

# **Exploring Problems Faced by Female Students in a Weekly Boarding Day Secondary School in Chadiza, Zambia**

## **Abstract**

This article highlights the findings of a study that explored girls' issues in weekly boarding. The objectives of this research were twofold: (1) explore the problems that exist among the girls in weekly boarding at Chadiza Day Secondary School; (2) determine how problems among the girls in weekly boarding day secondary schools impede their education. This study used a mixed method research employing a case study. The study sample consisted of 38 participants: 12 girls, 10 boys, 10 teachers (5 female teachers and 5 male teachers), 2 guidance teachers, 2 administrators and 2 parents. Participants were sampled using snowball, purposive and convenience sampling methods. Data were collected through questionnaires, interview guide, observation guide and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and were analysed qualitatively using thematic data analysis technique and quantitatively employing descriptive data analysis method. As such, this study established issues that girls, who do weekly boarding at Chadiza Day Secondary Schools, were involved in; and how these issues impeded their education. The findings served as an eye-opener for the School administration, teachers and parents to provide services that would help to provide quality education and reduce existing issues that impede the education of girls. The results of the study were discussed in reference to thematic areas of the findings; related literature on girls' issues in weekly boarding and the authors drew attention to how these issues impeded their education. The study concludes that weekly boarding in day secondary schools is a good initiative but should be provided under what may be called 'supervised weekly boarding' in order to avoid girls' issues that may affect their education and life at large.

**Key Words:** *Girls' issues, Pregnancies, Promiscuity, Weekly boarding*

## **INTRODUCTION**

This article looked at girls' issues in weekly boarding at Chadiza Day Secondary in the Eastern Province of Zambia. To create more space at secondary school for both boys and girls, from 2001, the government of the Republic of Zambia started upgrading Primary Schools into Day Secondary Schools. In Chadiza District, seven (7) Day secondary schools were established. Unfortunately, the education of girls in weekly boarding is associated with a lot of issues that impede their education. Education is a right in Zambia (Education Act, 2011; Educating our Future, 1996; Vision 2030; National Development Plans [1<sup>st</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>]). Worldwide people have advocated for girls' education for "the sustainability and progress of all regions depends on the success of women across the globe" (Stepp, 2012: 5).

Zambia houses policies and legislation that promotes the right to education. To begin with, Zambia's main legislation on education is the Education Act (2011), which identifies each person's rights to high school education. Education our Future (1996) is the third policy on education in Zambia and focuses on equitable access to quality education at all levels. A survey of policy framework in Zambia reveals that education is at the centre stage of all of them (Education Act, 2011; Educating our Future, 1996; Vision 2030; National Development Plans [1<sup>st</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>], The National Child Policy, 2006; Free Basic Education Policy, 2002; Re-entry policy for girls, 1997). Both the 1991 Constitution of the Republic of Zambia and the draft Constitution of the Republic of Zambia clearly highlight the right to education:

Article 11 of the 1991 Constitution of the Republic of Zambia identifies that “every person in Zambia has been and shall continue to be entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual”. Part III of the Constitution expands on these fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, which include protection from discrimination (article 23) and the protection of young people from exploitation (article 24). While its preamble specifically “pledg[es] to every citizen the right to education”, no provision in the constitution specifically protects the right to education.

The First Draft Constitution of the Republic of Zambia incorporates a Bill of Rights. This includes the right of persons to education (article 62), the right of children to free basic education (article 55), the right to non-discrimination (article 27), the right of women and men to equal treatment (article 51), youth access quality and relevant education and training (article 56), and the right of persons with disabilities to education (article 58).

The world today is fuelled by information and driven by knowledge which is the currency of modern life. Information and knowledge is attained through education. This is the reason as to why both boys and girls must be educated. The importance of girl child education cannot be overemphasized as it can clearly be seen in the popular saying that goes and is attributed to the Ghanaian scholar, Kwegyir-Aggrey 1875-1927) who asserts that “if you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a family [nation].” Hence, empowering girls with education will enable them (when they become women) to realize the importance of sending their daughters to school.

The adage above by Kwegyir-Aggrey was supported by former President of the United States, Barack Obama, while addressing the United Nations General Assembly in 2012 with this remark: “The sustainability and progress of all regions depend on the success of women across the globe” (Stepp, 2012:5). He further stated, “The future does not belong to those who bully women. It must be shaped by girls who go to school and those who stand for a world where our daughters can live their dreams just like our sons” (Stepp, 2012:5). Educating a girl in particular can kick-start a virtuous circle of development. More educated girls may later have healthier children, earn more money that they could invest back into their families and communities and play more active roles in leading their communities and countries (King and Winthrop, 2015).

In line with what James, Obama and Elizabeth with Rebecca said above about educating the girls, the ministry of education also recognises this importance of education through its role that state “to prepare the individual to live in this society, to develop into the new type of person needed to meet the challenges of life in Zambia,” (Kelly, 1996:249). Meanwhile, despite realising the importance of educating the girls, the Ministry of Education’s attempt in the past to achieve this desirable goal was like a mere dream. As seen in 1996, only 59 620 Grade 7 pupils were selected for progression to Grade 8 out of a total of 180, 054 who sat for the 1995 terminal examinations, giving a progression rate of 33.1%. It is of no doubt that the smallest number was for the girls. This was clearly seen by what the Ministry of Education (MoE) (1996:62) said that “*for every 100 girls who begin primary school, only 70 complete the full primary course, 23 proceed to junior secondary school, 9 into senior secondary, and 7 sit for the school certificate examination in Grade 12.*” The ministry gave further evidence of girls’ education lurking behind. The lowest of all enrolment ratios was that for rural girls, with only 4.2% of the girls in the 16-18 age range being enrolled, (MoE, 1996).

However, after deliberate programmes of encouraging parents to take their children to school and retain them, Zambia began to see increase in primary school enrolments. Soon, the country was faced with a new challenge of providing enough space at the primary level for all the learners. According to MoE (1996), “shortage of spaces at primary school has been created with several factors such as allowing excessively large classes, and by allowing widespread use of double, triple and even quadruple sessions”.

MoE (1996) posits that because of the rapid growth in Grade 7 enrolments, the numbers leaving the school system on completion of Grade 7 enrolments increased very rapidly. This explains why access to Grade 8 and 9 will be progressively expanded so that an increasing proportion of those who complete Grade 7 can proceed into Grade 8 (MoE, 1996:18). As such, the shortage of space at primary became a trickledown effect. Furthermore, the pronouncement of nine-year compulsory education that has been implemented since the promulgation of the Compulsory Education Law and Free Basic Education in Zambia escalated the enrolments and created demand for further expansion in education. Hence, when this trickle effect spread to secondary schools, pronouncement was made to create more secondary Schools by upgrading certain primary schools. Therefore, a lot of day secondary schools were constructed.

The aforementioned allowed establishment of 8 day secondary schools between 2006 to date in Chadiza District, namely Chadiza, Chanida, Chanjowe, Kalemba, Katantha, Naviruli, Taferansoni and Zemba. Before then, there was only Chadiza Boarding Secondary School and many pupils had problem accessing secondary education because they were faced with two very serious challenges. The first challenge was high cut off point and the second challenge was that of high school fees. This meant that others who passed to go to Grade 8 or 10 were not able to continue with school as their parents failed to secure boarding fees. However, those who managed subjected their families to extreme poverty.

Although there were low cut off points, low school fees and more rooms in day secondary schools, they came with an increased aspect of weekly boarding for those who came from far places. Consequently, girls were faced with a lot of problems in these weekly boarding school arrangements. It is against this background that the author took time to study girls’ issues at Chadiza Day Secondary School particular for weekly boarders under the title ‘Weekly boarding in day secondary schools: girls’ issues at Chadiza Day Secondary’.

The Government of the Republic of Zambia upgraded a number of basic schools into Day Secondary Schools between 2016 and 2018. However, the upgrading of basic schools started around 2001 following the Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All in 2000 (UNESCO, 2000). This move cheered a number of parents and schools because it was associated with a lot of advantages. For instance, parents were no longer expected to pay for higher fees charged by boarding schools and other expenses. However, it was later observed that day secondary schools had a lot of issues that impeded the education of girls especially for the girls in weekly boarding. Uncovering these has threefold advantage, one to school administrations, then learners and lastly parents.

The objectives of this research were twofold:

1. Explore the problems that exist among the girls in weekly boarding at Chadiza Day Secondary School.

2. Determine how problems among the girls in weekly boarding day secondary schools impede their education.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Literature shows that in Africa like in South Asia and other parts of the world, education of girls is not valued as they believe that girls are trained for a role as a wife, mother, and daughter in law (Nisha, 2014; Perlman, et al., 2018a, 2018b; World Bank, 2018). Unanimously, the literature points to families' perception that the cost of education both monetary and psychological is wasted on a girl as she will get married. Catsambis and Garland (1997) reveal that parental involvement dramatically declines as students enter the middle grades and even more so as they enter high school. Parents become less involved in monitoring students' individual behaviour and are more concerned with their learning opportunities at secondary school. However, it should always be remembered that parents are the first teachers of the child, but somehow parents lose it as their child grows, especially after the child has left elementary school. Slowly, the parents turn over the parenting of their child to the school authorities. However, Scott (1995) posits that there is no clear line to show where the parents' input stops and the teachers input begins. Nonetheless, what needs to be remembered is that both school and parents have crucial roles to play in the education welfare and proper discipline of the children.

Catsambis and Garland (1997) and Crosnoe (2001) mention that parents tend to become less involved in their children's education over time, especially after middle school. This decline could be the result of parents giving their children more autonomy as they grow older or because parents feel less knowledgeable about complex materials.

Girls and young women, who are educated, have greater awareness of their rights, greater confidence and freedom to make decisions that affect their lives, improve their own and their children's health and chances of survival and boost their work prospects. One in eight girls is married by the age of 15 in Sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, and one in seven has given birth by the age of 17. Ensuring that girls stay in school is one of the most effective ways of averting child marriage and early births. Education is also a key factor in hastening the demographic transition to lower birth and mortality rates. Nammuddu (1999) argues that poor performance of girls has relations with greater demand on their time to perform house chores including fetching water and wood, cooking and the care of younger siblings.

In Zambia, the concept of weekly boarding started in 1935 by Father Zabdry who was a Jesuit missionary at Chikuni Mission (Coombe, 1967). There were a number of children who were taken from the surrounding villages of chiefs Chona, Monze and Ufwenuka to go and stay for a week at these boarding schools and go back home on the weekends (Chomba, 2011). From that time, the trend became common in many parts of the country in areas where schools were very far.

Education is the shining beacon of light that can get girls out of poverty. It can also give them power to look after their families and help their communities. It can also give them the strength to be aware of the abuses and, therefore, denounce them. These forms of abuses could include emotional, economic, physical and sexual abuses. Ananga (2011) observed that education of girls was beneficial as it contributed to both social and economic development, intergenerational education, social equity and sustainability of development efforts.

Interestingly, Banja (2002) established that the influence of home environment on pupils' behaviour cannot be disputed. The involvement of parents in the disciplining of school going children would reduce problems in secondary schools. However, it is not known how parents are involved in schools in Zambia and in particular at Chadiza Day Secondary School.

When a girl is educated, later in life, she becomes an educated mother. Educated mothers are more likely to ensure that their children receive the best nutrients to help them prevent or fight off ill health, know more about appropriate health and hygiene practices and have more power in the home to make sure children's nutrition needs are met.

The Ministry of Education policy insists on homework being given to learners at least twice a week in all the subjects (Kasanda, 2003). Kelly and Kanyika (2000) reveal that there is a positive relationship between learning achievement and frequency of homework. Studies have shown that the children of more educated parents are more likely to perform well and progress further through school (Brahman et al., 1999). They add that illiterate parents are less likely to encourage their children to work hard at school.

A democratic form of discipline leads to a healthy classroom environment that in turn promotes respect for education and a desire for knowledge. Ovell (2001) notes that discipline in schools is essential for effective learning, good teacher relationship and peer adjustment. Comparatively, this shows that Kombo (2005) is correct when he says that educational attainment of girls is associated with the type of educational institution one attends.

Williams (1982) states that discipline involves all stakeholders, programmes as well as personality and school climate. Charlton and David (1993) assert that absence of proper family environment, presence of social differences and having learners from disadvantaged social areas; could lead to bad discipline and negative academic results. If the family background is not good, different social classes are present in the school, school is located in a socially disadvantaged area and there is a bad influence of peer groups, these things have negative effect on discipline and then academic achievement are negatively affected.

Having good academic qualifications without good foundation of self-discipline, the individual maybe rendered useless to him/herself, family and the society. Hence, schools should have a standard code of conduct which every student should adhere to willingly. Schools should also provide vital support services through guidance and counselling in order to instil in learner a sense of responsibility and curb issues that may arise. School discipline is a powerful emotive subject since it is one of the main determinants of students' success in their academic work (MoE, 2001). Most people equate falling academic standards in schools to low standards of students' discipline (Griffin, 1994).

The parents expect the school alone to provide solutions to the indiscipline in weekly boarding caused by their children. From one perspective, Nziramasanga (1999) states that because of many pressures imposed on the family, parents tend to have little time with their children to give them the necessary guidance and this is even worse when their daughter is in weekly boarding. From another perspective, UNESCO (2002:2) adds that "African adults have become more concerned with earning money and are less occupied with many traditional practices that formerly contributed to the upbringing of young people".

In another related study, Lyamba (2013) revealed that the causes of indiscipline were peer pressure, community influence, lack of positive role models, the re-entry policy, human rights

awareness, drug abuse, the media, ineffective classroom management and home environmental factors. The study recommended that parents should be greatly sensitized on the need to be involved in educational affairs of their children so as to reduce the levels of indiscipline in schools.

UNESCO (2012) has compared the impact of distance to school on education of girls at both primary and secondary levels in Nigeria, Malawi, Uganda and Zambia. The study finds that distance to school has a negative impact for both sexes, and is a serious barrier to girls' education, particularly at the lower secondary level. This was complemented in Tanzania in a study by (Mchelu, 2015) involving five day community secondary schools investigating the effect of long commuting on students' academic performance in weekly boarding secondary schools. The study specifically investigated the influence of long commuting on student's tardiness, truancy, school transfer and drop outs and its effects on teaching and learning processes and its relationship to poor academic performance. The study found that long commuting students faced a lot of challenges that affected their academic performance. These included factors like tiredness, tardiness, truancy, and incompleteness of class work.

Furthermore, Kelly and Kanyika (2000) indicate that the time learners take to get to school lowers their academic achievement because such learners are likely to arrive late at school, have less study time than their classmates who live near the school. They may also fail to do their homework when they arrive home due to tiredness. Mbozi (2008) also revealed that learners, who covered many kilometres as they walked to school daily, arrived tired such that they failed to concentrate in class. As a result, their performance was poor (Muchimba, 2010).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study used mixed method research employing a case study. A case study was adopted because it focused on in-depth evidence (Creswell & Plano, 2018) analysis of girls' issues in weekly boarding at Chadiza Day secondary school. This choice agrees with what was said by Gosh (2003) that a case study is a method of collecting information about an individual, a family, an institution, a group of persons that knows precisely the factors and causes of a practical phenomenon. A case study was used because the data required was in form of people's views, observed experiences and feelings about girls' issues in weekly boarding.

This study was conducted at Chadiza Day Secondary School in Chadiza District of Eastern Province of Zambia and was purposively chosen because it was one of the newly established Day Secondary Schools, centrally located in the township and had a number of weekly boarders.

The target population included all pupils, all teachers and administrators at Chadiza Day Secondary School. Cohen et al (2007) describes a sample as the total number of subjects selected to participate in a given study. The study sample consisted of thirty-eight (38) participants; 12 girls, 10 boys, 10 teachers (5 female teachers and 5 male teachers), 2 guidance teachers, 2 administrators and 2 parents who were selected and participated in the study. This study used snowball sampling to select teacher participants. The researchers identified three teachers who then recommended others who were contacted and requested to participate in the study. The two (02) administrators, two (02) guidance teachers and two (2) parents were conveniently selected. Both convenience and snowball sampling were used for pupils. Convenience sampling was used to select learners who were registered as weekly boarders.

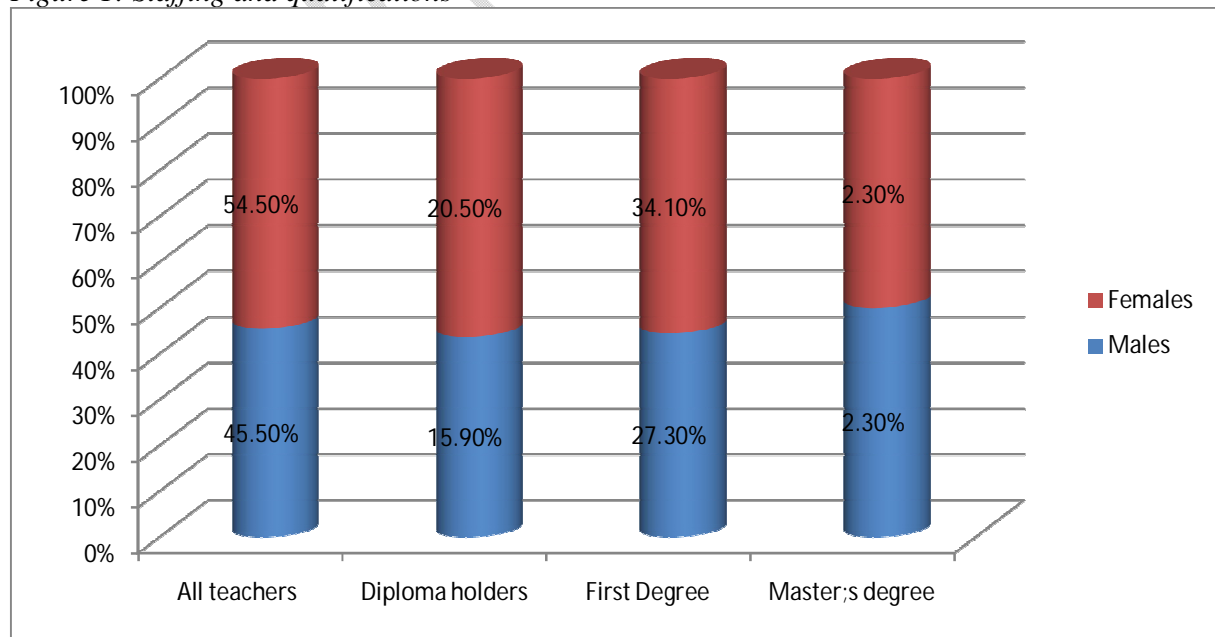
In order to solicit views from pupils, teachers and administrators, two research instruments were used to collect qualitative data for the study which were focus group discussion guides and questionnaires (Kothari, 2004; Banda, Mpolomoka, Mbono & Sampa, 2017). The researcher used focus group discussions (FGDs) for both pupils and teachers. FGDs were advantageous because participants were able to bring out issues related to weekly boarding. This method also offered the researchers an opportunity to study the ways in which individuals collectively made sense of a phenomenon and constructed meaning. There were a total of four (04) FGDs. The first group consisted of girls, the second group comprised boys, the third group comprised female teachers and the fourth group comprised of male teachers. Open-ended questionnaires were used to collect data from guidance teachers and administrators. This tool allowed respondents to express themselves freely and were physically delivered. The questionnaires were delivered on the same day and collected after 4 days. Interview guide was used to collect data from parents while observation guide was used to collect data in the four (4) weekly boarding houses visited. 4 focused group discussions (FGDs) with 4 boarding houses; held interviews; observation guides were conducted to collect data about the welfare, social interactions, academic performance (through student portfolios at the Careers (Guidance) office, like school report forms, student progress charts, performance in continuous assessment).

The researcher used thematic data analysis to analyse qualitative data collected from focus group discussions and narratives. The quantitative data were analysed manually using descriptive statistics. Additionally, simple analyses were done using Microsoft excel.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presented findings and discussion of the study that looked at girls' issues doing weekly boarding at Chadiza Day Secondary School in the Eastern Province of Zambia.

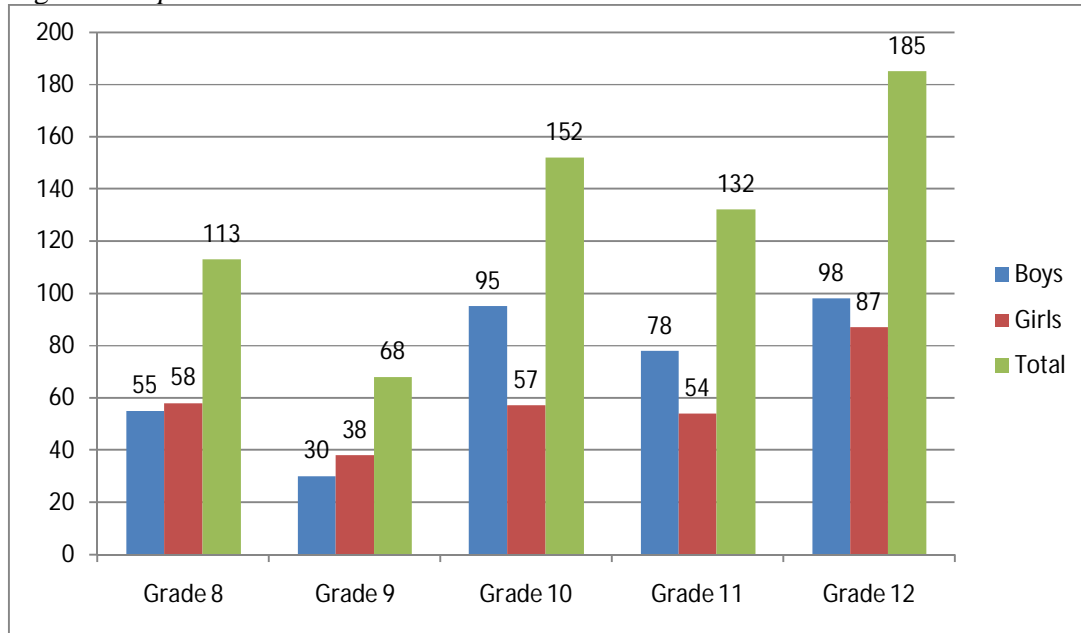
Figure 1: Staffing and qualifications



Source: Research findings 2019

As shown in Figure 1 above, Chadiza Day Secondary School had 44 teachers of which 20 were males representing 45.5% and 24 females representing 54.5%. 9 female teachers had diplomas representing 20.5% of all the teachers. 7 male teachers had diploma representing 15.9%. 15 female teachers had first degrees representing 34.1%. 12 male teachers had first degree representing 27.3%. No female teacher had master's degree representing 0%. One male teacher had master's degree representing 2.3%.

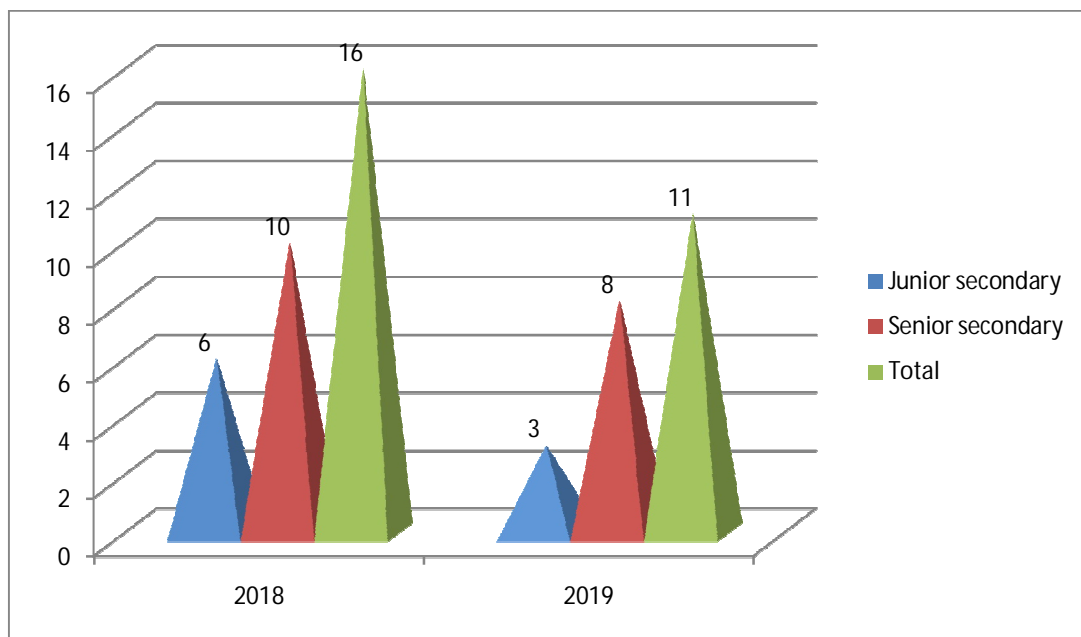
Figure 2: Pupil enrolment in 2019



Source: Research findings, 2019

As shown in Figure 2, in 2019 the enrolment of pupils at Chadiza Day Secondary School was 650 pupils in total representing 100% of which 356 were boys representing 54.8% and 294 girls representing 45.2%.

Figure 3: Pregnancies



Source: Research findings 2019

As shown in Figure 3, in 2018, 6 junior girls and 10 senior girls had pregnancies. In 2019 there were 3 junior girls and 8 senior girls with pregnancies giving a total of 27 in two years. The question one would ask is that if at one school there were 27 girls with pregnancies, what if all schools in the district were included? This issue was very serious and needed urgent attention. Meanwhile, in 2018 no girls were re-entered (went back to school) after giving birth while in 2019, 6 girls were re-entered representing 25% of the total girls impregnated. The majority that did not go back to school after giving birth ended up into early marriages.

It was reported in the female teachers' focus group that:

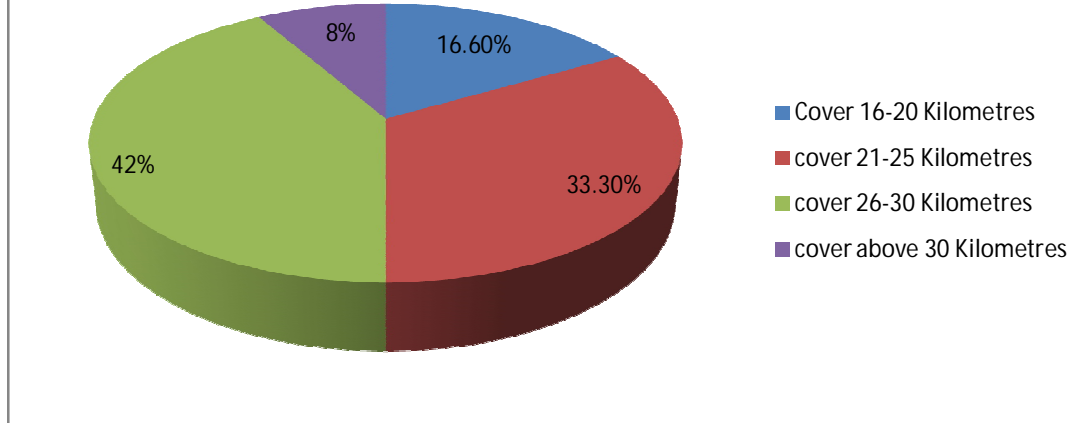
*Girls in Day Secondary Schools are more venerable than those in Boarding Secondary Schools because of a number of issues they are involved in or they do due to lack of control when they knock off at school. Most of them are problematic but those doing weekly boarding are a big problem. They are difficult to control. They are free to do all sorts of unwanted activities that affect their performance.*

This corroborates with what Kombo (2005) posits that educational attainment of girls is associated with the type of educational institution one attends. This was supported by MoE (1996:62) "for every 100 girls who begin primary school, only 70 complete the full primary course, 23 proceed into junior secondary school, 9 into senior secondary, and 7 sit for the school certificate examination in Grade 12." This shows that a lot of girls were not able to continue with education because they were affected by different issues.

### **Long distance from homes**

Figure 4: Distance from school to home

## Approximate distance in Kilometres girls cover from home to school



Source: Research findings 2019

As revealed by Kelly and Kanyika (2000) the time learners take to get to school lowers their academic achievement because such learners are likely to arrive late at school, have less study time than their classmates who live near the school. This study confirmed this as shown in figure 4 and as such many girls opted to be doing weekly boarding. To confirm this further, one administrator indicated: *Our pupils come from far places, as far as Mtaya and Ngala. Mtaya is 45 kilometres and Ngala is 40 kilometres from Chadiza Day Secondary and one would take about two hours driving due to the bad state of the roads.* This was complemented by girls' focus group responses when they were asked to tell kilometres girls cover from home to school. Hence, this study found that all the girls who were coming from far places were doing weekly boarding in order to reduce distance. These findings were in line with the study done by UNESCO (2012) comparing the impact of distance to school on girls' education at both primary and secondary levels in Nigeria, Malawi, Uganda and Zambia. The study found that distance to school had a negative impact for both sexes, and was a serious barrier to girls' education, particularly at the lower secondary level. However, this study found that both junior and senior secondary school girls were equally seriously affected by distance.

Kelly and Kanyika (2000) purport that girls who stay near the school such as the weekly boarders at Chadiza Day have more time to study and report for school on time. However, this study did not agree with the findings of Kelly and Kanyika. This study established that some girls were reporting late for schools for several reasons such as, preparing food for the boys, taking the roles of wives, waking up late because of sleeping late at night, waking up late due to intimate issues they were involved in the previous night for instance, conversations and messaging on phones that usually took more minutes or hours. It was reported in girls' focus group: *Some men were even visiting boarding houses around 06:00 to have sex with girls and hence reporting late for classes.* This meant that their stay near the school did not solve a purpose of arriving on time at school.

Literature reveals that learners, who covered many kilometres as they walked to school daily, arrived tired such that they failed to concentrate in class (Mbozi, 2008). However, this study

found that girls were getting tired not due to long distances, but due to vices they were involved in during the previous night before coming to school in the morning. Girls' weekly boarders did not utilise evening or night time for studying. Instead they misused it by involving themselves in illicit activities.

### **Low academic performance**

Both focus groups of teachers expressed displeasure over low performance of the girls in weekly boarding. This was also complemented by the one guidance teacher who indicated:

*Girls do not study; they are most of the time chasing or being chased by men or fellow pupils. Phones conversations, SMS (Short Messaging System) and WhatsApp with their intimate friends, are some of the activities that take away their study time, hence poor performance (GT).*

This was complemented by one girl during follow up question after observation at the boarding house:

*Some girls receive frequent phone calls and have long conversation from boys or men and disturb their studies. Others have long conversations that take even hours, and some phone conversations go up to midnight even beyond, (one girl at first boding house)*

*One girl at fourth boarding house said: After knocking off, some girls give their boyfriends or man friends missed calls or messages for them to call back (one girl at fourth boding house)*

Female parent aged 54 said: *Girls do not spare enough time for studying after knocking off. They would rather be seen walking around, coupling and having phone conversation.*

One administrator said: *Apart from pupil factors, we have many other factors that bring down girls' performance in school.*

One guidance teacher indicated that: *Grade 8 and 10 selection is not well done. We are always left with residues even after producing the creams that are taken by boarding secondary schools at grade ten.*

### **Food collection**

Chomba (2011) says that many children were taken from the surrounding villages of chiefs Chona, Monze and Ufwenuka to go and stay for a week in weekly boarding schools and go back home on the weekends. This study found the same scenario at Chadiza Day Secondary School. On weekends girls went back home to collect food and it was usually on Fridays after classes and come back on Sunday afternoons or evening. A question came out in female teacher's focus group: *Who knows or who can guess what happens or how girls go home and get back to school and what they do on every weekends?* This was justified in boys' focus group that: *Some girls do not go to their parents' homes. They use weekends to meet with their men.*

### **Time management**

*Table 1: Daily Routine*

<b>DAY</b>	<b>06:30 to 07:00</b>	<b>07:00 to 07:20</b>	<b>07:20 to 13:00</b>	<b>13:00 to 14:00</b>	<b>14:30 to 16:00</b>	<b>16:00 to 17:00</b>
<b>Monday</b>	Station up keep	Registration	Lessons	Lunch	Lessons	PMS
<b>Tuesday</b>	Station up	Registration	Lessons	Lunch	Lessons	Sports

	keep					
<b>Wednesday</b>	Station up keep	Registration	Lessons	Lunch	Lessons	Clubs
<b>Thursday</b>	Station up keep	Registration	Lessons	Lunch	Lessons	Sports
<b>Friday</b>	Station up keep	Registration	Lessons	Lunch	Lessons	Debate/Quiz

Source: Research findings 2019

As seen in table 1, the each day was filled with activities from 06:30 to 17:00. Weekly boarder girls cooked on their own hence, they found it had to prepare meals due to less time available especially at lunch time. This was confirmed in girls' focus group: *We have no enough time to do our cooking at lunch time. We do not prepare breakfast due to time and lack of food for breakfast.* This issue affected their education performance. Girls were expected to be in school from 06:30, and that they only had an hour for lunch which was not enough to do their cooking. Hence, some girls reported for afternoon school activities without eating. Therefore, their body lacked energy to perform well because a child who does not eat enough food lacks concentration in class. That was the reason most girls weekly boarders preferred to have fast food such as biscuits, drinks and buy already prepared food. The issue was the source of money to buy fast and already prepared food. It is at this point that some girls resorted to making relationships with men and boys who could buy fast food for them. Girl focus group: *Demand for Vanilla, on the go, chicco (types of biscuits), fritters and drinks are influencing girls to involve in vices.*

#### **Lack of materials and infrastructure**

As observed by the authors and confirmed through interviews and all focus groups, Chadiza Day Secondary School had shortages of teaching and learning materials. The school also had no enough infrastructures for both pupils and teachers. It was still squatting in the buildings that belonged to Chadiza Primary School. Their only 1x4 classroom block was still under construction for more than 8 years and more works needed to be done for it to be completed. As if that was not enough, the school had also no science laboratory. Female teachers' focus group: *Upgraded Day School such as Chadiza has many problems which include infrastructure, teaching and learning materials and shortage of teachers.*

#### **School fees**

Pupils reported that they chose to come to Chadiza Day Secondary Schools because of low fees they were required to pay which was affordable by their parents.

This was supported by a Male parent aged 62: *Day Secondary Schools are good because they have low school fees. This makes it easy for most of us not in informal sector to pay.*

It was again reported in the boys' focus group that:

*Some boys were doing piece works to find money for school fees on their own and as such it was easy to pay for school fees at day school than at the boarding school. Meanwhile, some girls misuse money for school fees given to them by parents to buy clothes and other unnecessary things. In the end they have nothing to pay to school. Hence, they resort to promiscuity to earn money.*

The study established that some parents gave their daughters enough school fees but they misused.

### **Accommodation and Rentals**

Girls looked for accommodation on their own or with the help of fellow pupils or even just other people. Even when girls found rooms on their own, very few parents visited them to see where they were staying. This agreed with what was said by (Crosnoe, 2001) that parents tend to become less involved in their children's education over time, especially after middle school.

During observation visit to boarding houses, one girl said:

*I was visited one day by my parents when my friends sent a message that I was sick. It was difficult for them to allocate where I was renting. My friends had to follow them and met at the market to direct them.*

The study established that parents were less involved in the welfare of the girls doing weekly boarding. This was also supported by Catsambis and Garland (1997) who intimated that parental involvement dramatically declines as students enter the middle grades and even more as they enter high school.

One administrator said:

*Our girls rent small houses or rooms on their own in Kamwala, Mulolo, Zingalume, Chimwemwe and Police compounds and the school has no police of visiting them. As such, they conduct themselves in the manner they wish to.*

To confirm this, it was revealed during the girls' focus group discussion that *rental charges varies and was per bed space, we pay K25 to K50 non-electrified, while electrified rooms ranged from K35 to K60 per month. The rooms accommodated 2 to 4 girls.*

### **Source of water and hygiene in houses**

Source of water was a problem. Some girls fetched water from other houses with running water or shallow wells. During observation visits, one girl at the third boarding house said that *the first house I rented with my two friends when we come for grade ten in 2017, we were neighbours with the boys and we drew water from the same point and used the same bathroom and toilet. We were there for the whole term.*

One girl at the second boarding house narrated the following:

*We draw water from a kiosk and we pay 50n per 80 litters. There is a book where they record our litters and amount paid. Therefore, what we do with my friends, we put our money together and pay using one name.*

### **Promiscuity**

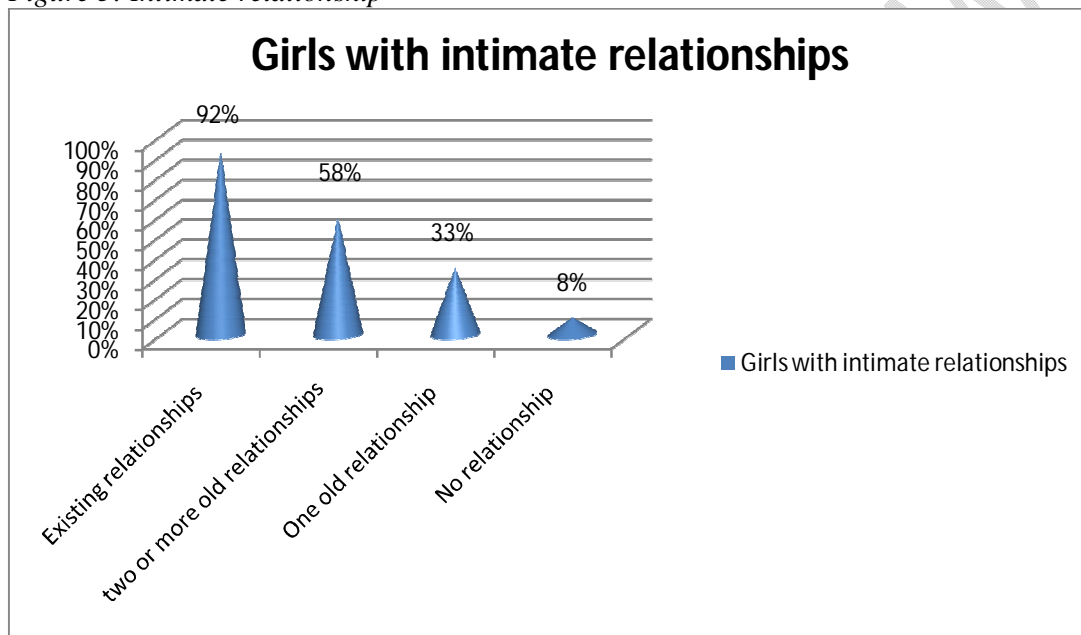
It was revealed in both teachers' focus group discussions that girls were left free without proper guidance from parents and school. As a result they were involved in illicit activities such as beer drinking and promiscuity. Unanimously, participants observed this as a very serious issue. This was confirmed by what was said in boys' focus group discussion that: *Girls are involved in relationships with many people who give them money and other things such as body lotion, soap and relish.*

One girl during observation visit confirmed had this to say:

*Some men take the girls for outing to the border (Zambia-Mozambique boarder called Chanida). Others make friendship with teachers, taxi drivers, business men even fellow pupils who give them money and food staff. Some boys only offer them transport by the way of carrying them on bicycles when going for weekends.*

Another confirmation came from boys’ focus group that girls did not demand much money in exchange for sex. It came out clearly that even just a packet of soya piece, few eggs, cup of *kapenta* or a K10 would allow them meet for sex several times. However, a complaint that came from the boys was that the girls would not stick to one partner, anyone who would approach them would be accepted as long as they offer them something though little.

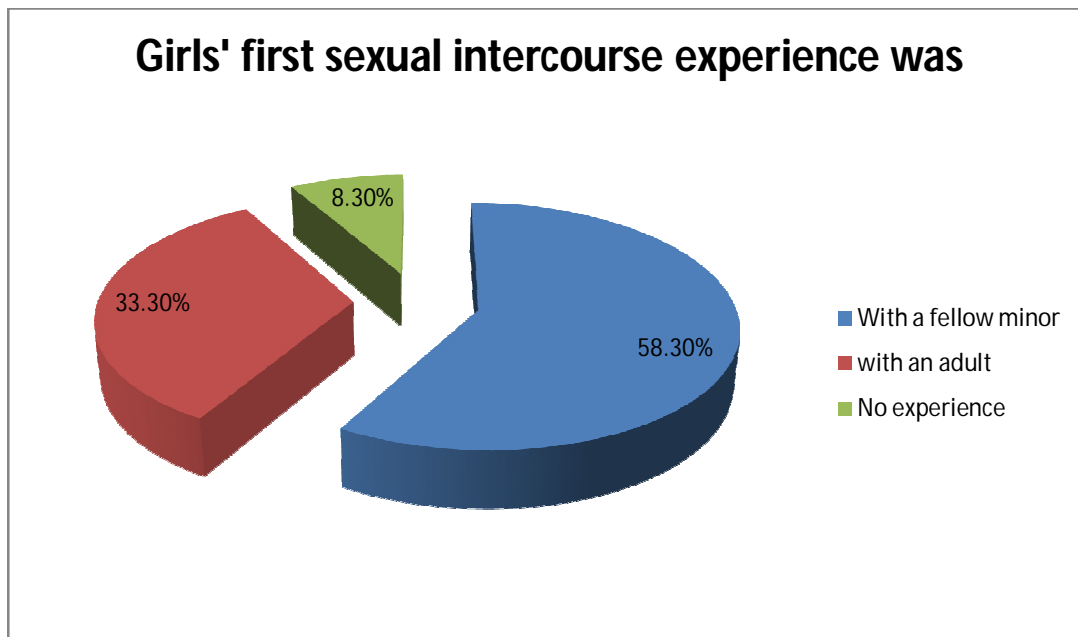
Figure 5: Intimate relationship



Source: Research findings, 2019

Figure 5 shows percentage of girls and their intimate relationships. The study established that intimate relationships were common as seen by the 92% of the existing relationship. It was also reported in the focus groups for teachers and boys that some male teachers looked at girls not as daughters but as mates. This came out very clear in female teachers’ focus group: *Some girls who have relationships with male teachers have less respect for female teachers. It is even worse if a male teacher has a wife teaching at the same school.* Meanwhile, in boys’ focus group it was reported that: *Some boys spend nights in girls’ boarding houses when they go for studies.*

Figure 6: Girls’ first sexual intercourse experience



Source: Research findings 2019

Figure 6 shows that 58.3% of girls had first sexual intercourse with their fellow minors, 33.3% had first experience with adult while 8.3% have had no sexual experience. When the girls were asked to share places of their first intercourse experience, 33.3% had their first intercourse experience at secondary school, 25% at home, 16.6% at primary school and during social events and 8.3% had no experience.

#### Peer Pressure

It was found out that peer pressure also contributed to girls' issues. This was seen in 2018 when three grade 8 girls forced three boys to impregnate them. This was after their fellow grade 8 girl was impregnated as reported in the female teachers' focus group: *In 2018 three grade 8 girls forced some boys to impregnate them.* As such it was concluded that peer influence is again an issue among girls' weekly boarders. The findings were in line with the study by (Lyamba, 2013; Banda & Nowanga, 2017) who revealed that the causes of indiscipline were peer pressure, community influence, lack of positive role models, the re-entry policy, human rights awareness, drug abuse, the media, ineffective classroom management and home environmental factors. Unfortunately, being pregnant was taken to be a great achievement for both girls and some female parents. That was a reason these girls demanded pregnancies from the boys threatening them that if they would not, their relationship would end. Limited personal supplies (lotion, food, clothing) was unanimously said to be another cause of peer pressure leading girls in this school arrangement to indulge in sexual activities. Three quarters of the respondents mentioned male teachers in distance marriage relations and sexual relationships as victims to either's machinations (the school girls' and the teachers). This corroborates with what Chikopela, Chitundu and Mpolomoka, (2020) established in their study.

#### Education level of Parents

Brahman et al. (1999) argues that pupils from developing countries are unlikely to progress further in their education because of high illiteracy levels among the adult population. They added that illiterate parents were less likely to encourage their children to work hard at school. Meanwhile, children of more educated parents were more likely to perform well and

progress further through school. This was true with this study that most girls belong to parents who were not educated as such it was not possible for them to advise their daughters (Masaiti, 2018). Parents looked inferior before their daughters because of the education their daughters acquired. As a result, girls could just do things they wanted. However, educated parents knew what was involved in education and were able to strongly advise their daughters based on the vast school experience and educational knowledge they had.

### **Guidance and Discipline**

This study found this to be true since instilling proper discipline to girls in weekly boarding was almost impossible because of non-supervised weekly boarding which existed. Griffin (1994) posits that most people equate falling academic standards in schools to low standards of students' discipline. Teachers complained that it was difficult to control the girls because they were not in one place. Male teachers' focus group: *it is difficult to instil discipline to weekly boarders when they knock off. Discipline is given to them when they are in school, after knocking off, it is none of our business.* As elaborated by MoE (2001), school discipline is a powerful emotive subject since it is one of the main determinants of students' success in their academic work, and it is an issue that has generated public concern. The study found this to be very true. A well-disciplined pupil was disciplined even in her studies (Mushibwe, Mpolomoka, Botha & Machaka, 2020). She knew what to do at all time and did only that which was right even when they were alone in boarding houses. This was complemented by Ovell (2001) who said that discipline in schools is essential for effective learning. The findings were also supported by Literature (MoE, 2001; Mainde, Mpolomoka & Mwansa, 2022) which revealed that discipline is not only the key to good academic performance, which all parents, students and teachers cherish and aspire but also a preparation for success throughout life.

The study established that the schools also needed to provide the vital support services through guidance and counselling in order to instil in girls a sense of responsibility and curb issues that may arise. One administrator said: *Though guidance services are provided at school, there is need to make it more effective.*

Guidance and counselling services were bases of good discipline. As discussed above, this study found that discipline was lacking among girls. This was in agreement with what literature contends (Ovell, 2000; MoE, 2001; Mpolomoka, Kanduza, Sampa, Sichali, & Hamweete, 2016; Mushibwe, et al., 2020) that discipline is essential. This is because when behaviour is learnt, it is difficult to undo it. Most of the girls would go in the society with the kind of unpleasant behaviour learnt or developed in weekly boarding. As such, they would not have a successful life.

Furthermore, literature (Makinde, 1984; Bennars, 1994; Mutie and Ndambuki, 1999; Mushibwe, et al., 2020) holds that the guidance programme is supposed to develop the learner's intellectual abilities, develop a balanced personality and have a complete person intellectually, spiritually, morally and socially. Guidance and counselling programme is therefore aimed at assisting students to harmonise their abilities, interests and values, thereby enabling them to develop their potential fully. This means that with good guidance and counselling programme in Day Secondary Schools, a lot of girls' issues in weekly boarding would be controlled and performance improved. This is in line with what was said by Griffin (1994) that most people equate falling academic standards in schools to low standards of students' discipline.

## **Conclusion**

The study explores a number of problems regarding female weekly boarders at Chadiza Day Secondary School. The findings clearly highlighted the issues that girls were involved in or experienced in weekly boarding. Furthermore, the study's result clearly explained how the issues impede girls' education. Weekly boarding in day secondary schools is a good initiative. However, it must be provided under what may be called 'supervised weekly boarding' in order to avoid girls' issues that may affect their education and life at large.

## **Recommendations:**

1. Day Secondary Schools should provide supervised weekly boarding and improved guidance services.
2. Day Secondary Schools should keep proper records of all the pupils doing weekly boarding.
3. The parents should also provide necessary services for their daughters to help them pursue their education with no or very minimal issues.
4. Girls at Chadiza Day Secondary School in weekly boarding should understand and adhere to demands and rules that go with education.

## **Ethical Approval and Consent:**

The researcher obtained permission from the School Administration before the data collection process commenced. Consent from participants was obtained. Participants were assured that all the data shared would remain confidential and used solely for the purpose of the study and that anonymity would be observed. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured by requesting participants not to write their names on the questionnaires. Lankshear and Knobel (2004) contend that participants need to be assured of confidentiality and preservation of anonymity in order to mask their identity in the report to minimize any negative repercussions in the light of the outcome of the study. This helped to minimize fears and promote honesty among the respondents in the way they responded to the questions.

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