A SURVEY STUDY ON THE FACTORS THAT AFFECT GIRLS’ ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF ADDIS ABABA

BY
HAILU DINKA
ALAMIREW KUMILACHEW

The Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau
Department of Gender Mainstreaming

Sponsored by
United Nation Development Fund for Population Agency (UNFPA)

August, 2010
ADDIS ABABA
# Table of Contents

## Contents

Table of Contents ................................................................................................................................. 1

- List of Tables ................................................................................................................................. 3

- List of Figures ............................................................................................................................... 4

- Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... 5

- Appendices ....................................................................................................................................... 6

## CHAPTER ONE

1. **INTRODUCTION**

   1.1. THEORATICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY ..................................................................... 1

   1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM ....................................................................................... 7

   1.3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY ............................................................................................. 9

   1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY ....................................................................................... 9

   1.5. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY ......................................................................................... 10

   1.6. Limitations of the Study ..................................................................................................... 11

## CHAPTER TWO

2. **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

   2.1. GIRLS' EDUCATION .......................................................................................................... 12
2.2. GIRLS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT --------------------------------------------- 18
2.3. FACTORS AFFECTING GIRLS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT ---------------------- 19

CHAPTER THREE

3. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

3.1. SAMPLING TECHNIQUE ------------------------------------------------------- 26
3.2. DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS ----------------------------------------------- 27
3.3. METHOD OF DATA GATHERING ------------------------------------------------- 27
3.4. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS --------------------------------------------------- 27

CHAPTER FOUR

4. RESULTS

4.1. Summary of respondents ----------------------------------------------------- 29
4.2. Family Related factors ------------------------------------------------------- 30
   4.2.1. Parental Existence ------------------------------------------------------ 30
   4.2.2. Parental Education ------------------------------------------------------- 32
   4.2.3. Parents occupation -------------------------------------------------------- 34
   4.2.4 Parents Support ----------------------------------------------------------- 35
4.3. School Related Factors ------------------------------------------------------- 38
4.4. School Facilities

4.5. Students Self Concept

4.5.1 Subjects perceived as difficult

4.6. Directors Interview

CHAPTER FIVE

5. DESCUSION

5.1. Family Related Factors

5.1.11 parents Education

5.2. School Facilities

5.3. Self Concept

5.4. Statistical Tests of Factors

CHAPTER SIX

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1. Conclusion

6.2. Recommendations

References

4
List of Tables

Contents
Pages
Table 1a students .........................................................
29
Table 1b Directors interviewed ..................................
29
Table 2 Parental Existence and Family Structure ............
30
Table 3 Parental Education ...........................................
32
Table 4 Parental Occupation .........................................
35
Table 5 Parents support to their daughters .....................
36
Table 6 Teachers’ Related Factors .................................
39
Table 7 Facilities in the Schools ....................................
42
Table 8 Students’ Self Concept .....................................
43
Table 9 poorly performed subjects

45

Table 10 Students Rankings of Factors causing low achievement

47

Table 11 Summary of Statistical Tests for Factors indicated from table 5-8 –

58

List of Figures

Contents

Pages

Figure 1. Parents' educational background ---------------------------------- 33

Figure 2. Parental Occupation --------------------------------------------- 35

Figure 3. Difficulty Level of each Subject to the Students ------------------ 46
Abstract

In June 2010, a study was carried out in Addis Ababa General Secondary Schools to assess the factors that influence girls’ academic achievement. The basic questions which the study attempted to answer were related to (1) academic environment (2) out of School factors (3) de-motivating factors in and out of the school and (4) students’ self perceptions.

250 students sampled from five sub-cities and thirteen school principals in Addis Ababa participated as courses of data for the study. Through the use of questionnaires and interviews quantitative and qualitative data were collected from students and school directors. The data collected were analyzed using percentages, figures, chi-squares and interpretations through qualitative approaches.

Major findings of the study showed: (1) Unfavorable parental environment and poor family structure, (2) The use of poor instructional strategies and inequity in gender treatment, (3) Lack of academic motivation on the part of girl students themselves and (4) Poor parental support to be the major causal factors for girls’ low academic achievement in government secondary schools.

On the bases of the findings: (1) the use of effective teaching strategies, (2) the development of self-efficacy on the part of female students themselves, (3) effective parenting styles, and (4) the design of strategies that enable the use of after school programs and further provision of life skill education in the school were recommended to alleviate the problem.

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. THEORATICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

To day in the world all societies have come to understand that education results in positive externalities. Not only does it have an intrinsic value in the sense of the joy of
learning, reading, etc. but it also has instrumental, social, and process roles. Education, according to UNESCO (1994), imparts a sense of ability to control ones' own life and environment and there by family planning and the use of contraceptives.

It is becoming well recognized and an accepted fact that education is an important instrument for the economic development of a nation. This was evidenced by Kedir, et.al (2001) and many other researchers. They clearly showed that the total benefits of education multiply when schools open their doors to both sexes equally. In particular, female education has become one of the most powerful forces for the intelligent utilization of technological innovation in the developing world.

More than a century ago, people have identified that education has been taken as a basic human right. In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26) laid down that everyone has the right to education; education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory (EFA, 2007). Technical and professional education and training shall be available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit (Bishop, 1989) Since this declaration, education has been considered as the birth
right of every child, and universal primary education was seen as an effective way to give all children—regardless of sex or family background—an equal start in life as indicated by Bishop (1989).

The importance of education has been emphasized by international conventions, including the Universal Human Rights and the programs of action of the international conferences on population and development (Valentine, 1998). The fourth world conference on women, held in Beijing recognized that women’s literacy is a key to empowerment, participation in decision making in society and to include families well being (UN, 1995). In addition, the United Nations articulated the millennium development Goals (MDG) to include goals for improved education, gender equality, women’s empowerment and educations essential role in building developed societies and creating a foundation for a sustained economic growth (UN, 2003). Education contributes directly to the growth of national income by improving the productive capacities of the labor force. A study of 19 developing countries, including Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia concluded that a country’s long term economic growth increases by 3.7 percent for every year the adult population’s average level of schooling rises (UNESCO, 2003). Thus education is a vital instrument for poverty reduction, especially in the Sub- Saharan African
regions where poverty is deeper when compared to other Asian countries which have been joining the developed countries. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2002) Countries that have made social investments in health, family planning and education have controlled population growth and have registered faster economic growth than countries that have not made such investments.

Various studies have shown that in the increasingly open global economy, countries with high rates of illiteracy and gender gaps in educational attainment are less competitive, because foreign investors seek labor that is skilled as well as inexpensive. At present various global trends pose great challenges to women who are illiterate or have limited education. Economies’ export orientation and the growing importance of medium sized enterprises create opportunities for women, but women need the appropriate education and training to get advantage of these opportunities.

According to valentine (1998) the benefits of female education for women empowerment and gender equality are broadly recognized:
• As female education raises, fertility, population growth, infant and child mortality fall and family health increases.

• Increase in girls’ secondary enrollment is associated with increases in women participation in the decisions of their contributions to household and national income.

• Women’s increased earning capacity in turn, has a positive effect on child nutrition (Dawyer, 1988).

• Children—especially daughters—of educated mothers are more likely to be enrolled in school and to have greater educational attainment.

• Educated girls are more politically active and better informed about their legal rights and how to exercise them.

In many developing countries of Africa governments have become cognizant of the benefits of female education. According to Toro (2006), education of girls has a profound effect on national development as their lack of education has been linked to low birth weight, poor health and high mortality rates in children high fertility rates, poor family nutrition, low life expectancy, poor sanitation and high illiteracy rates. Thus, the socio economic importance of female education can not be overlooked.
An effort to boost female education has been made by the government, international organizations and non government organizations (NGOs). However, as reported during workshops, Annual Educational Conferences and as the information obtained from educational abstracts show, there are still gender disparities in education. Girls still have low access to learning, low participation and poor performance in many subjects, especially mathematics and the sciences. (Seleshi, et. al. 1999 and Kedir & Tilaye, 2001).

The Ethiopian Government, like other African governments and the developing world, has been motivated and taken a series of measures to promote girls education and involvement over the past 16 years. Among these measures, the New Education and Training Policy which was issued in 1994 (NETP) strongly addressed the issue of female education as a vital instrument to alleviate poverty and pave the way to sustainable growth and development, innovation and enhance competitiveness in the global economy. Consequently, a series of implementation guide lines like, the Education Sector Development Programs (ESDP, 1-4), various strategic plans have been developed and utilized. On top of these, the education quality improvement package has been developed and implemented. In order to facilitate the implementation of this package, continuous training and capacity building
programs have been designed and carried out. As a result of these measures taken by the government, school enrollments have grown manifold where girls got more access than before (Annual statistical abstracts, 1990-2009). In addition new schools have been established and more places have been added to the old ones in the country and to schools in Addis Ababa in a wider magnitude.

Despite the remarkable and concerted efforts discharged by the Ethiopian government, the country’s education sector has been confronted with a number of daunting challenges one of which is the multifaceted impediments to girls’ Academic Achievements.

The factors that interplay and affect girls’ academic achievement are limitless. Although various research works have shown classroom related factors as the causes of imbalances in achievement between male and female students, out of school factors play a big role in female education performances. School mapping, sexual harassment by classmates, inefficient use of time due to household cores, self perception, and lack of self efficacy and other psychological factors are worth mentioning. (Noble,et.al,2001,Striker,1992; Viadero,1998; in Julie,et.al works,2006;). Though the studies conducted in Ethiopia (Sileshi, 1995) and else where in the world (Fox, 1981; Enema & Sherman, 1976, 1997, 1978)
disclosed gender differences in achievement that favors males at the high school level little is known about the case in Addis Ababa. According to Sewnet (1995), a study made in Eastern Gojam zone, 5th grade males performed better than their female counterparts in mathematics. Among the factors that were responsible for the differences between boys and girls, the investigator identified students’ attitude, teachers’ differential treatment and differential expectation and parental education.

It is easy to imagine that there exist only few studies that examined girls’ academic achievement in Ethiopia. The meager studies that were done in primary grades were subject-specific while most of them were not done in Addis Ababa but in the regions. The variables that affect girls’ academic achievement, even if the results were generalizable, may still be different in Addis Ababa. Thus there is a need for conducting a comprehensive study that investigates factors that affect girls’ academic achievement in secondary schools of Addis Ababa. Therefore, this study was carried out in response to this felt need.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Some research works conducted in many countries of the world and in a few regions of Ethiopia, other than Addis Ababa have established that there are glaring sex differences with
respect to girls’ academic achievement. The findings from the Ethiopian National Learning Assessment for grade 4 and grade 8 (2008) supported this evidence. The assessment studies have not been done for secondary schools in the country in general and in Addis Ababa in particular. But, whilst there has been progress in the recognition of the importance of girls’ academic attainment in both secondary schools and in the next subsequent higher levels, still, there seems to exist numerous factors affecting girls academic achievement in the secondary schools of Addis Ababa. Therefore, this study has been initiated to address the issue with the view to forward suggestive strategies for future policy actions. Thus, this study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. Which factors related to academic environment (School Factors) affect girls’ achievement in secondary schools of Addis Ababa?
2. Are there any de-motivating factors for girls’ in schools and out of schools that affect their achievement?
3. What out of school factors affect girls’ academic achievement in secondary schools of Addis Ababa?
4. How do girls perceive themselves as learners in secondary schools achievement?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
The major objective of the study was to investigate the factors that affect girls’ academic achievement in the secondary schools of Addis Ababa. The study had the following specific objectives:

- To examine school factors that hinder girls’ academic achievement in secondary schools.
- To identify out of school factors that impact girls’ academic achievement.
- To find out the motivation that girls have to perform well in secondary schools.
- To suggest some ways of alleviating the problems associated with girls’ academic performance in secondary schools.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Little is known about the factors that influence girls’ academic achievement in the secondary schools of Addis Ababa. Thus this study will provide the necessary theoretical background on the nature of the factors that affect girls’ achievement in secondary schools. It is also expected to survey the problems and needs of girls in relation to their academic achievement. The results of this study maybe used to inform educators and administrators of factors that affect girl’s performance in secondary schools. Moreover, the study will also help policy makers, planners, and school officials in
making ongoing decisions about girls’ academic performance in secondary schools of Addis Ababa. In addition, the study may serve as a reference for further research. Further more, research in this area has the potential to provide important suggestions to improve standards and quality of education and performance of students that should not be overlooked in a developing country like Ethiopia. Eventually, Regional level government planners engaged in the formulation of Education sector operational and strategic plans could utilize the findings of the study. Lastly, International and home grown none government organizations working on advancing girls education can take an advantage of the findings of this research.

1.5 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study was limited to the general secondary schools of the Addis Ababa City Administration. The 9th grade female students were the target population. The investigation was limited to in school factors and out of school factors that impact girls’ academic performance. The findings and conclusions were reflecting the responses of girls in the sampled schools and information obtained from teaching learning process owners/school directors in the sampled secondary schools.
1.6. Limitations of the Study

As we all very well know, a research dealing with assessment of the magnitude of a certain problem entails collecting and processing as much data as possible. This in part requires adequate time, energy, and finance. However, as the study was to be completed within one month (1-30 June, 2010) this was a hectic duration since this time of the year is usually a time when all schools are busy in completing the works of the academic year. Nevertheless, adequate care has been made to preserve the quality of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This part of the paper deals with different research findings related with girls’ education and their academic achievement and possible causes that can affect their school performance. The chapter is organized with sub-titles; girls’ education, girls’
academic achievement, and factors that affect girls’ academic achievement.

2.1. GIRLS’ EDUCATION

Education is a fundamental human right: Every child is entitled to it. It is critical to our development as individuals and as societies, and it helps pave the way to a successful and productive future. When we ensure that children have access to a rights-based, quality education that is rooted in gender equality, we create a ripple effect of opportunity that impacts generations to come. Education enhances lives. It ends generational cycles of poverty and disease and provides a foundation for sustainable development. (2010)*

According to the report of save the children (2010), significantly more girls than boys enrolled in the first grade fail to complete the first cycle of primary school. To fill the gap between boys and girls retention in schools a mechanism named affirmative action was designed in order to promote girls survival in Ethiopian schools. Further, affirmative action is predetermined in the constitution in order to provide special attention to women so as to enable them compete and participate on the basis of equality with men in political, social and economic life as well as in public and private institutions (Yohannes, 2000).
‘An uneducated girl is a girl in darkness’ (Save the Children, 2009, 2010). This proverb can tell us a lot about girls’ education and its impact in any socio-economic development of a country. Without education life and work environment is very difficult for girls and in turn impossible for the development of the nation as a whole, because, without educating women, national endeavors can be less effective and the efforts of women are weaker. Equal opportunity of education for both sexes is equally important (Tadesse, 2009). A rights-based approach to education can address some of the societies’ deeply rooted inequalities. These inequalities condemn millions of children, particularly girls, to a life without quality education – and, therefore, to a life of missed opportunities (opcit).

According to Yohannes (2000), out of 30 million women in Ethiopia, only 16.7 percent are considered to be literate. Although education is open to girls, the negative social attitudes against women, is still being reflected in the educational system, as expressed at different meeting of the Women Education Associations. Although Ethiopia's education and training policy stresses the need to sensitize society about the importance of girls' education, it has nevertheless a long way to go in making its dream come true Yohannes (2000). The same is true in relation to girls’ academic achievement. Girls who happen to go to school are expected to take care of household chores as well when they return home, leaving
them with no time to study or do their homework. This results in poor school performance, often resulting in failure (opcit).

Girls’ education is becoming a critical issue for the development of any nation. King and Hill (1993) as cited in Tadesse (2009) argued that educating females yields far-reaching benefits for girls and women themselves, their families’ and their societies in which they live. Though this is the fact, the focus for female education is not as their counterpart; especially, in developing countries, the participation of women in education is characterized by low enrolment and poor performance (Herz, 1991; King and Hill, 1993; Odaga and Heneveld, 1995 as cited in Kedir and Tadesse, 2009).

The central problems of female education have been clearly identified as access to school, attainment in years of schooling, academic achievement and accomplishment after school. All of these problems are interrelated and influenced by in- and out-of-school factors (World Bank, 1996).

Educating women has all rounded benefit in order to manage their own life and/or for others’. An educated female is likely to become: a more competent and knowledgeable mother, a more productive and better paid worker, an informed citizen, a self confident individual and a skilled decision maker (Obanya 2005:15).
The World Bank (1996) declared that the evidence of significant returns to female education includes reduced fertility, reduced infant and maternal mortality, enhanced family health and welfare, improved children's education, and increased agricultural productivity, earnings, and overall economic productivity for women and the larger economy (Adhiabo and Haneveld, 1995).

Furthermore, girls’ education contributes to improved quality of life and enhances national development through:
- Increased economic production rates;
- Improved hygiene and nutritional practices;

According to the World Bank statements (2009); girls’ education is important in:

- **Reducing women’s fertility rates.** Women with formal education are much more likely to use reliable family planning methods, delay marriage and childbearing, and have fewer and healthier babies than women with no formal education. It is estimated that one year of female schooling reduces fertility by 10 percent. The effect is particularly pronounced for secondary schooling.
Lowering infant and child mortality rates. Women with some formal education are more likely to seek medical care, ensure their children are immunized, be better informed about their children’s nutritional requirements, and adopt improved sanitation practices. As a result, their infants and children have higher survival rates and tend to be healthier and better nourished.

Lowering maternal mortality rates. Women with formal education tend to have better knowledge about health care practices, are less likely to become pregnant at a very young age, tend to have fewer, better-spaced pregnancies, and seek pre- and post-natal care. It is estimated that an additional year of schooling for 1,000 women helps prevent two maternal deaths.

Protecting against HIV/AIDS infection. Girls’ education ranks among the most powerful tools for reducing girls’ vulnerability. It slows and reduces the spread of HIV/AIDS by contributing to female economic independence, delayed marriage, family planning, and
work outside the home, as well as conveying greater information about the disease and how to prevent it.

- **Increasing women’s labor force participation rates and earnings.** Education has been proven to increase income for wage earners and increase productivity for employers, yielding benefits for the community and society.

- **Creating intergenerational education benefits.** Mothers’ education is a significant variable affecting children’s education attainment and opportunities. A mother with a few years of formal education is considerably more likely to send her children to school. In many countries each additional year of formal education completed by a mother translates into her children remaining in school for an additional one-third to one-half year. (The world Bank, 2009)

As many research findings show there is gender inequality in education, though girls’ education has a significant role in social, economical and cultural development of the country and can lead successful life for them.

**2.2. GIRLS’ ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**
Academic achievement is the capacity of the learner to grasp/perform what he/she has learned from a given content. This achievement can be affected through different environmental factors. An academic achievement is something you do or achieve at school, college or university - in class, in a laboratory, library or fieldwork. (2010)** Academic achievement is the result of effort or it is the case of nurture rather than nature.

The impression of academic failure varies in its meaning. Academic failure is the situation in which the subject does not attain the expected achievement according to the ability of the learner, resulting in an altered personality which affects all other aspects of life (Rodriguez Castellanos, 1986 as cited in Kedir, 2001). Similarly, notes that while the current educational system perceives that the student fails if he or she does not pass, more appropriate for determining academic failure is whether the student performs below his or her potential (Antonia Lozano, undated).

When we say girls’ academic achievement, it is related to gender feature which is because of beliefs, norms, and way of life in one society that create gender imbalances and directly or indirectly affects women’s academic achievement. But, many literatures have illustrated that academic achievement did exist between boys and girls because of their sex. An individual’s sex has been found to be a powerful predictor of
differences in academic achievement (Hyneman, 1980). One field of study has been difficult for females or males and not for their counterparts. For instance, studies which focused on subjects have pointed out that girls tend to perform better than boys in work requiring verbal ability while boys tend to perform better than girls in tasks requiring science and technological skills (Wasagna, 1995; White, 1996; as cited in Kedir, 2001).

2.3. FACTORS AFFECTING GIRLS’ ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

In general there are factors that can affect academic achievement of all students rather than girls in particular. There have been many studies that sought to examine low academic achievement and point out their findings on hard work, previous schooling, parents’ education, family income and self motivation as factors that have a significant effect on the students’ achievement (Harb, et. al., 2006).

The other important factor that can affect students’ academic achievement is related to schools. According to Olaniyi Bojuwoy, undated) poor instructional strategies have the greatest degree of effect on pupil academic performance.

Lack of resource materials for teaching, instructional strategies, teacher shortages and teachers’ attitude to work
were rated more highly than other characteristics (opcit). The result further showed that while the teachers considered lack of resource materials for teaching as having the greatest degree of effect on pupils’ academic performance, the students on the other hand considered poor instructional strategies as having the greatest degree of effect on pupil academic performance (opcit).

The research conducted in Nigeria by Lockheed and Komenan (1989) as cited in (Olaniyi Bojuwoye, undated) report that if we control for the student background, school characteristics have significant effects on academic achievement and that in many cases the effects of the school characteristics are greater than the effects of family background.

All the above factors may be common to both sexes and there must be other additional factors that might affect girls’ academic achievement in particular.

In relation to girls’ education, factors that affect academic achievement are more complex and serious than boys because of norms and beliefs about women education in the society. The attitude of parents and the society at large towards females’ education, parents and community attitudes are mainly influenced by traditional beliefs regarding the ideal roles of women. Social traditions and deep-rooted religious
and cultural beliefs are most often the barriers to expanding girls’ educational opportunities in under-developing countries around the world (Save the Children, 2010). Traditionally, the only roles available to women were those of wives and mothers (FAWE, 1997).

The study conducted in Ghana (FAWE, 1997) has documented that society regarded those girls who performed well in science for example as ‘Witches’ or as ‘men-women’. The study further explains that parents were also reported that they discourage their sons from marrying women who were science graduates as they felt that they would not respect especially those husbands who were non-scientists. In our country Ethiopia, females are also considered as mothers, wives, the responsibility for child rearing and house manager still in many areas of the country at large and this belief can affect the academic achievement of girls.

The interaction of school-related factors can bring about a serious impact on the academic performance of students. The low quality of a school which is functioning with inadequately qualified and ill-prepared teachers, lack of good instructional materials including, books to give a sense of continuous achievement and teachers who mistreat girls in class can seriously hamper the progress of girls at school (UNESCO, 1966).
In practice teachers typically interact differently with their male and female students. Studies conducted in Africa indicate that there exists implicit and explicit gender discrimination in the classroom by various teachers (Mbilinyi and Mbughuni, 1991 as cited in Kedir 2001).

From the experiences of different countries’, teachers at school are considered to act as follows:-

1. *Teachers spend more time talking to males and allow male students to talk more than females in classroom;*
2. *Girls had to wait longer for answer or assistance;*
3. *Teachers knew a great deal more about the boys they teach;*
4. *Teachers prefer to introduce topics which are usually associated with males;*
5. *Majority of teachers prefer to teach boys, even though it was easier to teach girls;*

Extensive research has been carried out on in- and out-of-school variables affecting female students' achievement such as school factors, self-concept, self-efficacy, attitude,

There are many other special conditions that can affect girls’ academic achievement. The socio-cultural and socio-economic factors that constrain girls' education at the household and community level are closely interwoven. They include the direct and opportunity costs of schooling, which may be prohibitive to some families, and the priority given to girls' future roles as mothers and wives, which may have a strong negative bearing on their formal educational opportunities (Adhimbo Odaga and Ward Henevald, 1995).

An assessment was conducted in Awassa town, at the Ethiopia Tikdem School to find out the academic performance and dropout rates of school girls. There are factors that affect their academic performance. Female students are highly exposed to school dropout, sexual harassment, and heavy work load within the family and negative social outlook. Lack of awareness on the importance of female education within the family and the surrounding community members are some of the challenges being faced by female students (Melaku Hafebo, undated).

On the other hand, there is a strong positive relationship between family socio-economic status and students’
performance at school (Fuller, 1987). Especially, the economic status of parents plays a great role in educating children in general, and that of girls in particular. The finding of gender researchers (Anderson, 1992) indicates that girls from lower income families tend to have irregular attendance, poor performance and fewer qualifications. Parents who are economically better are able to provide their girls with the necessary learning facilities and therefore girls can attend classes regularly and perform better in their education score a better result during their examinations. Girls from poor economic families on the other hand encounter such problem as inability to pay school fees, inability to buy learning facilities, and chronic starvation so that girls may perform badly in school work.

In relation to educational background of parents, well-educated parents do involve more in school affairs and encourage their children more than the un-educated ones. Regarding this, Hyde (1989) said that educated parents are more likely to send their daughters to schools and keep them there longer. Such parents can also monitor the progress of their daughters in schools.

Another important issue that can play a significant role for girls’ academic performance is the perception of oneself. Because of their sex, if girls develop that they can’t perform
well in education or in a certain field of study, school learning may be influenced and may lose their effort to achieve better – this is the problem of self-perception or self-efficacy. In relation to this idea, especially for poor performance of science field of studies, Hilton and Bergland (1974) have said that a sex-related difference in achievement is partly the result of self-efficacy of girls for their achievement in science subjects.

In general, as presented in the preceding pages, literature on girls’ academic achievement has established a range of factors that influence the performance of girls in secondary schools. However, similar works appear to be limited in the case of Addis Ababa. But, this study is expected to come up with conclusive evidence on the bases of the forthcoming data presentation and analysis.

CHAPTER THREE

3. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The study is descriptive since it attempts to explain the factors that currently influence the academic performance of girls’ in the general secondary schools of Addis Ababa. The research was quantitative and qualitative. In order to triangulate the analysis interviews were conducted with selected general secondary school directors.
3.1. SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Out of the 10 sub-cities in Addis Ababa, 50% of them were randomly included in the study. From each sampled sub-city one general secondary school was taken to make the sampling comprehensive. Grade 9 female students were purposively considered as sample population since grade 10 students were no more in the schools due to the Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate Examination (EGSECE). From each sampled grade 9 students, 50 female students who achieve low scores (<50%) during the first semester examination were selected purposely to collect dependable data.

3.2. DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS

Closed and Open ended Questionnaires were designed and distributed to all subjects to secure the necessary information for this study. In addition to this Interview guides were developed and utilized to collect data from the school principals/deputies.

3.3. METHOD OF DATA GATHERING

A technical team was selected and trained on how to administer the data gathering process from the sampled
schools. On the bases of this, data was collected, tallied, and coded for analysis and interpretation by the same group.

3.4. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The coded data was organized and tabulated by the consultants/major researchers. The tabulated data was analyzed and interpreted by using descriptive statistics (percents, figures, and graphs). Chi-square test was applied to check the significance level of the result obtained by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). In addition the qualitative data collected from students and school directors through open ended items and interviews were carefully coded and analyzed qualitatively.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. RESULTS

The study was planned to secure data from 250 general secondary school students (all female) sampled from five Sub-cities and represented by five general secondary schools. Only grade nine female students were purposely taken as data sources since grade ten female students were not in the schools due to the conclusion of the Ethiopian General Secondary School completion Examination (2010). Grade nine male students were excluded since the researchers believed that girls with low academic achievement should speak on their own about the status of their performance. Therefore low
achieving girls’ students were mainly targeted to fill out questionnaires to generate the necessary data.

In order to substantiate the coverage of the data sources unstructured interviews were conducted with general secondary school directors. The summary of respondents is presented on the next page.

As shown below 97% of the students’ questionnaire have been filled out by the female students and received back. Since this percent is more than 90% it has been coded and utilized in analysis.

### 4.1 Summary of respondents

#### Table 1a: - students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub city</th>
<th>School name</th>
<th>No of questionnaires distributed</th>
<th>No of questionnaires collected</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Addis ketema</td>
<td>Yekatit 23</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gulelle</td>
<td>Dilber</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Yeka</td>
<td>Berhan Guzo</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Kirkos</td>
<td>Misrak Goh</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Akaki kaliti</td>
<td>Kaliti</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub city</th>
<th>School name</th>
<th>No of questionnaires distributed</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Ib: - Directors Interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub city</th>
<th>School name</th>
<th>No of questionnaires distributed</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub city</td>
<td>School Name</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Gulelle</td>
<td>Entoto Amba</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeraf</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Arada</td>
<td>Kelemework</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yekatit 66</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Lideta</td>
<td>B.Aba Nafso</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Addis Ketema</td>
<td>Yekatit 23</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Akaki</td>
<td>Bulbula</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Kirkos</td>
<td>Misrak Goh</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Temenja Yaz</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Bole</td>
<td>Haddis Alemayehu</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Yeka</td>
<td>Karalo</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keftegna 12</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Nefas Silk</td>
<td>Sedil</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the summary of the directors interview above indicates 90% of the sub-cities were included as information sources regarding girl students’ academic achievement in secondary schools. However, 13 general secondary school directors, that is more than the number of the sub-cities served as data sources through interviews were coded and narrated.

4.2 Family Related factors:

4.2.1 Parental Existence
As indicated in the literature part of this research one way of examining girls’ academic achievement is investigating whether or not their parents or guardians are alive. The present study made this comparison as follows:

**Table 2: Parental Existence and Family Structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether parents alive or not</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both of them alive</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only the father alive</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only the mother alive</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With whom the students live</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With both parents</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With the father</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With the mother</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With a relative</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in table two, 51% of the students reported that their parents are alive and they live with them. Many of them do not have their parents living (49%) but their mothers (62%). It can also be observed from the data on the table that only few students live with relatives. This implies that students whose parents are not alive reside with non-relative guardians, a fact that could affect their success in learning and achievement. Although a number of studies underline the positive influence of parental support/encouragement and or control to the girl students schooling, the data in the table seems to imply the
difficulty that girl students can face to achieve good performance in the absence of both parental support both in the home and at school.

In order to know whether parental existence had any effect on their schooling, students were provided with an open ended item. Consequently students’ responses indicated that, where parents are alive, wrangling and disagreement exist among the father and the mother, health problems in the family are common and there is no peace and stability that encourage schooling and studying. Those who live with relatives seem to have similar problems. They indicated that their performance is always poor because, they do not have time to study, to work assignments and rest but always busy in house hold cores, not respected but always infringed and the family environment is not always conducive for academic work. Girls who live with a single family reported that there are problems related to economy/source of income and the livelihood of the family rests solely on students’ and attention can not be given to school/academic work. It is surprising to hear that a girl student said she was beaten by her mother and sometimes even the neighbors have been invited to support the beating.

4.2.2 Parental Education
One of the factors that can influence the education and achievement of girls is often reported to be parents’ education level. In particular, mothers’ education is often recognized as an important empowering instrument for women to induce positive impact on the education of their daughters. In this regard, the educational background of parents was examined in the present study and is displayed in the following table.

**Table 3: Parental Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Illiterate</th>
<th>Primary education</th>
<th>Secondary education</th>
<th>Diploma</th>
<th>Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above depicts that some of the parents of girls in secondary schools are illiterate (19% and 30% fathers and mothers respectively). The education level of the mothers seem to be wider at primary level and the participation of mothers in the next subsequent higher levels of learning seems to be low (10% Diploma and 4% degree). On the other hand, fathers seem to be better of in attaining higher education levels (29%). On the whole the mothers’ education level is lower than that of the fathers and, it appears that, they lack the necessary orientation and skills to support and encourage their daughters to learn and attain good achievement. Furthermore, one can easily observe that although, 70% of the mothers
seem to have literacy its influence on the education of their daughters appears to be meager. The same holds true for the influence of fathers’ education (80).

![Figure 1: Parents’ educational background](image)

*X* - Fathers, *Y* - Mothers

**Figure 1: Parents’ educational background**

**NB:** Numbers (1-5) on the X-axis indicates the level of education from illiterate to degree and the Y-axis indicates number of individuals or parents.

As indicated in Figure 1, the trend of the education level of the parents of the targets of this study (low achieving female students) decreases when educational level increases. When we compare mothers and fathers, especially, mothers are higher in number than fathers at illiteracy and primary level; but the reverse is true when the education level increases to tertiary level.

**4.2.3 Parents occupation**
In addition to the institutional factors like parental existence family structures and parental education, parents’ occupations have been reported to influence the performance of students in secondary schools (Uwalfo, 2005). In this connection an attempt was made to examine the occupation of parents of girls in the secondary schools. The data obtained shows that only 35% of fathers and 25% of mothers are government employees while 15% of the fathers and 20% of the mothers have been reported to be merchants. Only little parents earn their lively hood from handcraft works while the majority of the parents are employed in daily labor. Those who were reported to be government employees seem to be those parents whose education level have been better (Diploma or Degree in figures 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Gov. employee</th>
<th>Merchant</th>
<th>Handcraft work</th>
<th>others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the parents appear to be employed in other income generating activities like vendors, daily laborers, house wives, cleaners, cookers and the like and therefore, this seems to imply their lack of permanent financial background to
support their daughters’ education so that, girls can attain better achievements in the schools.

*X* - Fathers  *Y* - Mothers

**Figure 2**: Parental Occupation (1, 2, 3 & 4 are Gov. Employee, Merchant, Handcraft work & others respectively)

### 4.2.4 Parents Support

As indicated earlier the parents’ existence and education background as well as their employment and income status have often been said to influence the achievement of their daughters in schools. This influence is better understood when the kind of support that the parents owe to their daughters is clearly known. In connection with this, items relating to parental support to the education of their daughters were presented to students and the responses are displayed as follows.

**Table 5**: - Parents support to their daughters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Items</th>
<th>Responses in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. support my education</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in the table, some parents provide considerable support to their daughters by way of encouraging them to learn and providing the necessary educational materials and supplies (92%). However, most of the parents seem unable to arrange study time for girls (73%), and create access to a tutor/tutorial support to complement classroom learning (58%).

Further, it appears that most of the students are not being coached (93%) - support and checking home work and some times revise what they have learned in schools at home and thus they do not seem to perform under planned and controlled study situations. As a result it seems that girl students are not focused on their academic studies (87%) possibly because the home environment is not conducive enough to support the study at home (78%). In general, it seems that no permanent study rooms or corners for

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Encourage to learn</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Full fill all materials</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. arrange study time</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>.73*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hire a tutor for support</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>.58*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Coach to perform best</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>.93*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Expect me to excel</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Encourage me to be focused</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>.87*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Lovely &amp; peaceful family</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>.78*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. There is conducive study room in the family</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>.57*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further, it appears that most of the students are not being coached (93%) - support and checking home work and some times revise what they have learned in schools at home and thus they do not seem to perform under planned and controlled study situations. As a result it seems that girl students are not focused on their academic studies (87%) possibly because the home environment is not conducive enough to support the study at home (78%). In general, it seems that no permanent study rooms or corners for
daughters at home (57%). Therefore, for most of the students, the home environment appears to be unfavorable for good academic achievement.

In response to the open ended items a considerable number of students reported that although some families have been positive to the daughters’ education, they arrange neither study time nor other tutorial supports to girls. Some of the parents were reported to be dictators and encourage their daughters to get married than continuing their studies. Others reported that there is totally no family support to schooling. Thus the responses from the open ended items seem to agree with the discussion presented in the table above.

4.3. **School Related Factors.**

Research in the field of instruction indicates that engaging and supporting all students in learning, understanding and organizing subject matter for students learning, creating and maintaining effective environment for student learning, planning instruction, designing learning experiences for all students and assessing student learning are some of the factors that can influence students learning and achievement.
In this regard an attempt has been made to examine teacher related factors that in one way or the other influence girls’ academic achievement. The data obtained from students’ questionnaire is displayed in table 6. Teachers’ skills and styles in demonstrating knowledge of the subjects they teach seems to be approved 83% but only few teachers’ plan instruction to develop and sequence instructional activities and materials for students (38%). In addition, a considerable number of teachers (52%) are reported to provide notes for students while there are still some teachers who do not prepare essential ideas and contents in the form of notes for learners (48%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Items</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Know their subject</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Use daily plans</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Provide notes on essential points</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Use instructional materials</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Always accessible</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most of the teachers do not use instructional materials to aid students learning (63%) and many of them seem to be inaccessible for academic consultations and support during and after instruction. It appears that there are many teachers who ridicule and demoralize girl students in the system (74%). Some of the teachers are reported that they are not working hard and do not develop student understanding through the use of instructional strategies that are appropriate to the subject matter and the learners’ needs. As is usually the case with administrative and disciplinary issues, teachers provide make up classes for periods not utilized due to unforeseen circumstance (58%), but that seems to be not the case with other teachers (42%). In addition not all teachers provide additional tutorial support for students, on their own (65%). Furthermore, the data in table 6 reveals those teachers seem to be inequitable in treating and supporting good performing learners and their counterparts (68%). Moreover girls are not
equally seen like their male counterparts (92%) and thus gender sensitivity seems not to be kept during instruction.

In addition to the responses obtained from the students’ questionnaire, girls were asked to indicate whether the teachers’ behaviors, in instructing have influenced their academic achievement or not. In response to this most of the students reported that some teachers always recognize performing students, particularly male students and not the poor performing female students. Some teachers do not use instructional time properly and fail to listen to students academic difficulties and act accordingly. Some subjects like mathematics and sciences are reported not clear to students because of the presentation styles of teachers. Some teachers are reported that they do not respect girl students and it is said that teachers violate professional ethics most of the time while teaching by insulting students. Moreover, it was indicated by the students that most of the teachers have problems in using English as a medium of instruction while teaching. Thus, the qualitative explanations of students’ response appear to conform with the overall responses to the students’ questionnaire, showing problems relating to teachers’ instructional strategies.

4.4. School Facilities
The causes and cures of students’ academic performances are often said to be associated with the availability of school facilities and resources. Students were asked to indicate problems of inadequate facilities in their schools. The responses obtained indicate that water, sanitation and hygiene facilities are available in most of the schools (83%). Libraries are reported to be available in the schools (82%) although there are still some schools without such facilities (17%).

On the other hand, important facilities like laboratories together with specimen and supplies appear to be missing in most of the schools (60%). Motivational programs and services like guidance and counseling, recreational activities and excursions seem to be meager (42%). A considerable number of schools seem to provide girls education (43%) but tutorial programs that support girls learning and achievement are not in place in most of the schools (66%). Furthermore acts of violence seem to exist in some of the schools (46%).

**Table 7:- Facilities in the Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Items</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. There is a separate toilet for girl students</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. There is water supply</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. There are enough desks</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. There is a library</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. There is a guidance and counselor</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. There are laboratories</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. There are motivational programs</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. There are supports for girls education</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. There are tutorial programs</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. No violence against girls</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Girl students’ response to the open ended items clearly revealed and complemented the responses from students’ questionnaire. Most of the students indicated that although one observes laboratory rooms and buildings almost all of them are not functional. Participation in co-curricular activities is biased against school girls since most of the time, better achieving male students are given due attention. Tutorial programs are not continuous and sustainable. There is no mutual understanding between some of the teachers and students. Sexual harassment is observed in and out of the school. Teachers are not reflective but deny their mistakes and sublimate to students.

### 4.5. Students Self Concept

Research has shown that positive attitudes towards self and school ultimately determines students’ motivation and effort in doing school work. In this connection girl students were asked to indicate their feelings and aspirations about one self and the response obtained is presented in the table to follow.
### Table 8: Students’ Self Concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self concept items</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes in</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel happy to learn</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I work for academic excellence</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I complete tasks given by teachers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I have a vision</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I work to rich my vision</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I maintain good, relation with my friends and respect them</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I have not been lonely</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I participate in school clubs</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I benefit from club participation</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in table 7, a range of self perception factors come into play regarding secondary school girl students. That is a large numbers of students (92%) seem to be excited for attending schools but fail to work and excel in academic performance (94%). Thus they are not task oriented and complete academic activities given by their teachers (91%). It can be observed that an insignificant number of girls students report (0.05%) that they have set a vision, but almost non are working towards their vision (91%). Most of them have good relationships with their classmates and school friends as is usually the case with school peers of similar age and level of schooling (93%) and most of them do not feel isolated in schooling. A considerable number of girls’ students participate in extra curricular activities in their school (46%) but many of them reported not to benefit from such participation and thus,
lack the degree of inclusiveness and fulfilling their aroused interests and feelings in the classroom and in the schools as a whole.

Responding to the effects of self perception on their academic achievement the students indicated a number of factors that require attention. Some of them reported that they are becoming hopeless due to inconvenient family environment and the difficulty of the contents of some subjects. Others indicated that they lack natural stamina and fail to understand the lessons despite the efforts they make to study. They further revealed that their academic performance has been declining since they joined the secondary level, the cause of which is yet unknown to them. Some of them said they have emotional problems in expressing themselves and could not tell their peers and feel as if they attend schools forcefully and no one understands them. It is debilitating to hear from girls students that they hate their femininity due to violent actions and gender bias that are sometimes reflected in schools. On the whole, it appears that some of the girls in secondary schools lack confidence to achieve better in schools and precipitate to haplessness.

4.5.1 Subjects perceived as difficult
It is not difficult to see that if students perceive subjects as difficult from the outset and if, as a result of this, they lack confidence in doing home works, class works and tests successfully, and then it is likely that they would fail. That is, such a perception, in most cases will be associated with students’ poor academic performance.

To examine students’ perception regarding the difficulty of subjects, students were asked to indicate the subjects in which they perform poorly, as shown in table 9.

**Table 9:- Poorly performed subjects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Amharic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Biology</th>
<th>Chemistry</th>
<th>Physics</th>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ratings</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the students (23%) were of the opinion that mathematics was the subject in which they scored low marks and this is followed by chemistry, physics, English and Biology in sequential order as shown in the figure follows. It also seems that the students attain low scores in History, Geography and Amharic. However, it is easy to observe that irrespective of the score in each subject, all students attain
low performance in all the subjects, a fact that confirms that they are truly low achievers in secondary schools.

Finally students were asked to rank order some of the factors which may specifically cause low score attainment in the secondary school subjects.

**Figure 3: Difficulty Level of each Subject to the Students**

**NB:** - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8 on the X-axis are to Amharic, Biology, Chemistry, English, Geography, History, and Mathematics & Physics respectively.

**Table 10: Students Rankings of Factors causing low achievement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causal Factors</th>
<th>Rank order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Teachers’ poor teaching approaches</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Subject difficulty</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Poor foundation</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lack of study time</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Lack of tutor</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The individual ranking of girls was found similar with the overall rank order. Consequently, the difficulty nature of subjects, tutorial support and teachers’ style of teaching were reported to rank first to 3rd orderly. On top of this, lack of study time and failure to understand the practical usefulness of the subjects in later life appear to assume the 4th and 5th order. Poor academic background, teaches violent behaviors and lack of parental support were also the last ranked factors as causes for low academic achievement.

4.6. Directors Interview

As this study was an assessment of factors, influencing girls’ low academic achievement in the secondary schools, interview sessions were arranged with the principal of the sample schools and those of the other secondary schools to secure pertinent data. Unstructured Interview guide were designed and utilized with 13 school principals in total. The data obtained from interviews were coded and summarized.

Most of the directors (58%) agreed that when seen in general, the academic performances of few girl students have been
improving and in some cases, better than those of the boys. However, boys attain minimum competency level than girls and transit from one grade level to the next. The directors listed the following problems in their schools as they relate to girls low academic achievement:

- Failure to be punctual, absence and dropout;
- House hold cores in the family;
- Failure to do assignments, and absence from tutorial programs;
- Low self perception in relation to boys;
- Family breakdown and lack of support;
- Violence against girls and sexual abuse/environmental influence
- Lack of focus on academic work; and
- Self employment to earn their livelihood.

The resulting effects of the above problems were elaborated by the directors as follows.

- If students are not punctual, absent from classes, fail to complete assignments and miss tutorial programs they fail to utilize academic learning time properly, and consequently, achieve low performance.
- When family breakdown and lack of family support is not there, students will be forced to be dependent on either of the parents or other relatives and could be abused and
loose hope that results in lack of focused work on academic performance.

- When girl students are sexually abused they may get caught with sexually transmitted diseases or become pregnant; as a result could be in a deep psychological trauma and low self perception.

Furthermore the data from the directors’ interview revealed that:

- Some students do not have a vision
- The values that girl students attach to school is low
- Most of the girls have economic problems
- Parents perception to school work is not satisfactory
- Students do not achieve well in science and mathematics subjects due to lack of support from the family and because of this they become de-motivated to work hard for better achievement. Consequently, the ultimate objective of some of the students is simply to complete secondary education and not to transit to the next higher education level. As a solution to such problems, the directors suggested the following points.

1. Provision of special support to girls’ education.
2. Empower girls’ students through tutorial programs all over the year.
3. Create good relationships with parents and open dialogue with them about how to support the education of their children.
4. Carrying out continuous support and monitoring of girls education.
5. Support poor girl students through welfare programs.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1. Family Related Factors
The findings of this study revealed that although the majority of the parents of girls in government general secondary schools were alive parental influence has not resulted in good academic achievement since most of the students themselves indicated that where both parents are alive the prevalence of disagreement in the family created lack of peace and stability in the home environment. This directly confirms with that Ichado (1998) underlined; that is, parents’ constant disagreement affects children emotionally and this could lead to poor academic performance in schools. On top of this Olutola (2007) point out that those parents and the individuals experience at home play tremendous roles in building the personality of the learner and making him what he is. Ichado further stated that the environment in which the student comes from can greatly influence his performance at school. Thus, unfavorable family environment is the cause for poor academic performance of girls in general secondary school.

5.1.1. Parents Education

If secondary school girls did not have favorable family environment, what does the educational background of the family look like is another problem that can be posed for
discussion. As the result section of this paper showed the literacy level of both parents of girl students in government general secondary school was found to be acceptable enough; that is, 81% and 70% for both the father and the mother respectively. The influence of this literacy level on girls’ academic achievement seems to disagree with what some researchers have found out.

In this regard Adell (2002) had to say that another group of performance determining factors is the family factors and educational conditions attributed to the family is beyond all doubt or discussion the most important and weighty factor in determining the academic performance attained by the student. Montero (1990) added by saying that students whose fathers are with high level of study are those who least fail. However, the educational background of the parents of the targets for this study seems to depart from this argument, thus, it is easy to conclude that the family educational climate of girl students in government general secondary school of Addis Ababa has not resulted in a good amount and style of help that the daughters should have received.

Another point of discussion that should be raised at this juncture is what support the parents are actually providing as guardians to their daughters in government general secondary schools. In connection with this, the data on table five revealed
that most of the parents encourage and support girls’ learning by providing the necessary materials (92%). However, the data in the table further display absence of achievement motivation support elements. That is, the schedule of study time, tutorial support and coaching which arouse interest and the desire to be focused and excel are not in place (78%). But the home has a great influence on the students’ psychological, emotional, social and economic aspects. As Ajila and Olutola (2007) put it; the state of the home affects the individual since the parents are the first socializing agents in an individuals’ life. This is because the family background and context of a child affect his reaction to life situations and his level of performance. On top of these girls students themselves have clearly indicated that, their parents, except being positive to their education, totally there is no family support to academic achievement, some parents are dictators and encourage their daughters to get married and not to continue their schooling. Thus as Castello and his colleagues (1986) elaborated the dynamics of communication and affective relationships, attitudes towards values, expectations, parenting styles like democratic versus autocratic do not characterize in most of the families. It can safely be said that the family support to government general secondary school girl students does not go further than fulfilling the learning infrastructure for students. Other than out of school factors, this study has also examined school related factors that directly or indirectly influence
students’ academic achievement. Regarding teachers related factors, the study has examined a number of specific characteristics attributable to teachers. Pedagogically seen, that is in the areas of mastery of subject knowledge, establishing and articulating goals for students learning and sequencing instructional materials and activities for compensating the wasted instructional time, the study showed that teachers’ rapportaire is satisfactory (on the average 54%). However, from the point of view of professional ethics as this relates to respectfulness accessibility enthusiastic, putting and leading students to high achievement by way of additional tutorial support, maintaining equity in instruction and respecting the dignity of girls’ students, the study has revealed the existing shortcomings in secondary schools (72%). This stance seems to disagree with what research has established. According to Marchesi and Martin (2002), the pupil’s socio-cultural level and his previous aptitudes indirectly influence the results of learning since they delimit classroom procedures. As for characteristics of the teachers-tutor, this is considered a key element for the pupils personal and academic development, the values given from teachers to pupil and vice-versa are usually reciprocal. The same authors found that teachers’ expectations significantly influence on students’ academic result.
Atkinson (2000) found positive relationship between the teachers’ motivation and that of the students. Furthermore, Montero (1990) demonstrated that students failing in school are those most rejected by their group-class. Added to these assertions girls’ students, in response to the open ended items, reported that some teachers do not use instructional time properly, are not equitable in treating gender and poor and good performing students and fail to listen to students academic difficulties, they insult/denounce girl students and demoralize, thereby violating professional ethics. It seems that the effective and relational variables fail to be kept among some teachers and pupils. Thus teacher related factors are the major causes for low performance among government secondary school girls.

5.2. School Facilities

The findings of this study show that basic instructional materials and WASH facilities are availed in the secondary schools (90%). This seems to conform to Shebbs (1986) claim that lack of resource materials for teaching has a direct effect on the teachers’ ability to perform and an indirect impact on student performance. But programs that can motivate learners to achieve (in school programs like student shows, films, dramas/academic related, guidance and counseling service, tutorial programs and girls empowering activities) are
inadequate in most of the schools (43%). It is safe to conclude that supports and services that motivate girls to achieve better are minimum in the secondary schools.

5.3. Self Concept

Another variable which was found to have a considerable influence to girls’ performance was the way they perceive themselves. As evidence from the data in the present study indicates most of the girl students are delighted for being in secondary schools (98%) but this state of feeling does not result in better achievement since the highest percentage of girls (93%) on the average, are not enthusiastically working to worlds a set goal and not task oriented for academic excellence. They are not involving themselves as subjects to their own academic success. This appears to contradict what research in education has established, that is, according to Julie, et al, (2006) students’ perception of themselves influence the amount of effort they are willing to put forth in school, their educational aspirations and their academic achievement. On the Other hand, girls’ students have good peer relationships (93%) and most of them not isolated and participate in school clubs (46%), but the academic benefit earned from such an involvement is minimal (48%). This contradicts the notion that students participation in extra-curricular and education related activities, as well as how they
spend their out-of-class time have been shown to influence (positively or negatively) their academic achievement (Noble et al, 2001). Thus secondary school girl students have low academic motivation and poor self perception.

The other important point revealed in this study was the perception that secondary school girl students have towards core subjects perceived by students to be difficult to score. Mathematics and Sciences were found to be the subjects. This study also revealed that teacher's poor teaching strategies and the belief that Mathematics and Science subjects are difficult is being maintained by secondary school students. Thus, poor performance of secondary school girls implies that the students are not self-efficient and maintain negative attributions to their failure.

5.4. Statistical Tests of Factors

The data utilized in this study were further manipulated using the chi-square test as shown in table 11 below:

Table 11:- Summary of Statistical Tests for Factors indicated from table 5-8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Expected Factors</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>( \chi^2 ) Calculated</th>
<th>( \chi^2 ) Table value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1. arrange study time</td>
<td>-5.384</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>293.47*</td>
<td>12.8325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Hire a tutor for support</td>
<td>-2.100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Coach to perform best</td>
<td>-8.918</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Encourage me to be focused</td>
<td>-7.934</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Lovely &amp; peaceful family</td>
<td>-6.341</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. There is conducive study room in</td>
<td>-1.855</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1. Use daily plans</td>
<td>-3.048</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ Schools’</td>
<td>1. There is a guidance and couns...</td>
<td>-2.10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.273*</td>
<td>11.1433 ( \alpha = 0.05 ) two-tailed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. There are laboratories</td>
<td>-2.34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. There are motivational programs</td>
<td>-2.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. There are supports for girls’ ed.</td>
<td>-1.85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. There are tutorial programs</td>
<td>-3.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8 Self</th>
<th>1. I work for academic excellence</th>
<th>-9.077</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>319.28*</th>
<th>14.4494 ( \alpha = 0.05 ) two-tailed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. I complete tasks given by teach.</td>
<td>-8.596</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. I have a vision</td>
<td>-9.234</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. I work to rich my vision</td>
<td>-8.596</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. I have not been lonely</td>
<td>-1.349</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. I participate in school clubs</td>
<td>-1.088</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. I benefit from club participation</td>
<td>-1.604</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- \( \star R \) (Standardized Residuals) – The contribution of each sub-factors in a major factors
  (Most of the sub factors have their own contribution except the shaded ones).
- \( \star df \) (degree of freedom).
- \( \star \alpha = 0.05 \) Error expected at 5%.
- \( \star \) Two tailed* testing with both (two) directions – Is there any difference between the two categories?
  These factors are selected according to high values given by the respondents.

According to the summary of statistical test (table 11), except the individual sub-factors that is conducive study room (family related factors: -1.855) Schedule factor (support for girls: -1.250) and factors relating to school clubs (-1.347) the contribution of the rest of the individual factors as total of the factors was found to be high. In addition the calculated chi-square values for the major factors influencing achievement
are found to be all significant since, in all the cases the calculated Chi-square ($\chi^2$) value were found to be greater than the expected values that is that of the family related factors is $293.47 (\text{df}=4) > 12.8325$ (table value) while that of the teacher related factors was $275.290 (\text{df}=8) > 17.5345$ at alpha = 0.05 of non directional testing (two-tailed). In a similar manner that of the factors related to school was $33.273 (\text{df}=4) > 12.8325$ and the value of students self perception was found to be $319.28 (\text{df}=6) > 14.4494$, therefore, the results obtained from the data, in this study are found to be significant and, thus confirms the conclusions reached in this study.

**CHAPTER SIX**

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

6.1. **Conclusion**
The major objective of the study was to assess the factors that influence girl students’ academic achievement in the government secondary schools. Accordingly, the following specific questions were formulated for investigation.

1. Which factors related to academic environment affect girls’ academic achievement in the government secondary schools?
2. Are there any de-motivating factors for girls’ in schools that affect their achievement?
3. What out of school factors affect girls’ academic achievement in the government secondary schools?
4. How do girls perceive themselves as learners in secondary schools?

Using a random sampling technique five sub-cities was selected. One each general secondary schools were randomly selected from the sampled sub-cities; 50 grade Nine (9) female students with poor academic performance were purposely identified as data sources from each five schools.

Structured students questionnaire comprising closed and open ended items and directors’ interview guides were employed to collect data from 250 grade nine (9) students and thirteen (13) high school principals. The data were then analyzed using descriptive statistics, chi-square (to test the significance level of the results) and qualitative techniques.
The analysis disclosed, among other things, the following results.

1. Unfavorable parental environment and poor family structure were found to be one of the causes for poor academic performance for girl students.

2. Teachers’ use of instructional strategies that do not appeal to the needs and aspirations of most of the girl students, coupled with lack of equity in instructional treatment for both sexes were disclosed as the major de-motivating factors hindering performance in the schools.

3. Many factors appeared to hinder girls’ academic achievement. The factors, among others, appeared to be perceived difficulty of the core subjects, lack of confidence, focus and vocational orientation, poor study habits, little time available for study, negative attributions to academic failure, lack of self-efficacy, life skills, and violence against girls.

4. Although girls appeared to have a good perception of self for joining secondary education, the analysis indicated that they lack academic motivation—the element that initiates girls themselves as subjects own involvement in learning and achievement.

5. The influence of parents on their daughters’ education and involvement in after school activities has not
influenced academic success for girls. Cognizant of the discussions presented in this study and on the bases of the above findings, one may conclude that there is a serious problem in the achievement of girls in the government general secondary schools of Addis Ababa. In particular, where the country at present is marching towards scientific and technological advancement nothing short of good academic performance is needed in the Sciences and Mathematics. Thus there is an urgent need to devise further strategies which my help to alleviate the problem.

6.2. Recommendations

Eventually, the present findings seem to have practical implication to girls’ empowerment through education in secondary Schools. In brief there is a need to:

a. On the part of girl students themselves, direct all their efforts and personality towards the achievement of specific academic goals, thus bringing all their efforts to academic work.

b. From the teachers’ side, use a variety of instructional strategies and resources to respond to girl students diverse needs, engaging students in problem solving, critical thinking, and other activities that make subject
matter meaningful and promote self-directed, reflective learning for all students. In addition, in schools where regular guidance and counseling is missing, all teachers should recognize and devote themselves to help students with academic problems through Para-counseling services. Further, teachers should closely work with parents from time to time to help students’ poor performance.

c. On the part of the parents, they should understand and act that, although the school is responsible for the experiences that make up the individuals life during school periods, yet parents and the individuals experience at home play tremendous roles in building the personality of the child and make the child what he is. It is, therefore, to be noted by whoever is a parent, that parenthood is a responsibility requiring the full cooperation of both parents who must ensure the total development of their offspring. Further, the parents should accept that the dynamics of communication and effective relationships, attitudes towards values, expectations, the parenting style (democratic, autocratic and laziest faire), are also influential both in the students’ educational process as well as in family-school relations.

d. From the side of stakeholders, as copying strategies like problem solving and communication skills were said
better associated with higher school GPAs (Hodges, 1992) show their level best in promoting life skills education from the second cycle of the primary education levels to empower girls know specific behaviors that result in successful outcomes that help better achievement.

e. Action on the part of parents, counselors, teachers, and schools can help students develop positive copying skills and realistic expectations of themselves and help them overcome background conditions that might otherwise affect their chances of being successful in school.

f. From the side of the education bureau, that the full day regular school program is already in place, the educational achievement can benefit from time spent out of school on educationally related activities and accomplishments if strategies that enable schools properly utilize after school programs properly is carefully designed.
References


Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Ambrose, Alli University.

Retrieved from http://www.krepublishers.com


31. Save the children (2010)* Girls Education: Global Combination for Education.


40. _____________ (1995): UN platform of Action, fourth world conference on Women; Beijing: China, 4-15 September.


46. What is academic Achievement? (2010)* Answers Corporation International sites English.
