivating teachers, improving learning aids.

differences. While the study aligns with broader literature, addressing gaps like gender representation and including qualitative insights from teachers or parents could provide a more comprehensive understanding.

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