

**THE EFFECTS OF FEMALE CIRCUMCISION AMONG MAASAI  
GIRLS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: THE CASE OF  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LOITOKITOK DIVISION OF  
KAJIADO DISTRICT, KENYA**

**BY**

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**NOVEMBER, 2010**

**DECLARATION****DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE**

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university. No part of this thesis may be produced without prior permission from author or Moi University.

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## ABSTRACT

This study focused on female student attitude towards female circumcision and academic performance. It was based on Symbolic Interactionism Theory advanced by Blummer (1969) cited in Nelson, (1993). This theory emphasizes on interaction in which individuals define, interpret, and give meaning to each others' action in a social environment instead of merely reacting to them.

A sample of 150 Form 4 female students was drawn from all secondary schools in Loitokitok Division. The researcher used a self-report questionnaire in soliciting firsthand information. In addition, students' common mock examination mean scores were collected from their respective schools.

Data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Spearman product-moment correlation coefficient, mean, frequencies and standard deviation were used in the descriptive analysis. t-test, Chi-Square test and One Way ANOVA were used in testing the hypotheses at a significant level of .05.

The findings indicate that 72% of the respondents report having undergone female circumcision. This is because female circumcision has no significant effect on female students academic performance ( $t = 22.117$  and  $p = .000$ ). The findings also revealed that age does not have any significant effect on the students' attitude towards the practice of female circumcision as well as effect students academic performance ( $\chi^2 = .06$  and  $p = 0.054$ ). The type of school had no significant effect on students' academic performance ( $F = .695$  and  $P = .557$ ). Also the type of school had no significant effect on students' attitude towards female circumcision ( $\chi^2 = 4.888$ ,  $p = .012$ ).

Recommendations include improvement of schools infrastructure and conscious raising on the effects of female circumcisions among students, parents and guardians; education policy makers; and education development actors in the District; to the Ministry of Education, school management and non-Governmental organizations.

**DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my loving parents A. Ole Lingoine and S. Naserian.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Overview**

This chapter encompasses the background of the problem, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study and research questions. Moreover, it gives hypotheses, justification, and the significance of the study. The limitations of the study, theoretical framework and operational definition of key terms are also examined.

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Kajiado District is home to the Maasai, a pastoralist community with deeply entrenched culture and traditional lifestyle. In most African communities, female circumcision is regarded as a rite of passage from one social group to the next regarded to be of higher rank. Therefore, it is through initiation process that an individual is admitted to being a member of a social group.

An initiation rite varies from one community to another. For example some communities practice physical operation form of initiation, as it is the case of female circumcision among the Maasai community. Other operations include tattooing, and perforating the ear lobe, a practice that is performed to the girls in other African communities. In some communities where physical operation was not done to the initiates, a psychological substitute for female circumcision ceremony could be done as an adjustment of female adolescents to adulthood.

Girls are circumcised at the onset of puberty. The initiates are involved in intensive training and instruction during seclusion period. The instruction given is believed to stir up considerable emotional powers both at the individual and the group level. The instruction take place according to a symbolic ordering, which touched the initiates at the deepest level of their consciousness. The instructions are meant to guide them by means of particularly intense spiritual experience, to the threshold of mystical life (Erny, 1981).

There are many reasons for carrying out female circumcision, among them chastity, increasing chances of marriage, religious decree, and tradition (WHO 1981; Black, 1993). Communities that practice female circumcision believe the practice serve social, religious, educational and psychological functions. The rite is believed to usher the initiates into adulthood and getting rid of childhood. The instructions given during seclusion are mainly on society history, philosophy, folklore, and the responsibilities of being a woman. The instructions are considered important to integrate girls into the society. If these teachings are not imparted the youth would be ill prepared for responsibilities of marriage and parenthood (Mbiti, 1991). It is mainly the time for knowledge acquisition as the individuals are taught values and customs that they are meant to abide to in the society.

In addition, female circumcision serves as a dramatization of sex-roles. The community perceives it as a way through which one can recognize her sex responsibilities and try to behave according to the expectations of the community. The practice of female circumcision was meant to affect their attitudes, emotions, and ways of handling community issues including their husbands hence ensuring a homogeneous community that abides to its tradition and customs as expected.

Although several reasons have been advanced for the practice of female circumcision, objections have been raised on the adverse effect of female circumcision. The immediate complications of female circumcision include hemorrhage and infection, which can be severe enough to threaten life. This practice has been criticized for causing excessive bleeding which has sometimes been fatal (Lumbasi, 1994). Long term effects such as sexual dysfunction, menstrual and fertility problems, difficulties during childbirth and psychological impairment are also reported (Hosken, 1978).

On the other hand a study by Herzong (1970) found significant correlation between initiation and self-image among Kikuyu adolescents. Other studies on circumcision and

self-concept found a positive significant correlation between self-concept of male and female circumcision (Clifford, 1964; Mwaniki, 1973).

In summary therefore, female circumcision is considered an obligation of each and every Maasai girl, as a cultural demand and a preparation for marriage. In relation to formal education, time is taken up by circumcision ceremonies especially when it is done the months of February and September in the year and girls are required to be in seclusion camps while schools are in session. Some primary schools in arid and semi arid areas largely inhabited by Maasai community virtually lose most Standard 7 and 8 pupils. This is attributed to girl circumcision ceremonies and attendants responsibilities of other girls who assist the initiates while in seclusion period.

Early efforts by the missionaries and the Kenyan Government to educate the Maasai children were always met with stiff resistance (FAWE News, 2001). The only education the Maasai considered vital for their youth was an elaborate system of initiation ceremonies as rites of passage to adulthood. Emphasis was given to female circumcision as a rite of passage among the Maasai community and its possible challenge to the education of the Maasai youth specifically the girls. Basing the argument on these contributions, this study was carried out to investigate the effect of female circumcision on academic performance.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

No consensus has been reached on the subject of female circumcision, which evokes a lot of heated debate on its definite value. Missionaries and the Kenya Government termed education and development of the Maasai as difficult since early efforts were always met with stiff cultural resistance. This District was chosen because female circumcision is commonly practiced in the area. Despite the great imbalance in the distribution of students by gender, girls have been performing relatively poorly in the National examination in both primary and secondary schools in the District (Kajiado District Development Plan, 1997-2001). Cultural beliefs and attitudes were found by Maritim (1983) to affect academic performance. Maritim, however, never specified

what cultural believes or attitudes that could have been influencing academic performance. Most communities practice female circumcision for cultural reasons. The female students' attitude towards the practice of female circumcision could affect their perceived need for education hence in turn affecting their academic performance. The researcher thus saw the need to investigate the effect of female circumcision on secondary school students' academic performance.

### **1.3 The Purpose of the Study**

People of different walks of life have different opinions concerning the practice of female circumcision as some of them support while others don't. National Examination Council ((Kajiado District Development Plan 1997- 2002) has reported poor performance among girls in secondary schools in the District. However, cultural beliefs and teachings were found by Maritim (1983) to have a significant impact on the education of girls in Kenya. Maritim's research was however, not specific because there are various cultural beliefs and teachings present in different communities of Kenya. Among the Maasai community, female circumcision is a cultural practice performed to young girls for various reasons. The purpose of this study was to provide empirical findings by examining the effect of female circumcision on academic performance.

### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study were to:

- a. Investigate the effect of circumcision on academic performance of female secondary school students in Loitokitok Division.
- b. Investigate the attitude of female students towards female circumcision.
- c. Investigate the effect of age on female secondary school students' attitude towards circumcision.
- d. Find out the effect of age on female secondary school students' academic performance.
- e. Find out the effect of the type of school on female secondary school students attitude towards circumcision.

- f. Examine the effect of the type of school on female secondary school students academic performance

### **1.5 Research Questions**

This study answered the following questions:

- a. Does circumcision affect female students' academic performance?
- b. What is the attitude of female student towards circumcision?
- c. Does age of female students influence their attitude towards circumcision?
- d. Does age affect female students' academic performance?
- e. Does the type of school influence the female students' attitude towards circumcision?
- f. Does the type of school affect the students' academic performance?

### **1.6 Null hypotheses**

This study had the following null hypotheses:

- H0 1: There is no significant effect of female circumcision on students' academic performance.
- H0 2: Age does not have significant effect on the students' attitude towards the practice of female circumcision
- H0 3: Age does not have significant effect on students' academic performance.
- H0 4: The type of school does not have any significant effect on students' academic performance.
- H0 5: The type of school does not have significant effect on students' attitude towards the practice of female circumcision

### **1.7 Justification of the Study**

There has been an international outcry from various non-Governmental organizations (NGOs), medical bodies, churches, and many people of all walks of life on the effects of the practice of female circumcision (Kiragu, 1995). Female circumcision has therefore become a subject of international concern and has evoked a lot of emotional reactions among people.

The sensitization programmes on the effects of female circumcision are evident in many countries, especially among the communities that practice female circumcision for example in Sudan and Kenya. Female circumcision was one of the major items of the agenda for the women's decade that ended in 1985 and various presentations were made from different countries (Sanderson, 1985). In Kenya, varying reactions have been raised on the issue of female circumcision. For instance, Ngugi (1994) asks "How can you ask a starving Maasai woman to stop circumcising her daughters before you provide her with food and water?"(p 104)

Moreover, sensitization programmes have been set in parts of Kenya like Narok, Meru, Samburu, Kisii and Kajiado Districts to sensitize people on the effects of female circumcision. This study investigated the female students' opinion on the same since they are the ones affected. Besides the sensitization programmes, research studies have concentrated much on the health effects of female circumcision. A research on circumcision of both girls and boys and its effect on self-concept and academic performance was done among the Pokot community of Kenya by (Katam, 1996). The research reported a significant relationship between circumcision among boys and girls and their self-concept. However, the research did not examine the effect of female circumcision on academic performance, which was the focus of the present study in Kajiado District.

### **1.8 Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study will be of great benefit to teachers, the Ministry of Education and non-Governmental organizations. It will provide information on students' attitude towards the practice of female circumcision and its effect on academic performance.

To the Ministry of Education, the findings can be helpful in preparation for teachers deployed to certain communities that practice female circumcision. They will be aware of the effects of female circumcision on academic performance. Guidance and counseling services departments will use the findings in helping students in their

academic work. The gender movements and other non-Governmental organizations can use the findings in their campaign on the effects of female circumcision. The study findings will add a new dimension of knowledge on students' attitude towards female circumcision and academic performance.

### **1.9 Scope of the study**

This study was carried out in Loitokitok Division of Kajiado District. The study used all mixed and single sex secondary schools in Loitokitok Division. As per the objectives and hypotheses, this study underscored five variables namely age, female circumcision, students' attitude towards female circumcision, type of school, and academic performance. Thus, observations of this study can be generalized to Loitokitok and other areas with similar characteristics.

### **1.10 Assumption of the Study**

Assumptions of the study were:

- a. Schools kept proper examination records for students.
- b. The average marks each student got at end of the term gave a true reflection of her academic performance.
- c. In the absence of standardized tests that could be used to assess the academic performance of the subjects involved in this study, it was assumed that end term mock results were an acceptable measure of students' academic performance.
- d. Information given by respondents was true.

### **1.11 Limitations of the Study**

There was scanty literature on female circumcision and academic performance from books. Due to this, the researcher solicited information from internet, newspapers, and journals.

### **1.12 Theoretical Frame Work**

This study was based on Symbolic Interactionism Theory. As cited in Nelson (1993), the theory sees human behavior as a form of interaction in which individuals define,



interpret, and give meaning to each other's actions instead of merely reacting to them. Blummer (1969) noted that human behaviour is meaningful and that people individually or collectively rationalize behavior on the basis of the meanings and impressions of objects that characterize the world.

According to this theory, interpretive process does not occur in a vacuum but is defined by a particular context and affected by moral order. Moral order involves how people are expected to live in the society. People therefore make sense out of everyday life actions through interpretive rationality, in reference to this moral order. This study therefore, employed this theory to explain the practice of female circumcision in terms of its meaning and values given by the society, which are transformed from one generation to another.

The theory also states that society is dynamic and evolving in the sense that change is inevitable in the society over time. People derive meanings from behaviour and actions. Interaction plays a greater role in a person's action and behaviour. In this regard, female students' social environment affects their attitude towards the practice of female circumcision.

Attitude and perception facilitate actions of an individual in response to meanings and values. From this argument, the female students are able to accept or reject female circumcision depending on the meanings and values attached to it. Since female students in Loitokitok Division are brought up in an environment where female circumcision is a rampant cultural practice, they are in a position to give meaning and values to its practice. In addition, they are able to give their perception of its possible effect on academic performance.

This theory recognizes the fact that human behaviour cannot be separated from its historical, economic, political and cultural matrix, in which it is embedded. Thus, female circumcision cannot be discussed in a vacuum since circumcision could not escape its cultural dimension.

### 1.13 Operational Definition of Key Terms

**Academic Achievement:** In the present study, academic performance was used to refer to a specified level of proficiency in school work in general. More specifically, it referred to the mock examination mean score of Form 4 students for the end of form three, term III of the Year 2004 in all the school subjects.

**Attitude:** This referred to mental or neural state of readiness, organized through experience exerting a directive or dynamic effect upon the individual's response to all objects and situations.

**Female circumcision:** This term was used to refer to both the physical operation and the psychological process of acquiring the status of adulthood certified by physical operation of the female genital parts.

**Initiation:** This referred to the rite of passage from child hood to adulthood, which culminates in circumcision. It incorporated all the activities, and teachings imparted to the initiate before, during and after circumcision.

**Perception:** In this study perception refer to the process of how individuals experience reality and the images the mind forms of the reality experienced. In this study, perception stemmed from the way the female students attached values and formed meaning from the action of female circumcision in relation to their academic performance.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Overview**

This chapter gives a critical review of related literature on female circumcision and academic performance. The review mainly focuses on the origin of female circumcision as a form of initiation, the forms of circumcision, the incidence, and its importance according to most communities practicing this rite.

#### **2.1 The Origin of Female Circumcision**

The origin of female circumcision is not clearly known. Female circumcision is also referred to as “genital mutilation” especially by people who do not support the rite. The term female circumcision was consciously chosen for this study instead of female genital mutilation (FGM) because this term connotes malice. Among the communities, that still practice female circumcision, there is no intention to harm their daughters. The word female circumcision is used in this study to avoid antagonizing people. Although outside Africa, the practice of female circumcision is also very much upheld in countries like Yemen, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and certain section of Latin America, its main locus is Africa.

The debate over female circumcision is relatively recent. In the 1950s and 1960s, however, African activists and medical practitioners brought the health consequences of female circumcision to the attention of international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO). Still, it was not until 1979 that any formal policy statement was made following a seminar organized by WHO in Khartoum to address traditional practices affecting the health of women and children issued recommendations that Governments work to eliminate the practice (WHO, 1979). Female circumcision is currently practiced in at least 28 countries stretching across the center of Africa north of the equator; it is not found in southern Africa or in the Arabic-speaking nations of North Africa, with the exception of Egypt (Toubia, 1995).

Female circumcision is a practice that dates' back beyond anyone's memory in Kenya. According to Giorgis (1981) female circumcision was practiced in ancient Egypt. Alternatively, it could have been an old African rite (Dorkenoo, 1994). This was mainly attributed to people's mobility through migration causing cultural assimilation through socialization process hence the spread of the practice to many parts of the world. Female circumcision was reported among the ancient Egyptian mummies in 200 BC, and was referred to as "Aramaic" during the second century BC. In a Greek Papyrus dated 163 BC, "Aramaic" was described as an operation performed in Memphis when women received their dowries (Giorgis, 1981).

Other beliefs in Egypt were that female circumcision could be traced to the patriarchal family system. This family system indicated that a woman should be faithful to only one husband while a man was allowed to have several wives. Mainly the operation was done to restrict the woman's sexuality (Giorgis, 1981). Basically, among the Maasai community, the origin of female circumcision remains unknown.

Although people of different walks of life have different opinions on the practice of female circumcision, issues of its origin still pose a major challenge to its mythology and the dissemination of information on the effects of female circumcision in the world. Although different communities practicing female circumcision may have different beliefs over its origin while to others it is unknown, this study concentrated on the effect of female circumcision on academic performance.

## **2.2 Female Circumcision**

Female circumcision is a term used to refer to the removal of part of the female genitalia, mainly the clitoris, labia minora and labia majora. Female circumcision consists of various operation procedures varying from one community to another; for example clitoridectomy where all or part of the clitoris is removed. Excision involves removal of all or part of the labia minora, and cutting of the labia majora to create "raw" surfaces, which were then stitched or held together to form a cover over the vagina when they heal. A small hole was left to allow urine and menstrual blood to escape. In

some less conventional forms of infibulations, less tissue was removed and larger opening was left.

In some communities, a ceremony is conducted but no operation of the genital occurs. A psychological substitution for the operation was done, for example, holding a knife next to the genitals, pricking the clitoris, and cutting some pubic hair or light scarification in the genital or upper thigh area, these practices were not prevalent among the Maasai community.

The vast majority (85%) of genital operations performed in Africa consist of clitoridectomy and excision as discussed in the next section. The least radical procedure consists of the removal of the clitoral hood.

### **2.3 Forms of Circumcision**

According to Dorkenoo (1994) female circumcision is classified into three main types depending on the amount of tissue removed from the genital parts as highlighted below:

**TYPE I:** Is the excision (removal) of the clitoral hood with or without removal of all or part of the clitoris.

**TYPE II:** Is excision the (removal) of the clitoris together with part or all of the labia minora (the inner vaginal lips).

**TYPE III:** Is the excision (removal) of part or all of the external genitalia (clitoris, labia minora and labia majora) and stitching or narrowing of the vaginal opening, leaving a very small opening, about the size of a matchstick, to allow the flow of urine and menstrual blood. Then the girl or woman's legs are tied together using a rope from the hip to the ankle for approximately 40 days so that she remains immobile to allow formation of scar.

The procedures were generally carried out by traditional excisors on girls between the ages of 9 and 16 and without the aid of anesthesia. The procedure was frequently performed to the Maasai girls during puberty. A survey by Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization found that type I was highly practiced in Kisii, Narok and Kajiado

Districts while type II was practiced in Meru District. Although various communities use different forms of circumcision, in this study the forms of female circumcision were not investigated, instead the focus was on the general effect of female circumcision on academic performance.

#### **2.4 Procedures followed during Circumcision**

The type of circumcision, the age at which it was carried out, and the way in which it was done varied according to a variety of factors including the woman's or girls' ethnic group, which country they were living in, and their socio- economic background.

The procedures were carried out at different ages, ranging from shortly after birth to sometimes during the first pregnancy, but mostly at puberty stage. According to world Health Organization, the average age was falling which indicates the practice is decreasingly associated with initiation into adulthood and this was believed to be particularly the case in urban areas. Maasai girls are mainly initiated at the onset of puberty. Some girls undergo female circumcision alone but often girls undergo it in a group, for example sisters, close female relatives, or neighbours. Where circumcision was carried out as part of initiation, as it was the case in societies in eastern, central and western Africa, it was more likely to be carried out on all the girls in the community who belonged to a particular age group. This was to be carried out in the girls' home, or the home of a relative or a neighbour, in the health center, or, especially if associated with initiation at a designated site, such as particular tree or river.

The person performing female circumcision may be an old woman, a traditional midwife or healer, a barber, or a qualified midwife or doctor. This applies to the Maasai community where an old woman is used to perform the genital operation to the girls. Sometimes a trained midwife was made available to give a local anesthetic and provide traditional medicine to the initiate to facilitate healing. In some cultures like the Maasai, girls would be told to sit in cold water to numb the area to be operated on to reduce bleeding. More commonly, however, no measures were taken to reduce pain. The girl was immobilized, held, usually by elder women, with her legs apart. Circumcision could be carried out using a broken glass, a tin lid, scissors, a razor blade, or some other

cutting instrument. When infibulation took place, thorns or stitches were used to hold the two sides of the labia majora together. Herbs, milk, egg, ashes, or cow dung that were believed to facilitate healing were applied after the operation.

The girls were taken to a specifically designated place to recover. If the circumcision was carried out as part of an initiation ceremony, elderly women imparted traditional instructions during the seclusion period. These instructions were considered important to the Maasai community since they were meant to inculcate to the girls new values and expectations of the society. The procedures differ from one community to another.

## **2.5 Functions of Female Circumcision**

There are many reasons cited for the practice of female circumcision, among them chastity, increasing chances of marriage, religious decree, and a cultural practice. Initially some communities believed the clitoris was ugly. Others believed that an uncircumcised girl was incapable of bearing children while others believed that infibulation adds pleasure to the husband during intercourse. Excision was said to reduce chances of engaging in sexual intercourse in unmarried girls, as the case with infibulation.

The importance given to virginity and intact hymen in various communities that practice female circumcision was argued to be the reason why female circumcision remained a wide spread practice. Behind circumcision, lies a belief that by removing parts of girls' external genital organs, sexual desires are minimized as the case with the Maasai community. This permitted girls who had reached puberty and adolescence to protect their virginity and therefore their honor with greater ease. A variety of justifications are given by respondents who favour continuation of the practice, including preservation of virginity before marriage, fidelity after marriage, enhancement of the husband's sexual pleasure, enhancement of fertility, prevention of infant and child mortality, cleanliness and religious requirements, but tradition is by far the most commonly mentioned reason (Toubia, 1995). In this study, the above functions were categorized into religious, socio-economic, medical and psychological as discussed below.

### **2.5.1 Religious Function**

The significance of female circumcision may have been a religious acknowledgement associated with powers of human production (Falwell, 1982). Giorgis, (1981) observed that during circumcision a sacrifice was made of a part of a body for the salvation of the whole. To other authorities the operation was viewed as a sacrifice to the deity presiding over fertility. For instance, among the Dogon community in Mali, human beings were believed to possess two souls during birth, the male, and the female. The clitoris of the female was believed to be the male element. Therefore, female circumcision was performed to get rid of what was contrary to the true nature (Dorkenoo, 1994).

In Egypt, there existed a correlation between the bisexuality of the gods and human beings in the mythology and the relationship of bisexuality to female circumcision (Giorgis, 1981). According to Islamic faith prophet Mohammed is quoted saying “Circumcise but do not go too deep; this is more illuminated to the face and more enjoyable to the husband” (Beasley, 1992; p 79). Therefore, religion plays a role in the existence and continuity of the practice of female circumcision in the society.

### **2.5.2 Socio -Cultural and Economic Functions**

Female circumcision was often considered necessary in order for a girl to be considered a complete woman, as the practice marks the divergence of sex roles in life and marriage. Girls who were not circumcised were considered by the community, which practice female circumcision as immoral, make rude wives and daughters’ in-law when married. It was meant to enhance the girls’ femininity, often synonymous with submissiveness and obedience. This prepared them for marriage hence the dowry was to be paid to their family. An uncircumcised girl fetches a lower bride price. In communities where the practice persists, bride price is deeply entrenched and a girl who refuses to be circumcised is considered a threat to the would-be wealth her father expects on her marriage. Different people have different opinions over the same for instance; Hosken (1978) considered infibulation as a crude method used to demonstrate anatomical virginity when a bride is sold by her family.



Hayes (1975) reported that circumcision served the purpose of reducing fertility in a country where population growth was high and resources were scarce. This was compared with the case in Sudan where 25% of the infertility cases were attributed to infubilation (Beasley, 1992). Among the Maasai community female circumcision was not done to reduce its human population as in Sudan, but mainly to prepare the girls for marriage responsibilities. In this case, the girls derive their primary source of identity and economic security from the patriarchal unit. This applies to the Maasai community since it was mainly to prepare the girls for marriage and protect the women from infidelity in their marriage.

### **2.5.3 Medical Functions**

There have been several medical studies conducted on female circumcision with focus on the removal of the clitoral hood (prepuce) including a research by Wheeler (2005). According to Wheeler (2005), the study reported a striking percentage of females he had circumcised experience enhanced sexual enjoyment. Unfortunately, this research was done outside Africa and its finding could be limited in application. Kenya in particular has no research of this kind. Therefore, many people who express their views for or against the practice of female circumcision have no experience or concrete evidence to back up their judgment.

Wheeler (2005) reported to have issued questionnaires to women he had circumcised and received 112 replies. Of the 112 respondents, 72 women who reported having never experienced an orgasm prior to the surgery, 64(87.6%) reported successful achievement of orgasm after the surgery. This research is however subjective in nature since the sample is not representative of all women around the world. This finding contradicts the belief by the many communities that female circumcision was done to reduce a woman sexual urge.

In 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were debates in England as to whether clitoridectomy could cure women 'illnesses' such as hysteria and "excessive masturbation" (Duffy, 1963). Block as

cited in (Giorgis, 1981) viewed masturbation as a 'Moral leprosy', which had debilitating effects on women and young children. However, in England clitoridectomy was performed from 1860's to 1920 to treat women's "emotional" problems. This is according to Hayes (1975) who in his book, *The Curability of Certain Forms of Epilepsy and Hysteria*, advanced that clitoridectomy was to be performed on women who suffered from certain forms of malaria, hysteria and insanity. In addition, Wollman (1973) reported to have received hundred patients referred to him by psychoanalysts and clinical psychologists. According to him, out of the hundred patients he received, 68 benefited by surgical female circumcision as a form of treatment. In addition, female circumcision was done to cure a certain form of a genital disease, although not specific.

The findings by Wollman (1973), which revealed that female circumcision, could be used to enhance a woman sexual satisfaction is controversial. The findings of a research study by Takey (1977) revealed that circumcised women could achieve orgasm only by masturbation, oral sex and in the lateral or female-superior positions only. It is evident that there are a lot of debates on the possible medical benefits of the practice of female circumcision. In relation to this, health is very important to students in their efforts to achieve excellent academic performance. It has not been mentioned therefore whether female circumcision impacts on the initiates' health or have any effect on their schooling process.

Moreover, Scott (1981) advanced that anatomic studies have shown that on a per centimeter surface area, the number of nerve endings in the glans clitoris is equal to that in the same surface of the glans penis. According to Scott, modern study of human sexuality and medical science has confirmed the critical role of the clitoris in female sexual stimulation. He continued to argue that the clitoris is not just the small mound, visible to the eye, but a large network of nerves that extend around the upper genital area past the urethra and in some women down to the top of the vagina itself. Most of the people who argue against the practice of female circumcision base their argument on such studies. However, this practice has been there for a long time and fortunately or unfortunately girls and women who are affected are hardly heard complaining of their

sexual incapacity during intercourse. It may be other people initiative to explore and explain the possible effect of this practice on the initiates' sexual deprivation.

However, the ideas about the health effects of female circumcision were not unique to Africa. Clitoridectomy continued to be practiced for these reasons until early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the U.S.A. Health benefits were not the most frequently cited reasons for circumcision in societies where it was still practiced. Mainly, female circumcision was done as part of the initiation rite. In some societies, which practice female circumcision believed that it enhances fertility, while others believed that uncircumcised woman could not conceive. In some cultures, it was believed that clitoridectomy makes childbirth safer.

Today, these claims have little or no support by epidemiological data and this practice has virtually been abandoned in most western countries. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics report of 1975, there was no medical indication for circumcision in the neonatal period. In addition, in 1978, the American college of obstetricians and gynecologists endorsed the academy's position and jointly reaffirmed this judgment in their 1983 report – Guidelines for Prenatal Care. In countries like Britain, New Zealand, Canada, and Australia, circumcision rates have reduced markedly due to this realization. In this instance therefore, circumcision is only an occasional medical necessity. In Kajiado District, the practice is still rampant for the reason already cited earlier. However, most of the studies done are on the effect of female circumcision on the initiates' health. It was therefore, the aim of this study to bridge this gap of knowledge by providing knowledge female students' attitude towards female circumcision and academic performance.

#### **2.5.4 Psychological Functions of Female Circumcision**

According to Bettelheim (1954) female circumcision is an effort of the youngsters themselves to resolve the conflict between their pregenital desires and identification of the biological and social role of their sex according to nature and the mores of the society. Circumcision of girls makes them feel grown up, and have no qualms having

sexual relations with adult men, and grown men also view them as mature women, ready for sexual relationships.

In most cultures where removal of the clitoris and the inner labia is customary, a teenage female who did not get circumcised will require it because she is usually considered unclean and unfit by her society. The pleasure of being a full-fledged female in her society provides a girl with psychological satisfaction. In addition, uncircumcised girl is likely to be taunted by her family, friends, schoolmates and young boys.

Circumcision changes the meaning of life (Erny, 1981). Circumcision was done to the girls to provide physical and emotional shock to increase their receptivity of the important instruction given during seclusion. The rites do not by themselves impart any deep knowledge, but they make the girls more disposed to receive such knowledge and enhance their state to understand the significance of the passage from the profane world to that of the initiated (Erny, 1981). Thus, the removal of the clitoris and labia, viewed by some as the ‘male parts’ on a woman's body, was thought to enhance the girls’ fertility. Circumcision was meant to reduce the women’s sexual desire, therefore reducing the chance of sex outside marriage. The Psychological functions were mainly directed to submissiveness of the woman to her husband and knowledge on marriage responsibilities.

According to the Maasai community, the above functions were and still are evident as a reason for the continuing practice of female circumcision in Kajiado District. In this case, little has been mentioned to relate female circumcision to academic performance. In this respect, this research aimed at contributing new knowledge on the effect of female circumcision on academic performance.

## **2.6 The Incidence of Female Circumcision**

This practice has been reported in far afield as U.K, France, Canada, England, and United State of America. The continents of Asia and Europe have the least population of their residents practicing female circumcision. It is approximated to be about 20% of

the total population (Katam, 1996). The practice is all over the world but mostly in Africa.

In June 1999, the Ministry of Health in Kenya prepared a National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Female Circumcision. A study indicated that 38 percent of Kenyan women between the ages of 15 and 19 and over half of women above the age of 35 had been subjected to female circumcision (FAWE News, 2001).

It is reportedly practiced in varying degrees by some 30 of Kenya's 40 plus ethnic groups. It is not practiced among one largest ethnic group in Kenya's far West, the Luos while some Luhya sub-groups for example the Tachoni had been practicing female circumcision. National statistics by the Ministry of Health on female circumcision revealed that some communities like Kisii had 97% of their women circumcised; Maasai - 89%; Kalenjin – 62 %; Taita and Taveta –59%; Meru/Embu groups – 54 %; Kikuyu –43%; Kamba – 33 %; MijiKenda/Swahili – 12 % (FAWE News, 2001).

A 1992 survey conducted by the largest grassroots organization in Kenya, Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization (MYWO), found that nearly 90 percent of the women over 14 years of age in the Kisii, Meru, Narok, Kajiado and Samburu Districts had been subjected to female circumcision. It is also noted by Beasley (1992) that female circumcision is widely practiced among the Muslim community of the Northeastern Province of Kenya, particularly among the Somalis, Borans, and Gabras.

This study was conducted in Loitokitok Division of Kajiado District, which from the statistics shown above indicated that most women over 14 years had undergone female circumcision. Since most of the women and girls in Kajiado District had undergone female circumcision, this study examined their attitude towards female circumcision and academic performance.

## **2.7 Maasai community attitudes and Beliefs on Female Circumcision**

Attitude is a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, situation or event. The cognitive component of attitude concerns thoughts and beliefs while the affective component concerns feelings towards the attitude for instance circumcision. The feelings may concern love or hate of the practice. Attitude cannot be directly observed. Attitudes are latent, inferred from the direction and persistence of external behaviour. Attitudes therefore summarize, explain, and predict behaviour. Attitude is a hypothetical construct to explain the direction and persistence of human behaviour. The practice of female circumcision has been there in many communities in Kenya particularly among the Maasai community in Kajiado District. The persistence of this practice can be attributed to the favour of the practice emanating from the values attached to it.

Attitude concerns readiness for action. It is a behavioural intention or plan of action under defined contexts and circumstances. Parents with favourable attitude towards female circumcision might indicate their readiness to circumcise their daughters. Students with favourable attitude towards circumcision will express their readiness to be circumcised. The latter example illustrates the possibility of action component often but not always being an indicator of external behaviour.

Attitude can be measured at an individual level or common attitude of a group or community may be elicited. At any level, the information may be important in attempting to represent democratically the “views of the people. Consideration of how attitudes relate to their causes and effects may provide insights into human functioning. Accordingly, actual or symbolic presence of an object elicits a general favourable or unfavourable attitude towards the object. This attitude in turn predisposes cognitive, affective and motor responses to the object, responses whose evaluative tone is consistent with the overall attitude. The fact that the practice of female circumcision has been there among the Maasai community and has been receiving full support by the community members, the students brought up in this environment are likely to uphold what their elders’ value and practice.

Among the groups that practice female circumcision, it is universally thought that the practice benefit girls. There is widespread belief among those who practice female circumcision that ancestors were to curse girls who had not undergone the practice. Mothers and grandmothers were the most influential persons to determine when girls were to be circumcised. Supporters of female circumcision argue that tradition is necessary for social fabric and to the maturation of girls in the society.

It was believed that female circumcision reduces female promiscuity, ensuring virginity at marriage and marital fidelity. Various beliefs were associated with the practice. The Akamba, for example, believed that it helped women avoid difficulties in childbirth. In rural areas where it is highly practiced, girls who had not undergone the procedure were often told they would not get husbands, an effective scare tactic in rural Africa where there is discrimination against unmarried women. This could also affected students in secondary schools where those who were not circumcised are abused by those who had undergone the practice. In addition, older men also reflected the traditional preference for wives who had undergone the procedure. This perpetuated the practice.

Supporters of female circumcision see the practice as integral to a girl's maturation because the ritual included instruction about sexuality, relations with husbands, pregnancy and marriage responsibilities. In this study, the students' attitudes towards the practice of female circumcision and academic performance were underscored.

People of different walks of life have expressed their feelings and attitudes towards the practice of female circumcision. In an article "Saving the School girl from forced marriage" Mesopir (11.12.2002), formerly working with Maendeleo Ya Wanawake says "Sexual and physical abuse, harmful cultural practices (e.g. female circumcision, early marriages) and denial of access to education for girls ... are some of the problems that girls face" p 28. "The sight of young girls being led out of class to be circumcised... by their parents really touched my heart." p 29

This was an expression of attitude since female circumcision was viewed as a threat to the girl's education. Mesopir expresses an unfavourable attitude towards the practice of female circumcision.

Attitudes are a reflection of values based on beliefs and change of attitude comes as a result of true re-evaluation of one's basic values or beliefs. The interaction with the new aspects of culture and environment greatly effects people's attitude. Students' interaction with members of the Maasai community acquaints them to values attached to various cultural practices particularly female circumcision. It is from what they see from the environment which molds their attitude towards the practice of female circumcision.

The Federation of African Women Educationists News (2001) pointed out that cultural expectations, domestic tasks and parents' negative attitude towards the education of girls have been contributing to poor performance of girls in secondary schools. This information may not be true since it has no supporting research findings. However, the practice of female circumcision has a cultural background and the current research aimed at finding out students' attitude towards female circumcision and academic performance. The girls were expected to behave the way the society requires of them. In this case, the attitudes of the students adjust to those of the society. This is supported by (Ndimu, 1994) who says:

"Girls drop out of school too early because of their belief that they are mature enough after they undergo circumcision " pp148

The girls were meant to follow the instructions given during seclusion period. Njiru (1981) argues when describing Ameru indigenous education given during circumcision that "Women have no mandate to rule over men. They have several shortcomings, and unless the elders carefully guide them, they can bring the country to chaos" Njiru (1981).



According to Vonkur (1998) argument that “If a girl is left long in school, loses her virginity through exposure to Western education, and this may affect negatively the aim of marrying her off as a pure, innocent, simple, young wife” p 18.

This is an expression of attitude towards girls’ education, which the Maasai community also upholds. In this perspective, the girls may not be motivated enough to perform better in their academic work in school hence influencing their perception of the importance of schooling.

The United Nation General Assembly Special Session paper (2000) on Gender Equity, Development and Peace for 21st Century observed that socio-cultural attitudes and values are some of the causes of low participation in the schooling system among girls. This argument has no documented research findings therefore qualify to be an expression of attitude towards communities’ culture and values. Female circumcision is a cultural practice and therefore the aim of this study was to provide empirical findings on female students’ attitude towards the practice of female circumcision and academic performance.

## **2.8 Fight Against Female Circumcision**

Opponents of female circumcision have continued to emphasize that the practice of female circumcision is detrimental to women's health and well-being. Some consider female circumcision a ritualized form of child abuse and violence against women and a violation of human rights (Frances, 2009). Among the Maasai community in Kenya, who consider uncircumcised girls unclean, promiscuous and immature, girls are generally circumcised at age 14 or 15, usually just before they are married (McKinley, 1996). Because of their lack of choice and the powerful effect of tradition, many girls continue to accept circumcision as a necessary, and even natural, part of life and adopt the rationales given for its existence.

The Non-Governmental Organisations have not relented efforts to continue addressing the effects of female circumcision in Kenya. Numerous projects have been mounted to eliminate female circumcision, with some in cooperating rigorous evaluations to determine their success. According to Frances (2009) the approaches include

community education and awareness raising on the effects of female circumcision, and the practice of the alternative rite of passage.

Alternative rite of passage, the organization Maendeleo Ya Wanawake carried out a pilot project in the Meru District of Kenya in 1996 to develop an alternative initiation ritual. Some 25 mother-daughter pairs participated in a six-day training session that included information on the consequences of female circumcision and how to defend the decision not to be cut. The session culminated in a coming-of-age celebration planned by the community, excluding circumcision but including gifts and special T-shirts for the initiates, skits, and "books of wisdom" prepared by the parents of each girl (Rich & Joyce, 1997).

The practice of alternative rite of passage for girls instead of the surgical female circumcision is gaining support from local and International Organisations. This can be attributed to the belief that female circumcision encompasses more than the surgical cut itself. It is believed to be deeply entrenched in the future, wrapped in a complex shroud of assumptions, taboos and beliefs that impact a woman's social status and personal identity (Africa News, 1997).

Although the Non-Governmental Organisations efforts to eradicate the practice of female circumcision is anchored in the laws of Kenya, attitude towards the values and importance of its practice are entrenched in affected communities. These continue to challenge efforts by various organisations to affect the practice of female circumcision. Policy declarations by Government and professional bodies are essential to send a strong message of disapproval, but if the majority of the society is still convinced that female genital mutilation serves the common good, legal sanctions that incriminate practitioners and families may be counterproductive (Toubia, 1995). Although there are various interventions by Government, Civil Society and private development actors to affect the practice of female circumcision, this study specifically examined the effect of female circumcision on academic performance.

## **2.9 Summary**

People of different walks of life hold different attitudes towards the practice of female circumcision around the world. According to Blummer (1969) as cited in Nelson

(1993), attitude and perception facilitate actions of an individual in response to meanings and values. He adds that human behavior is meaningful and people individually or collectively rationalize behavior on the basis of the meanings and impressions of objects that characterize the world. Values given to the practice of female circumcision by the female students could affect their attitude towards the practice of female circumcision which in turn can affect academic performance.

Therefore, the girls' attitude towards female circumcision would stem from the attitudes of the old men and women in the society where they live. The female students' perception of the effect of female circumcision on academic performance could be determined by the value given to formal education by the community. It was therefore, the aim of this study to investigate students' attitude towards the practice of female circumcision and academic performance.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Overview**

This chapter covers the description of the research design, geographical location of the study, the research population and sampling procedures. Moreover, the chapter underscores the research instrument including validity, reliability, and scoring of the instrument, methods of data collection, analysis and presentation.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The “ex-post facto” research design was used in this study. Kerlinger (1973) defines it as a systematic empirical enquiry into which scientists do not have direct control of independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred. The study involved observation of the dependent variable and retrospectively investigated the independent variable for its possible effect. According to (Maritim, 1983) this design allows the collection of more information and tests for more relationships between variables. It is possible to get broad and reasonable accurate views of the response to certain issues and to test theories on social relationships at both the individual and group levels.

#### **3.2 Variables**

The dependent variables were academic performance and attitude towards the practice of female circumcision. A dependent variable is an attribute, which is measured by a researcher as an indicator of the outcome of a study (Stratton; Hayes, 1988). The independent variables in this study were students’ age, type of school and female circumcision.

#### **3.3 Geographical Location of the Study**

This research was carried out in Loitokitok Division of Kajiado District, Rift Valley Province, Kenya. Kajiado District is located at the southern tip of the Rift-valley Province. It is bordered by the Republic of Tanzania to the south-west, Taita Taveta

District to the south- east, Machakos to the east, Nairobi to the north-east, Kiambu to the North and Narok District to the west.

The District is situated between longitudes 36°5" and 37°55" East and between latitude 1°, 0" and 3° 0" South. The District covers an area of 21,105 km<sup>2</sup>. It's divided into five administrative Divisions namely Kajiado Central, Ngong, Mashuru, Magadi and Loitokitok. The land rises in altitude from about 500 meters around the lake Magadi to about 2,500 meters in the Ngong hills area. The main economic activities practiced in the area are crop and livestock farming. The area is sparsely populated with a population of 382,495. Loitokitok Division had a population of 145,012 in the year 2001 (Kajiado District Development plan, 1997-2001).

This District was chosen because female circumcision is commonly practiced in the area. Despite the great imbalance in the distribution of students by gender, girls have been performing relatively poorly in the National examination in both primary and secondary schools in the District (Kajiado District Development Plan, 1997-2001). Cultural believes and attitudes were found by Maritim (1983) to effect academic performance. Maritim, however, never specified what cultural believes or attitudes that could have been influencing academic performance. Most communities practice female circumcision for cultural reasons. The female students' attitude towards the practice of female circumcision could affect their perceived need for education hence in turn affecting their academic performance.

### **3.4 The Study Population**

There were five secondary schools in Loitokitok Division of Kajiado District. Out of the five secondary schools in the Division, there was one boys' school, one-girl school and three co-educational schools. Since this study only targeted female students, the girl school and the three co-educational secondary schools were involved in this study. In Loitokitok Division, the total population of girls in all secondary schools added up to 967.

### **3.5 Research Sample**

Secondary school in Loitokitok Division had a total population of 967 female students in Form 1 to Form 4. This encompasses the three co-educational secondary schools and the girl secondary school. The girl secondary school and two co-educational secondary schools were boarding schools and one co-educational secondary school was a day school. The distribution in number of Form 4 students in the various schools in the Division, the girl school had the highest number with 48 followed by the day school with 42, and the remaining two co-educational schools had 28 and 32 students respectively. This study only interviewed Form 4 female students in the schools selected for the study. There were a total of 150 female students in Form 4 in the Division who were therefore selected for this study. However, out of the 150 Form 4 female students, 130 students were available during the study and therefore participated by responding to the questionnaire.

### **3.6 Selection of the Research Sample**

All Form 4 female students in the Division were involved in this study through a purposive sampling. The Form 4 female students were chosen for this study since they were considered mature by age and could easily comprehend the items in the questionnaire. In addition, they had been in school for a longer time as compared to other students; they were in a position to respond to the attitude scale effectively. In this case, female students in four secondary schools in Loitokitok Division participated in this study.

### **3.7 The Research Instruments**

The researcher used questionnaire in soliciting first-hand information from the students. The questionnaire was considered important since it allowed the investigation to measure subjective states such as attitude, perception, and emotions. According to Maritim (1983) any study that requires having information about internal states must almost always use self-report techniques. According to Kothari (2003) the use of questionnaires is preferred because; it is free of bias from interviewer; it is cost effective; it gives respondents adequate time to give well thought out answers; the

researcher can reach the respondent otherwise not easily approachable conveniently and finally results can be more dependable. Since there was no standardized achievement tests that could be used to assess academic performance of the students involved in this study, the researcher used a common Form 3 third term mock examination mean score of the year 2004.

### **3.7.1 Reliability of the questionnaire**

Data collected largely depend on the reliability of the instrument. Reliability refers to the consistency that an instrument demonstrates when applied repeatedly under similar conditions (Koul, 1993). To establish the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was administered to 30 Form 4 female students' in Ilerai Girls Secondary School in Central Division of Kajiado District. The targeted students responded to the items twice, the second time being after one week. This school was chosen because it is situated in Central Kajiado District hence the female students come from a similar environment. The answered questionnaire was scored manually and a comparison between answers obtained in the first and the second scores of the administered questionnaire. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient( $r$ ) formula was used to calculate stability index in order to establish the extent to which the contents of the questionnaire were consistent in eliciting the same responses every time the instrument was administered. A correlation coefficient of .7 was realized. This was considered high enough to judge the instrument reliable for this study.

### **3.7.2 Validity of the Questionnaire**

Validity of the questionnaire is the success of the scale in measuring what it set out to measure. In this study content validity was assessed. This was to ensure that the items accurately measured what they were supposed to measure. To validate the instrument, the researcher sought assistance from experts in the department of Educational Psychology. Further assistance was sought from supervisors and colleagues at Moi University. Criticism, corrections, suggestions, and inputs were used by the researcher to make adjustment accordingly.

### **3.8 Administration of the Instrument**

A covering letter requesting the participants to cooperate in the study was written by the researcher and attached to the questionnaire. Students were required to fill the questionnaire in their classrooms. Spacing of their seating arrangements was done to ensure confidentiality. The respondents were asked to indicate their admission numbers. This assisted the researcher in knowing which student answered which questionnaire, hence correlating the responses of a student with her scores with academic performance.

### **3.9 Procedures for Data Collection**

The researcher visited the Divisional Education Office and presented the university letter of introduction to the research seeking permission to carry out data collection in schools. Permission was granted. The researcher visited the schools and requested for appropriate time to administer the questionnaire to the targeted students. The researcher requested the class teachers to assist in the distribution of the questionnaire. The researcher also requested for the form three third term common mock examination mean score results; for the Form 4 students for their previous year. This was a common exam done by all form three students' in the District at the end of every year and meant to provide an insight in to the students' academic performance.

### **3.10 Scoring Procedure**

Scoring of the questionnaire was done depending on each variable. Age as an independent variable was categorized into two age brackets. Students' age categories were 16-18 and 19-21 years. For circumcision as an independent variable, students were categorized into two, those circumcised or not circumcised. In addition, the type of school as an independent variable was categorized into four. The four categories were single sex schools and mixed schools, day schools and boarding schools. On the other hand, academic performance as a dependent variable, the mock examination means grade was used. A mean grade of E = was awarded 1 point, D- =2, D=3, D+=4, C-=5, C=6, C+=7, B- =8, B=9, B+=10, A- =11, A=12 respectively.



Moreover, the attitude scale that was used to measure students' attitude towards female circumcision was presented in likert scale with scores ranging from 1-5. Responses that reflected positive attitude were scored highly while those reflecting negative attitudes were scored low as shown below:

<b>Students Responses</b>	Strongly Agree [SA]	Agree [A]	Not Sure [NS]	Disagree [D]	Strongly Disagree [SD]
<b>Scores</b>	5	4	3	2	1

From the 18 items, the minimum score a student could get was 18 and a maximum of 90. However, for easy analysis of the data on attitude, the scale responses were merged in to three with 0-42 being negative, 43-66 being neutral while 67- 90 being positive. This is equally the same as 0-1.7 being negative, 1.8-3.4 being neutral and 3.5-5.0 being positive as used in the present study. To measure the students' attitude towards the practice of female circumcision, various items in section were used (item 2,3,5,6 and 7) against the biographical information in section A.

### **3.11 Ethical Considerations**

Each participant right to privacy was observed and cherished. The respondents were not required to write their names in the questionnaire used in data collection. However, they were requested to write down their admission number for identification of their academic performance records. The school authorities and the students were assured that the information given would be treated with absolute confidentiality.

### **3.12 Procedure for Data Presentation and Analysis**

Data analysis was done with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 15.0). The analysis employed the use of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The descriptive statistics included mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages. Correlation that serves as a measure of association was also used. The

most preferred was Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) because it is a measure of linear association.

The One Way ANOVA and Chi-Square were used to test the hypotheses in the study. One Way ANOVA underscores the variation that exists within cases. The Chi-Square test plays a significant role in assessing relationships between variables. This can be simplified to mean the extent to which one variable accounts for a shortfall in the other variable. T-test on the other hand is used to test the significance that exists while testing the difference in means. In tables, data was presented in terms of the student type of school, age, whether the student had undergone circumcision, responses to the attitude scale and academic mean grade respectively.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.0 Overview**

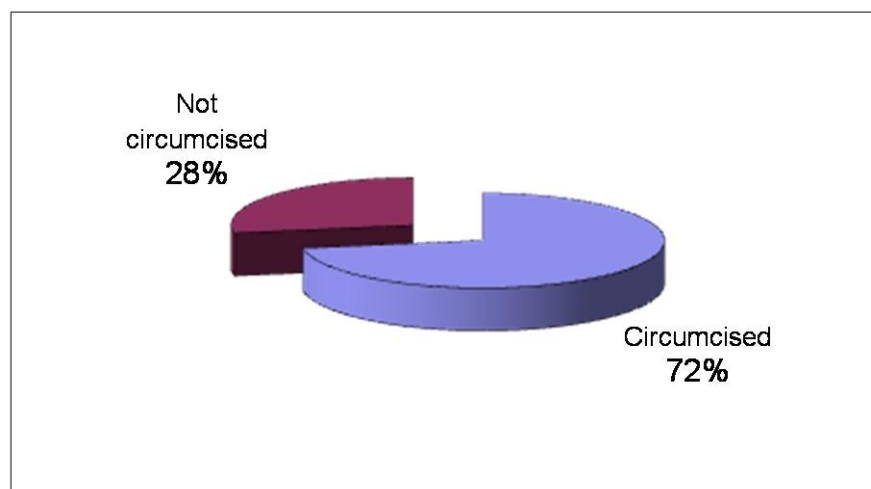
This chapter discusses the results of data analysis pertinent to the research questions that were advanced for this study. It gives a description of findings of the study, which focuses on female circumcision and academic performance. Five hypotheses were tested in this investigation. The five percent alpha level was used to reject or accept the null hypotheses which postulated relationship between variables. The .05 alpha level of significance was chosen because it was considered by the researcher as neither too high nor too low but standard. The .01 level of significance was considered quite a high level of certainty. Therefore, this level ( $p < .01$ ) is too stringent, that real significant results may be discarded (Kerlinger, 1973). Other levels of significance like  $p < .10$  may be too low a level of certainty so that a researcher selecting it risks a decision by taking too high a chance of 10 times in 100. The  $p < .05$  level was therefore considered appropriate.

#### **4.1 Demographic Distribution of the Respondents**

Out of the initial 150 questionnaires distributed to the Form 4 female students in secondary schools (girl school and mixed secondary schools) in Loitokitok Division, 130 were completely filled and collected by the researcher. From the schools, 15 Form 4 female students had not reported to school while 5 of them had been sent home for fees. The missing students were from the two co-educational boarding schools.

This gave a return rate of 86.8% of the total 150 targeted Form 4 female students in Loitokitok Division. This percentage was considered favourable and adequate to be used for data analysis. All the collected 130 questionnaires were properly completed and therefore were used for data analysis. Thus, the resulting research sample composed of 130 Form 4 female students ( $N = 130$ ). The research findings indicated that 94 (72%) of the respondents had undergone female circumcision while 36 (28%) of the respondents had not undergone the practice as shown on Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Prevalence of Circumcision among Female Students in Loitokitok  
Division of Kajiado District**



Source; Primary data

Most of the respondents 88 (68%) were in boarding school and the rest 42 (32%) were in day school. Those who were in single sex school were 44 (34%) and those in mixed school were 86 (66%). From the research findings, 59 (45%) of the respondents were between the age of 16 and 18 while 71 (55%) of the respondents were the majority of the respondents with age ranging from 19 to 21 years. In addition, 83 (64%) favoured the practice of female circumcision while 47 (36%) of the respondents held negative attitude towards the same practice.

#### **4.2 Female Circumcision and Academic Performance.**

From the research findings, out of 94 (72%) of the respondents who claimed to have been circumcised, 74 (79%) of them revealed that they favoured the practice of female circumcision. In addition to this, the research findings revealed that 63 (68%) of the circumcised respondents agreed that female circumcision was done on voluntary basis while 29 (32%) of the respondents who were circumcised disagreed over the same. Moreover, 25 (69%) of the respondents who were not circumcised supported that female circumcision was done on voluntary basis. These findings therefore revealed that most of the circumcised girls made their own decision to be circumcised.

Furthermore, to underscore female students' attitude towards the practice of female circumcision, the research findings revealed that 74 (79%) of the circumcised respondents wished that the practice continued in the society while 27 (75%) out of 36 (100%) respondents who had not undergone female circumcision did not wish the practice to continue in their community. However, 6 (5%) of the total respondents were not sure whether the practice should continue or not. From the above findings, the research revealed that majority 74 (56.9) of the female students favoured the practice of female circumcision and hence hold a positive attitude towards it.

From various reasons advanced for the practice of female circumcision the research findings revealed that, 107 (82%) of the respondents indicated that female circumcision was done for cultural reasons, 95 (73%) of the respondents claimed to improve women status in the society while 108 (83%) of the respondents reported that it was done to prepare the girls for marriage. These findings therefore revealed the reasons why most of the girls leave school completely after circumcision or lose interest in academic work though still remain in school.

To find the students perception on the effect of female circumcision on academic performance, the Form 3 third term mock examination mean scores revealed that 73 (56%) were circumcised and scored mean grade of 4.16 that was below average (6.0) in their academic performance. However, 21(16%) of all circumcised students had performed above average. On the other hand, 27 (21%) were not circumcised and scored mean grade of 4.3 that was also below average. These figures suggest that circumcision did not negatively affect their academic performance.

This finding complemented Brey et al, (1986) who argued that girls also have a weaker incentive to remain in school than boys because they are less likely to seek paid employment and therefore less likely to find the need for a school certificate hence dropping out early or performing poorly in their academic work. In addition, the argument whether female circumcision was done to reduce the sexual urge, was controversial with 51 (39%) being the highest percentage of the respondents who

disagreed with this argument. On this argument, majority of the respondents seemed not to know the correct response or they found it difficult to express their feelings towards the same. From the findings discussed above, the study found that various reasons and values attached to female circumcision were influencing the attitude towards female circumcision and the decision of the girls to get circumcised in the Loitokitok Division.

To examine female circumcision and academic performance, the findings were presented in frequencies and percentages using cross tabulation of two variables (grouped mean scores and status of circumcision). The findings of this study revealed that circumcised girls had a mean score of 4.16 as compared to the uncircumcised who had a mean score of 4.30. It is however worth noting that means are affected by extreme values. This is seen in the minimum mean scores (Circumcised 2.4, Uncircumcised 2.5) and maximum mean scores (Circumcised 9.2, Uncircumcised 8.7) as shown in table 1 below.

**Table 1: Mock examination mean scores of circumcised and uncircumcised students**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-test
Circumcised	94	2.4	9.2	4.2	1.4	t= 22.117 Sig. (two tailed) = .0000
Not circumcised	36	2.5	8.7	4.3	1.5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>1.5</b>	

It also shows that (87%) of the respondents who had been circumcised agreed to have lost interest in academic work after undergoing female circumcision. On the other hand, 28 (78%) respondents out of 36 (100%) who had not undergone female circumcision agreed that the students lost interest in academic work after circumcision. Moreover, 81(86%) of the respondents who had undergone female circumcision indicated to have experienced a drop in academic performance after circumcision. According to 30 (83%) respondents out of 36 (100%) who had not undergone the practice, agreed that female students experience a drop in academic performance after undergoing circumcision. Table 2 summarizes these findings and that of the attitude scale respectively.

A test of hypothesis – ‘ $H_{01}$ : There is no significant effect of female circumcision on students’ academic performance’ indicated  $t$  Value of 22.117 and  $p = .000$  when equal

variables are assumed. This means that the null hypothesis was accepted at .05. This implies that female circumcision has no significant effect on academic performance.

**Table 2: Students' responses on the attitude scale in frequencies and percentages**

Code	Variable	Negative	%	Neutral	%	Positive	%	Mean	SD
1	In Loitokitok Division MOST women and girls have undergone circumcision procedures	7	5.4	8	6.2	115	88.5	2.83	0.500
2	Do you favour the practice of female circumcision	47	36.2	-	-	83	63.8	2.28	0.965
3	Girls are circumcised because it is an important cultural practice	21	16.2	2	1.5	107	82.3	2.66	0.742
4	Female circumcision help in reducing the sexual urge	51	39.2	38	29.2	41	31.5	1.92	0.841
5	Female circumcision raises the status of women in the society	35	26.9	-	-	95	73.1	2.46	0.891
6	Circumcision is an important ceremony before marriage among girls	27	20.8	-	-	103	79.2	2.58	0.814
7	The practice of female circumcision should continue in our society	46	35.4	6	4.6	78	60.0	2.25	0.949
8	Female circumcision is against the law of Kenya	16	12.3	1	0.8	113	86.9	2.75	0.663
9	My religion does not prohibit the practice of female circumcision	17	13.1	9	6.9	104	80.0	2.67	0.698
10	The decision to be circumcised is voluntarily made by girls	38	29.2	4	3.1	88	67.7	2.38	0.910
11	After circumcision girls concentrate poorly in class work	27	20.8	1	0.8	102	78.5	2.58	0.815
12	Girls loose interest in academic work after circumcision	17	13.1	-	-	113	86.9	2.74	0.677
13	After circumcision one is expected to get married	17	13.1	5	3.8	108	83.1	2.70	0.660
14	Those who are circumcised always abuse other girls who are not circumcised in school	16	12.3	-	-	114	87.7	2.75	0.660
15	One become s fully mature after circumcision	27	20.8	4	3.1	99	76.2	2.55	0.817
16	Circumcised girls make good wives when married	19	14.6	8	6.2	103	79.2	2.65	0.725
17	The instructions offered during seclusion are very important for proper adjustment in the society	22	16.9	-	-	108	83.1	2.66	0.753
18	Girls experience a drop in their academic performance after circumcision	22	16.9	2	1.5	106	81.5	2.65	0.756

Source; Primary data

### 4.3 Age and Attitude towards Female circumcision

Attitude questions listed below specifically sought to measure attitude on continuity of female circumcision as opposed to the other attitude questions that generally measured attitude on female circumcision. The five questions were;

*Item 2* - I favour the practice of female circumcision.

*Item 3* – Circumcision is an important cultural practice

*Item 5* – Female circumcision raises the status of women in society

*Item 6* – Circumcision is an important ceremony before marriage among girls

*Item 7* – Female circumcision should continue in our society

From the research findings, the respondents' age affected their attitude towards female circumcision. Out of 59 (45.4%) respondents falling between 16-18 years of age, 32 (24.6%) of them held a positive attitude towards the practice of female circumcision. On the other hand, out of 71 (54.6%) respondents falling between 19-21 years of age, 46 (35.4%) supported the continuity of the practice of female circumcision hence hold a positive attitude towards it.

Going a step further to test the significance of the second hypothesis 'H<sub>02</sub>: Age does not have any effect on the students' attitude towards the practice of female circumcision, the test results were  $\chi^2 = .054$ . This implies that age does not affect students' attitude towards circumcision at significance level of .05. The opinions therefore vary from student to student irrespective of age. They also believe that circumcision raises their status to womanhood and serve as a permit to marriage. The respondents from both age groups agreed that female circumcision should continue.

### 4.4 Age and Academic Performance

In this study, all the students who participated in the survey were between ages 16 to 21. These were grouped into two classes (16 – 18 years and 19 – 21 years). The mean scores in academic performance of the two age groups were compared. The computed mean grade of students' academic performance in the age bracket 16-18yrs was slightly higher (4.23) and Standard Deviation of 1.47 as compared to the computed mean of



students within the age bracket of 19-21yrs (4.17) and Standard Deviation of 1.45. From these findings, there is a slight difference in academic performance with students' age. It is therefore seen that the younger the better in academics.

The hypothesis 'H<sub>03</sub>: Age does not have any effect on students' academic performance' was then tested with the use of t-test because of comparison of two means. The results gave a  $t = -89.81$  and  $P = .000$  two tailed. We therefore accept the null hypothesis at .05 significance level. This means that there is no significant difference in academic performance between young and older students.

#### 4.5 Academic Performance and the Type of School

From the research findings in the table 3 below, respondents in boarding schools performed better (mean scores 4.42 and 4.22) than day schools. The day school performance was a bit low (mean 3.97) as compared to the boarding schools. This could have been as a result of non-interference in students reading time that is so much a characteristic of day schools. Single sex schools might have had minimal interference by opposite sex students hence able to perform better academically. This could have allowed girls to concentrate on their studies.

**Table 3: The effect of the type of school on academic performance (mean score- mock examination)**

Type of school	Number	Mean score (Mock-Examination)	SD	One Way ANOVA
Boarding Single Sex	42	4.42	1.53	F = .695 Sig. (two tailed) = .055
Boarding Mixed School	44	4.22	1.57	
Day Mixed School	44	3.97	1.25	
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>1.46</b>	

The test of a related hypothesis - 'H<sub>04</sub>: Type of school has no significant effect on students' academic performance' indicated that  $F = .695$  and  $P = 0.557$ . This shows that the difference in means was significant at 0.05 and therefore, accepts the null

hypothesis that says “students’ academic performance is not significantly affected by the type of school she attends”.

#### **4.6 Effect of type of school on students’ attitude towards the practice of female circumcision**

The hypothesis ‘H<sub>05</sub>: Type of school does not affect students attitude towards female circumcision. The statistical finding indicated a  $\chi^2= 4.888$  and P = 0.6. Based on this finding, the null hypothesis was accepted, therefore “type of school does not have any significant effect on students’ attitude towards female circumcision” at .05. This implies that type of school a student attend does not affect her attitude towards the practice of female circumcision

#### **4.7 Summary**

The results of data analysis have been presented in this chapter. From these results, the following conclusions were drawn:

- a. Female circumcision did not affect students’ academic performance
- b. Age did not significantly affect students’ attitude towards the practice of female circumcision.
- c. Age had no significant effect on academic performance; however the younger students perform slightly better.
- d. Students’ academic performance was not significantly affected by the type of school, although students in boarding schools performed slightly better than those in day school.
- e. Type of school did not significantly affect the attitude towards the practice of female circumcision

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Overview**

This final chapter discusses the research findings and maps out general conclusions and recommendations. In the discussions, attempts are made to integrate the findings from other related studies. The chapter begins with a summary of the study findings. Discussions, conclusions and recommendations of the study are also underscored.

#### **5.1 Summary of the Study Findings**

The main concern of the present study was to find out female students' attitude towards female circumcision and academic performance. The results of the study showed that there was a significant high frequency of occurrence of circumcision of female students in secondary schools in Loitokitok Division. The reasons cited for female circumcision among female students related to cultural reasons including preparation for marriage, sign of maturity and improvement of women status in the community. However, most female students were not sure whether female circumcision was done to reduce sexual urge. With regard to the extent respondents considered reasons for circumcision important, it was adduced that there was significant value of the practice emanating from reasons for circumcision among the female students.

The findings of this study also revealed that whether one had been circumcised or not, the perception of the effect of female circumcision on academic performance were almost similar. With respect to female circumcision and academic performance, the findings indicated that there was no significant effect of female circumcision on academic performance resulting from instruction given during seclusion period. This can be attributed to similar environment that both circumcised and uncircumcised students find themselves at home and in school which could have affected their academic performance. The social environment that students' interacted with at home and in school could have affected their perception on the value for formal education.

From the study findings it was realized that female circumcision had no significant effect on academic performance as indicated by examination mean scores of third term mock results of 2004 of the circumcised female students versus the uncircumcised students. The study findings revealed that circumcised girls were slightly disadvantaged and had lower mean scores compared to those who were not circumcised. This finding is in agreement with Maritim (1983) argument that cultural beliefs and teachings had a significant impact on the education of girls. Although some of the girls were not circumcised, cultural beliefs and teachings could have affected their academic performance in school.

In addition, the study findings showed that there was a strong positive female students' attitude towards the practice of female circumcision. This meant that the female students favoured the practice and indeed most of them indicated that they were willing to have it continued in the society. This showed that apart from people's arguments on various effects of female circumcision, most female students were comfortable with the practice and willing to perpetuate its continuity in the society. The study revealed that positive students' attitude towards female circumcision fueled the continuity of the practice among the Maasai community. Student's attitude stemmed from values and meanings attached to the practice of female circumcision as a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood.

In addition, the findings of the study revealed that students' age did not significantly affect their attitude towards the practice of female circumcision. The study also revealed that age was not a significant factor in students' academic performance even though their performance reduced with the increase of age. In addition, the study findings indicated that type of school has no effect on student's attitude towards the practice of female circumcision. Students in the co-educational schools revealed a slightly higher positive attitude towards the practice of female circumcision as compared to students in single sex school. This could have been as a result of pressure from male students which might not be there in single sex schools.

It was realized that type of school did not have a significant effect on students' academic performance. There was a slight difference in mean score performance of students according to age or type of school.

## **5.2 Discussion**

This study investigated students' attitude towards female circumcision and academic performance. The study specifically examined the effect of female circumcision on academic performance, the effect of age on academic performance and attitude towards the practice of female circumcision. In addition, the study examined the effect of type of school on students' academic performance, and attitudes on the practice of female circumcision.

The findings of the study revealed that female circumcision did not significantly affect students' academic performance. This finding raises concerns on possible factors that could be influencing female students' academic performance in Loitokitok Division. Circumcised students had mean score slightly lower than those who were not. However, the study revealed that not all circumcised girls performed poorly in their academic work an indication that there could be other factors that affect students' academic performance. This finding is in agreement with the General Assembly Special Session 2000 on Gender Equity, Development and Peace for 21st century which observed that socio-cultural attitudes and values were some of the causes of low participation in the schooling system among girls. This study finding also complements the report by Republic of Kenya (Koech, 1999), which attributed students' poor academic performance to inadequacy of teaching and learning resources. This indicates that there were other factors which effected students' performance and could not only be attributed to female circumcision.

Poor academic performance among female students' in the Division remains an issue of concern for educational stakeholders and call for attention to address possible factors of effect. School and home environment including possible contributions of various

educational stakeholders in influencing students' academic performance call for further scrutiny.

The findings of this study indicated that female students favoured the practice of female circumcision and that they held various reasons for the practice. Of all the respondents, 72% indicated that they were circumcised with only 28% of the respondents indicating that they were not circumcised. Subsequently, 64% of all the respondents indicated that they favoured the practice of female circumcision while only 36% were not in support of the practice. This reveals that the practice of female circumcision was highly practiced in the Division with majority of the girls having preference for the practice to continue in the society. This means that the female students' had attached values to the practice of female circumcision making it unlikely to end any time soon. The numbers of female students' including those who were not circumcised opposed to the practice of female circumcision were fewer than those supporting, limiting the possibility that the practice of female circumcision will end soon in the Division.

The findings of this study revealed that age had no significant effect on respondents' attitudes' towards the practice of female circumcision. This could be attributed to time spent by students' regardless of age at home and school with community members and fellow students who could have affected their attitude toward the practice. The time students spent with their family members in the community and fellow students was likely to affect their values in female circumcision regardless of their age since the elderly assumed responsibility of passing society values and norms from one generation to the other.

The findings of the study also revealed that age did not have significant effect on students' academic performance although the younger by age (16- 18 years) performed slightly better academically compared to the elder ones (19 -21 years). This could be attributed social effect from home and school on students' value for formal education affecting their performance irrespective of age. Society expectation to have female

students also support in performing household chores could have contributed to the low academic performance in school the young and elder students.

The findings of the study showed that students' academic performance was not significantly affected by the type of school. This could be attributed to the similar social environmental location of the schools and infrastructural challenges influencing these academic institutions. Poor academic performance among the female students' in the Division irrespective of the type of school called for attention from all education stakeholders to address those issues likely to affect students' performance negatively. However, the present study showed that students in boarding and single sex schools had slightly higher mean scores as compared to day school though not significant.

This study was based on Social Interactionism Theory (Blummer, 1969) cited in Nelson, (1993). The Social Interactionism Theory placed the female students in a social environment. The biographical information was considered from an individual relationship with the social environment. The respondents' attitude towards female circumcision and academic performance were considered as a product of the interaction between the individual students' with her social environment. Maasai girls are brought up to understand the values attached to female circumcision and the expectation of the community. This was found to shape girls' attitude towards female circumcision.

This study results had proved that an individual social interaction process in her environment was interlinked and that there was a relationship between attitude towards female circumcision and its continuity in the society. While an individual grows up, the environment where they are socialized shape their attitude and perception. The study findings showed most students who had been circumcised had more positive attitude towards the practice of female circumcision compared to those who were not. In addition, students in day and co-educational schools showed more favour for the practice of female circumcision; which might have been as a result of their interaction with boys and wider community. The slight difference in attitude towards female circumcision could be attributed to social interaction of students in day schools with

elderly women and other community members after school which could have affected their attitude towards female circumcision.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The following conclusions were derived from the present study:

Out of all the respondents, 94 (72 %) indicated that they were circumcised. This was a reflection of high rates of the practice of female circumcision in Loitokitok Division, hence the conclusion that the practice is still rampant in Loitokitok Division of Kajiado District.

Female students were found to have a favourable attitude towards the practice of female circumcision and the majority agreed that the practice should continue. Most of the respondents agreed that the practice was done on voluntary basis. However, from the research findings, the students' attitude might have been affected by their participation in circumcision. This is because after the respondent was circumcised and undergoing the instruction during seclusion, her attitude was likely to have been affected in favour of the practice.

The study finding revealed that there was no significant effect of female circumcision on academic performance. Although the uncircumcised students had mean scores slightly higher, not all the circumcised students performed poorly in school. It was therefore, concluded that there could be other factors that significantly affected female students' academic performance in Loitokitok Division and not female circumcision.

The findings also revealed that age did not significantly affect respondents' attitude towards female circumcision. The time students' spent within home and school environment irrespective of age affected their attitude towards the practice of female circumcision. This could be attributed to the values attached to the practice. From the findings of these study is therefore, concluded that the young and elder students shared similar attitude towards the practice of female circumcision.



Age has no significant effect on academic performance of female students in Loitokitok Division. Although the younger student had mean scores slightly higher than the elder students, the difference was not significant.

The study findings showed that type of school had no significant effect on students' academic performance. However, students in single sex and boarding schools recorded slightly higher mean score compared to day and co-educational schools in the Division. The difference in the means score between the type of school was not significant.

On the effect of type of school on students' attitude towards female circumcision, the finding revealed that majority of students in co-educational and day school held more positive attitude towards it compared to those in boarding single and boarding school. This could be attributed to interaction between students' in day school with the wider community and students of opposite sex who create pressure to them to abide to societal values including female circumcision. Since the difference in attitude was not significant, it was concluded that the type of school had no significant effect of students' attitude towards female circumcision.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

### **5.4.1 Introduction**

In real life, it is difficult to separate human existence from his or her environmental, social and cultural aspects. The continuity of the practice of female circumcision depends on the values and beliefs attached to it, which involve cognitive appraisals of the values by the individual being exposed to such an environment.

There is no doubt that female circumcision has been a subject of great concern to many people in Kenya and other parts of the world especially in Africa. Many reasons have been cited for the practice of female circumcision and it is believed to benefit the initiates in one way or another. The continuity of this practice of female circumcision in some communities including the Maasai community have been receiving mixed

reactions from people of all walks of life, some supporting while others perceiving the practice as a violation of human rights.

Based on the findings of this study, the practice of female circumcision does not significantly affect female students' academic performance. If the practice of female circumcision remains unresolved, it would have no continuous substantial impact on female students' academic performance in secondary schools in Loitokitok Division. This is with the conviction that there could be other significant factors that affect female students' academic performance in the Division. Although female circumcision is believed to have various benefits to the girls among the Maasai community, the study findings has revealed that it has very little or no negative effect on students' academic performance. In view of the possible benefits and adverse consequences of the practice of female circumcision in Loitokitok Division in Kajiado District, certain measures needs to be undertaken to address this and other possible factors with significant effect on students' performance. This will enhance female students' commitment and enthusiasm to pursue high academic performance in secondary schools.

This study has several recommendations for the teachers and school authorities, the Ministry of Education and Non-Governmental Organizations with regard to the practice of female circumcision and academic performance.

#### **5.4.2 Recommendation for School Management**

Since there was no significant effect of female circumcision on female students' academic performance in Loitokitok Division, the school management should strengthen provision of counseling and support services to the affected students as well as address other factors significantly influencing academic performance. These will help the female students appraise female circumcision as being a challenge rather than threats or dangers in their academic performance (Melgosa, 2001).

The school authority should try to have more interactive sessions with the female students and create more opportunities for direct and deliberate communication among

students and teachers. This can be done by organizing informal social gathering for teachers and students with an aim of promoting mutual understanding and discussion of sensitive issues or concerns between teachers and students.

Efforts should be made in school to see that female students have the opportunity to express autonomy and esteem in their learning environment in order to avoid the feelings of constrain, misplacement and frustration by the school environment. This will enhance their concentration and interest in academic work, which will in turn affect their academic performance positively and limit chances of leaving school.

#### **5.4.3 Recommendation for Education Policy**

In the present study, it was found that the practice of female circumcision does not significantly affect students' academic performance. The Ministry of Education should play a role in readdressing this and other significant contributing factors of poor performance among girls in the Division since it has the responsibility to provide a supportive, conducive, supportive and healthy learning atmosphere for all students in the country. In light of the findings in this study the following recommendations are proposed for Education Policy in Kenya:

- a. The fact that female circumcision was found to have little or no significant effect on students' academic performance, the Ministry should address other needs of female students in the affected Districts by improving school infrastructures as well as enforce laws that protect them from cultural practices like female circumcision which will enhance their academic performance.
- b. Provide sufficient financial support to boarding schools in affected Districts to establish more single sex and boarding secondary schools. According to the findings of this study boarding and single sex school students had slightly higher academic performance compared to students in day school. Establishment of such schools is likely to improve academic performance among female students noting that there could be other factors of significant effect to academic performance and not female circumcision. .

- c. Mainstream gender and cultural issues like female circumcision in secondary school teacher training curriculum to equip them with skills and knowledge on how to guide and support affected students. This will significantly reduce cases of female students drop out; as they will receive timely and quality counseling services from their teachers in schools to make informed choices.

#### **5.4.4 Recommendation to the Non-Governmental Organizations**

Several national and international Non-Governmental Organizations have raised concern over the practice of female circumcision in different parts of the country. Most of these organizations have the responsibility to support academic welfare of female students in Kenya. Since the study findings revealed that female circumcision has little or no significant effect on students' academic performance in Loitokitok Division of Kajiado District, the Non-Governmental Organization should endeavor to address female students' retention and achievement of high academic performance in school. This will ensure that critical issues significantly influencing female students' academic performance receive adequate attention from Non Governmental development actors in the District and national level.

These organizations should strengthen the recent campaign on alternative rite of passage among girls to cover all Districts with high prevalence of female circumcision including Kajiado District. If this is done, many girls, guardians and parents are likely to embrace the alternative rites of passage reducing the little effect the practice of female circumcision has on academic performance and general health of the students'.

#### **5.4.5 Recommendation for Further Research**

It is not surprising that, by the end of the process, a research raises more questions than it sought to answer. The present research could not exhaust all issues on female circumcision and academic performance. The study therefore suggests that further research be conducted along the following lines:

- a. A comparative study on female circumcision and academic performance be conducted in different communities that practice female circumcision in Kenya.

- b. A research to investigate other possible factors that affect female students' academic performance in secondary schools in Loitokitok Division be carried out.
- c. Carry out a research to ascertain whether female circumcisions affect students' intelligence level.

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## APPENDIX I: PLATES



*Plate 1*



*Plate 2*



*Plate 3*

### Description of the Plates above:

**Plate 1:** Girls in a local primary school classroom in Loitokitok Division. Most of the girls in the class were from the Maasai Community.

**Plate 2:** Young Maasai girls in a circumcision ceremony in Loitokitok Division. Most of the girls were in secondary school.

**Plate 3:** Happy young ladies ready to attend a traditional wedding in their community. On the right is the researcher of this study; who hails from Loitokitok; accompanying a young lady to a marriage ceremony in a local village.

**APPENDIX II: LETTER TO THE STUDENTS**

Dear student,

You have been selected to participate in this study on female students' attitude towards female circumcision and academic performance. You are therefore, required to fill a questionnaire for this study to the best of your knowledge and be honest with your responses. I would like to assure you that the information you provide will be confidential and only be used for the purpose of this study. Please **DO NOT** write your name anywhere in the provided questionnaire.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours Sincerely

**Ms. Everlyne Nairesiae**

## APPENDIX III: THE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

### INSTRUCTIONS

The questionnaire has section A and B. Please fill in appropriate answers to section A. In addition, kindly complete the items in section B by indicating with a tick (√) the correct response to each of the items. Please tick only one choice. Under this section the letters abbreviated as “SA” stands for ‘Strongly Agree’, “A” for ‘Agree’, “D” for ‘Disagree’, “SD” for ‘Strongly Disagree’ and “NS” stands for ‘Not Sure’.

### SECTION A: General Information

- a) Admission number.-----
- b) Are you circumcised? Yes [ ] No [ ]
- c) What is your age? .....
- d) What is your type of school? Day [ ] boarding [ ]
- e) Indicate whether your school is: Single sex [ ] Mixed [ ]

### SECTION B: Attitude of female circumcision

1. In Loitokitok Division, MOST women and girls have undergone female circumcision procedures.

SA [ ]      A [ ]      NS [ ]      D [ ]      SD [ ]

2. I favour the practice of female circumcision

SA [ ]      A [ ]      NS [ ]      D [ ]      SD [ ]

3. Girls are circumcised because it is an important cultural practice

SA [ ]      A [ ]      NS [ ]      D [ ]      SD [ ]

4. Female circumcision helps in reducing the sexual urge.

SA [ ]      A [ ]      NS [ ]      D [ ]      SD [ ]

5. Female circumcision raises the status of women in the society.

SA [ ]      A [ ]      NS [ ]      D [ ]      SD [ ]

6. Circumcision is an important ceremony before marriage among girls.

SA [ ]      A [ ]      NS [ ]      D [ ]      SD [ ]

7. The practice of female circumcision should continue in our society.

SA [ ]      A [ ]      NS [ ]      D [ ]      SD [ ]

8. Female Circumcision is against the law of Kenya.

SA [ ]      A [ ]      NS [ ]      D [ ]      SD [ ]

9. My religion does not prohibit the practice of female circumcision.

SA [ ]      A [ ]      NS [ ]      D [ ]      SD [ ]

10. The decision to be circumcised is voluntarily made by girls.

SA [ ]      A [ ]      NS [ ]      D [ ]      SD [ ]

11. After circumcision, girls concentrate poorly in class work.

SA [ ]      A [ ]      NS [ ]      D [ ]      SD [ ]

12. Girls loose interest in academic work after circumcision.

SA [ ]      A [ ]      NS [ ]      D [ ]      SD [ ]

13. After circumcision, one is expected to get married.

SA [ ]      A [ ]      NS [ ]      D [ ]      SD [ ]

14. Those who are circumcised always abuse other girls who are not circumcised in school.

SA [ ]      A [ ]      NS [ ]      D [ ]      SD [ ]

15. One becomes fully mature after circumcision.

SA [ ]      A [ ]      NS [ ]      D [ ]      SD [ ]

16. Circumcised girls make good wives when married.

SA [ ]      A [ ]      NS [ ]      D [ ]      SD [ ]

17. The instructions offered during seclusion are very important for proper adjustment in the society.

SA [ ]      A [ ]      NS [ ]      D [ ]      SD [ ]

18. Girls experience a drop in their academic performance after circumcision.

SA [ ]      A [ ]      NS [ ]      D [ ]      SD [ ]

**APPENDIX 4 : RESEARCH PERMIT**