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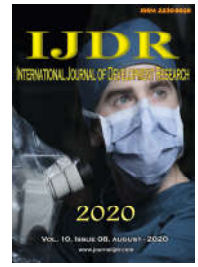
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## INFLUENCE OF HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIC FACTORS ON GENDER PARTICIPATION IN BASIC ADULT LITERACY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN NAKURU WEST SUB-COUNTY, NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA

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### ABSTRACT

The present study sought to examine the influence of household economic factors on gender participation in basic adult literacy development programme (BALDP) in Nakuru West Sub-County, Kenya. The study employed the descriptive research design and targeted the population of 1,564 individuals consisting of 17 adult education instructors and 1,547 learners that were involved in BALDP in Nakuru West. The study sample was 16 instructors and 140 adult learners who were selected using the clustered random sampling technique. Semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect data from the learners while interview guides were used to gather data from instructors. Quantitative data was analysed using percentages and the chi-square test while qualitative data was analysed using the thematic technique. Results showed that women had greater participation in BALDP in Nakuru West than men in terms of enrolment, class attendance, class involvement, and course completion. The low participation of men in BALDP was influenced significantly by the men's occupation ( $p = .001$ ) that limited the amount of time available for learning. The study recommends that the Directorate of Adult Education in Nakuru West and instructors should make classes more flexible and accommodative to the work schedules of men including offering evening and weekend classes.

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### INTRODUCTION

Basic Adult literacy development programme (BALDP) is generally a learning mode aimed at improving basic literacy skills such as reading, writing, numeracy, communication, and cultural literacy among grown persons (Pinder, 2011). In many societies, lack of basic literacy skills lead to unemployment, underemployment, and low political participation (Read Educational Trust, 2017). On the other hand, improved literacy contributes to economic growth, crime reduction, poverty reduction, increased civic engagement, improved health behaviours, cultural diversity, low birth rates and death rates, improved nutrition, increased self-esteem, and empowerment. Improved literacy among adults also leads to increased mobility, better interaction with their children, changed attitudes towards domestic violence, and more engagement in the social and political life of their communities (Chadha and Wadhwa, 2018).

Basic Adult Literacy Development Programmes are a common phenomenon in many parts of the globe. However, major gender disparities have also been observed in the adult illiteracy trends. Muscat *et al* (2017) examined participation in an adult education health literacy programme that sought to inculcate social skills among socially disadvantaged adults in Australia. The total turnout was 167 adults with 33% being from rural areas and 67% from urban centres. Gender analysis showed that 69% of the participants were women, and the average age found to be 45 years. A report by UNESCO (2017) also showed the predominance of women participating in adult literacy development programmes in Africa. Out of 21 individuals that were involved in the study, 14 were female, and 7 were male. This report focused on Sub-Saharan Africa in general. Another report by the USAID (2017) revealed that women formed the majority of individuals participating in an adult education programme in Namibia titled *Advancing Youth Project*. The data indicated that from 2012 to 2017, 22902

learners had enrolled in the programme with 70% being women and the other 30% being men. In Nigeria, Sanda (2014) also found that more females were attending literacy classes compared to men. In her research done in Borno State in Nigeria, she found out that only 28% of the participants attending BALDP in 2011 were males. Adult learners differ from basic learners in that they have greater roles and responsibilities. A study by UNESCO (2013) found that BALDP in Uganda found it difficult to attract participants with the main factors contributing to this difficulty being money. Although the adult literacy classes in Uganda were free, many did not attend classes because they could not abandon activities that bring food on their tables and attend those classes. UNESCO (2013) also found that another limiting factor was unavailability of resources. The survey revealed that the majority of the learners had to pay for basic materials such as books and chalks while others had to make contribution to compensate instructors because the instructors were not paid. A study by UNESCO (2018) found that inadequate resources were also the main factor hindering adults' enrolment in an environment education programme in Namibia. The programme was introduced with the view of educating participants on environmental problems and their solutions. Findings revealed that many adults could not attend classes because of lack of written literature. It was found that the programme did not have the capital to print and publish materials in native languages and thus learners were forced to use material printed in English. Although the study by UNESCO (2018) highlights how economic factors can influence adults' participation in education programme, it did demonstrate how resources or their absence contribute to gender disparity in adult education. The study by Onchari (2016) also found that household economic factors influenced enrolment in BALDP in Isinya Sub-County by affecting availability of time to attend classes, money to facilitate transportation to and from the learning centres, and access to learning materials. It was found that individuals from households with relatively high economic status were more likely to enrol into the adult literacy centres as they could afford to spare some time for learning. On the other hand, individuals from low economic households spent most of their time pursuing income generating activities and thus could not get the time to enrol in BALDP. Those who could get the time had no resources to enable them to commute to the learning centres and purchase learning materials. The study by Onchari (2016) however failed to demonstrate how economic factors have contributed to gender disparity in BALDP. It also emphasized on enrolment and ignored other aspects such as attendance, performance, and completion rates. The relationship between household economic status, gender, and adult education was demonstrated in a study by Chang, Wu, and Lin (2012), which examined factors that shape adult involvement in lifelong learning in Taiwan. The study used the survey design where data for 4,065 individuals between the ages of 18 and 64 years was analysed. Results revealed that more women in low and middle income families were engaged in lifelong learning than men. In low income households, women were 5.7 times more likely to engage in lifelong learning than men while in middle income families, women were 1.9 times more likely to engage in lifelong learning than men. The main reasons that barred men from low and middle income families from engaging in lifelong learning were work limitations and lack of desire. Women cited lack of time and overwhelming family responsibilities as the main reason for not engaging in lifelong learning. The study by Chang *et al.*

(2012) was however conducted in a context that is significantly different from Kenya and thus findings may not reflect how household economic status influences gender participation in BALDP in the Kenyan context. The study also focused on lifelong learning that also include education programmes that target the highly literate such as university degree and professional courses rather than BALDP that mainly target illiterate adults. At independence, the Kenyan government identified ignorance as one of the major obstacles to the country's development. To promote literacy among its adult population who had not gotten the opportunity to attend school, the government established the Board of Adult Education (BAE) in 1966 (Republic of Kenya, 2012). The Department of Adult Education (DAE) was created in 1967 to implement BAE policies. By 1979, the government had established 11,766 adult literacy centres with an enrolment of 415,074. The enrolment however started to drop and reached 93,052 in the year 2000 despite the fact that adult illiteracy level remained high. Apart from the low enrolment problem, the adult literacy centres have also had to deal with striking gender disparities (Njeri, 2011). In 2005, female comprised the largest segment of learners in BALDPs at 72.9% as compared to males whose proportion was 21.1% in which country? (Ndiku *et al.*, 2009). Several factors were linked to the gender disparities including cultures that made men unwilling to sit in class with their wives, men refusing to be taught by female teachers, family responsibility, inadequate instructional materials, inappropriate learning environment, and inability to balance career and learning demands. In Nakuru County, it is estimated that 17% of adults have no formal education (Kenya Bureau of Statistics, 2013). Although the rate is below the national average, it still highlights the need for adult education in the region. The enrolment of male learners also lags behind that of female, the backdrop on which this study was designed and undertaken in Nakuru West Sub-County. However no empirical study has been done to establish factors contributing to gender disparities in BALDP in Nakuru West Sub-County,

## METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive research design. This design was appropriate as the study sought to establish the current situation in Nakuru West Sub-County with regard to household economic factors and their influence on gender participation in BALDP. The design was also appropriate because the researcher had no control over the study variables and thus the variables had to be studied as they existed in the study setting without manipulating them. Particularly, the design entailed collecting the views and opinions of individuals who had been exposed to the study variables. It used both qualitative and quantitative methods. The target population was 1,564 individuals comprising of 17 adult education instructors stationed in Nakuru West Sub-County, as well as, 1547 adult learners who were enrolled in the BALDP in Nakuru West Sub-County (Nakuru West Sub-County Adult and Continuing Education Officer, 2018). These individuals were targeted because they had direct experience with the BALDP in the study area and thus, they were in the best position to provide information regarding factors that influence gender participation. One of the learning centers was used for pilot study. Proportional stratified random sampling was used to select a sample of 140 adult learners from the remaining ten learning centres, while the entire population of the remaining 16 adult education instructors was studied. Two instruments of data collection were used: (1) questionnaire for

adult learners, and (2) interview guide for instructors. The questionnaire was developed in line with the study variables that included gender participation in BALDP and household economic factors. The self-administered questionnaire contained close-ended questions that sought to elicit the respondents' views regarding the study variables. A semistructured interview guide was used to collect data from instructors in the adult literacy centres in Nakuru West Sub-County. Faculty staff reviewed the data collecting instrument for validity analysis. For reliability analysis, data from the pilot study gave a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.0812

## RESULTS

Out of the 156 individuals who were expected to participate, 146 responded by either completing a questionnaire or participating in an interview. This figure translates to a response rate of 93.6%. There were more female adult learners (59.5%) than males (40.5%) in the study sample. The results highlight that there is a gender disparity in the BALDP in Nakuru West in favour of women. Results of the present study also show that there are more female instructors (53.3%) than male instructors (46.7%). The results are also congruent with Ndegwa (2016) who found that there was gender disparity in the teaching workforce in BALDP in favour of women in Nakuru County. In terms of age, the majority of the learners (58.8%) were in the 20-40 years' age brackets. About 26.7% were below 20 years and 12.2% were between 41 and 60 years. Only 2.3% were above the age of 60 years.

On the other hand, the age similarities may affect the self-esteem of some learners who may feel embarrassed of receiving instructions from peers. The self-esteem issue may affect male and female learners differently. No instructor was below the age of 20 years or above 60 years, which is in line with government policy that set the retirement age for teachers in the BALDP at 60 years (Ndegwa, 2016). Concerning marital status, the majority of the respondents (58.8%) were single. This characteristic could have a positive implication on the participation of both genders in the BALDP. The results mean that the majority of the learners are less likely to have many family responsibilities that may hinder them from enrolling and attending the BALDP classes. This marital status is more likely to have a positive influence on female leaders because they are disproportionately affected by family responsibilities when they get married. Results further showed that 32.8% were married, 4.6% were divorced or separated, and 3.8% were widows or widowers.

**Gender Participation in BALDP:** The dependent variable of the study was gender participation in BALDP. One of the indicators that were used to measure this variable was enrolment to the BALDP by males and females. Learners were presented with three statements related to enrolment and asked to indicate their level of agreement with each on a five-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree). Results are presented in Table 1. Three scenarios were examined; the first was a centre having more or less the same rate of enrolment of male and female learners,

**Table 1. Enrolment of Males and Females in BALDP**

Key: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= undecided, 4= agree, and 5 = strongly agree					
Statement	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
In our class, the number of male and female students is more or less the same	28.2	8.4	2.3	32.8	28.2
Many female students have joined the course	9.9	12.2	5.3	29.0	43.5
Many male students have joined the programme	22.9	22.9	7.6	29.8	16.8

Source: Field Data (2020)

**Table 2. Class Attendance by Male and Female Learners**

Key: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= undecided, 4= agree, and 5 = strongly agree					
Statement	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
The class attendance of male and female students at this centre is more or less the same	25.2	27.5	1.5	22.9	22.9
Male students attend most of the classes consistently	18.3	22.9	6.9	28.2	23.7
Female students attend most of the classes consistently	13.0	11.5	4.6	29.8	41.2
Most male students arrive to class before the lessons begin	16.8	18.3	7.6	26.7	30.5
Most female students arrive to class before the lessons begin	7.6	12.2	11.5	28.2	40.5

Source: Field Data (2020)

These findings denote that the majority of the learners in BALDP centres in Nakuru West Sub-County are in the early and middle adulthood age. However, the programme has attracted individuals of different age groups including those who are past 60 years. The youthful learners are probably those who had dropped out of formal schooling during the childhood and have decided to advance the education. The majority of the instructors (66.7%) were in 20-40 age brackets while the remaining 33.3% were between 40 and 60 years. These results also imply that the instructors were in the early and middle adulthood age, which is the same age as the majority of the learners. The similarity in the ages of the majority of learners and instructors could have both a positive and negative implication on gender participation in BALDP. On one hand, the age similarity may make it easier for the instructors and learners to interact.

the second was a centre having more female enrolment, and the third scenario was a centre having more male learners joining the programme. Results in Table 2 show that 29.0% of the respondents agreed and another 43.5% strongly agreed with the position that there were many female students joining the BALDP in their centres. About 61.0% agreed or strongly agreed that the number of male and female students enrolling in their centre is more or less the same while only 46.6% agreed or strongly agreed that many male students were joining the programme. These results suggest that there is higher enrolment of females in most of the BALDP centres in Nakuru West Sub-County. They also demonstrate apathy and disinterest among the males towards the BALDP. The results are reinforced by qualitative data where most of the instructors that were interviewed affirmed that the number of female learners was higher than the male learners in their classes

(Interview Data, 2020). Similar findings were also observed in the study by Mogeni (2012), which found that enrolment and attendance was higher among women than men in Masaba North Sub-County BALDP centres. Wanja (2012) also found that more females than males were enrolling in BALDP in Magumoni Sub-County. These findings suggest that males have not fully embraced the BALDP across the country. They also suggest that there are elements within the programme and the communities that hinder the full participation of males in the programmes. Another indicator that was used to assess gender participation in BALDP was class attendance by male and female learners. Respondents were asked to give their views on several issues related to class attendance. Results are summarized in Table 2. Results in Table 2 illustrates that the majority of the respondents either strongly disagreed (25.2%) or disagreed (27.5%) with assertion that class attendance of male and female students at their centre was more or less the same. About 51.9% of the respondents held the view that male students attend most of the classes consistently as opposed to 71% who felt that female students attended classes consistently. In terms of class arrival time, more respondents (68.7%) said that female students arrive to class before the lesson begins than those who expressed that male students arrive to class on time (57.3%).

gender difference in class attendance varies from one learning centre to the next. The third indicator that was used to measure gender participation in BALDP is the involvement in class by male and female learners. Respondents were asked to give their views on several statements relating to this issue. Their views are summarised in Table 3. Results in Table 3 show that the majority of the respondents either agreed (29%) or strongly agreed (51.9%) that there is active involvement in class activities by both male and female learners. More respondents (75.5%) agreed that most female learners usually complete all their assignments as instructed by the teacher as compared to those who felt that male students also complete their assignments (67.2%). These findings imply that there is active involvement in classroom activities by learners of different gender but the level of involvement particularly when it comes to completion of assignments is higher among female learners. They show that female learners are more motivated than males to engage in classroom activities and are more committed to the learning process marked by completion of assignments given by teachers. Class involvement has a major bearing on the quality of learning as well as on learning outcomes. The low involvement by male learners in BALDP is therefore a point of concern. The qualitative data also point to the fact that there is low class involvement by male learners in the BALDP.

**Table 3. Class Involvement by Male and Female Learners**

Key: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= undecided, 4= agree, and 5 = strongly agree					
Statement	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
There is active involvement of both male and female students in class activities including answering questions	9.9	3.8	5.3	29.0	51.9
Most male students usually complete all their assignments as instructed by the teacher	9.2	13.7	9.9	18.3	48.9
Most female students usually complete all their assignments as instructed by the teacher	8.4	3.1	13.0	28.2	47.3

Source: Field Data (2020)

**Table 4. Course Completion by Male and Female Learners**

Key: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= undecided, 4= agree, and 5 = strongly agree					
Statement	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
The number of male and female students who complete the course in the centre is more or less the same	14.5	12.2	7.6	38.9	26.7
Many male students complete their course in this centre	13.7	13.0	8.4	38.9	26.0
Many female students complete their course in this centre	6.1	3.8	13.0	34.4	42.7

Source: Field Data (2020)

These results suggest that female learners have better class attendance when compared to male learners. Poor class attendance among the males limit them from benefiting from the BALDP. Poor class attendance set men up to remain behind in fundamental skills that they need to learn more complicated work. When they finally attend classes, they find it difficult to catch up with the rest of the learners. Chronic absenteeism could also roll-back the gain that men get from BALDP causing them to relapse into illiteracy. Current findings are consistent with the study by Wanja (2012) who found that 30% of male students enrolled in the BALDP in Magomoni Sub-County attended at least 5 lessons per week as compared to 42.8% of female learners. Missing 5 lesson per week falls under the definition of chronic absenteeism. The findings by Wanja (2012) indicate that chronic absenteeism among males is a widespread phenomenon in the country's BALDP set up. The findings are also supported by the qualitative data gathered during interviews with the instructors. Most of the interviewees affirmed that the attendance of female students was quite good and that most were always available for class. Some also reported that female learners were more punctual than the males. A few interviewees however gave differing views suggesting that

Most of the interviewed instructors indicated that female learners were more active in responding to questions in class, asking questions, engaging in discussions with fellow learners, and completing their assignments. One instructor described that:

Female learners are involved in class activities more than male because they are influenced by the others and they want to improve their knowledge. (Instructor3, Female, 2020).

Gender differences in class involvement can be attributed to a multitude of factors including the structure of classroom, teaching strategies deployed by the instructor, and learning motivation. The current study focused on the role played by household economic factors in determining class involvement by male and female students. The final indicator that the study used to gauge gender participation in BALDP is programme completion rates of male and female learners. Respondents were given a set of statement relating to this issue and asked to give their views. Results are summarized in Table 4. Results in Table 4 show that 65.6% of the respondents either agreed (38.9%) or strongly agreed (26.7%) that the number of male and female students who complete the course in their

respective centres is more or less the same. About 64.9% reported that many male students complete their course while 77.1% said that many female students complete their course. These results suggest that the completion rate of female learners is higher than that of males as the percentages of respondents who reported that many female students complete their course is higher than the percentage of those who said that many male students complete their course. These findings are consistent with the study by UNESCO (2017), who found that in Europe, women who were active in the labour force were more likely to participate and complete education and training programmes when compared to males. UNESCO (2017) also found that the majority of the individuals graduating from institutions of higher learning across the globe were women. The findings however relate to higher education rather than basic adult education, which is the focus of the present study.

**Influence of Household Economic Factors on Gender Participation in BALDP:** The objective of the study was to examine the influence of household economic factors on gender participation in BALDP. The study focused on three main household economic factors namely: household income, type of occupation, and access to learning resources.

**Influence of Household Income on Gender Participation in BALDP:** To assess household income, respondents were asked to indicate the range in which their average household income falls within the categories that were provided. Table 6 presents the distribution of respondents according to their average household incomes. The household incomes for male and female respondents are compared.

views. The results are summarized in Table 6. Table 6 shows that 86.8% of males and 74.4% of female respondents were of the view that low income limits some men from enrolling and participating in the programme. The chi-square test showed that there is no significant difference between males and females who either agreed or disagreed with the statement ( $p=0.124$ ). Results also show that 73.6% of male respondents and 84.6% of the females were of the view that low income limits some women from enrolling and participating in the programme. The chi-square test showed that there was a significant difference between male and female who either disagreed or agreed with the statement ( $p=0.048$ ). From the findings, it is evident that more male respondents feel that low income affects men learners more while female respondents hold the view that low income affect women learners more. However, the findings suggest that low income does not affect male and female learners' participation in BALDP differently. Both males and female appear to experience similar challenges associated with low income. This interpretation is also supported by findings in Table 6, which show that the majority of learners (both male and females) have low household incomes and thus are bound to experience similar challenges as far as income is concerned. Similar views were also expressed by the instructors when they were asked to give their views regarding how household income affects the participation of male and female learners in the BALDP. Most of the instructors indicated that the majority of the leaners in the centres (both males and females) were from high poverty backgrounds. Due to their low income status, a good number of learners work for long hours doing odd jobs to make ends meet.

**Table 5. Household Income for Male and Female Learners**

Average Household Income (Kshs)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Below 10,000	67.9	70.5
10,000- 30,000	18.9	20.5
30,001- 50,000	7.5	5.1
50,001- 100,000	1.9	2.6
Above 100,000	3.8	1.3

Chi-Square = 1.294,df= 4, p=.864

Source: Field Data (2020)

**Table 6. Influence of Household Income on Gender Participation in BALDP**

Key: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= undecided, 4= agree, and 5 = strongly agree							
Statement	Gender	1	2	3	4	5	X <sup>2</sup> Test (p-value)
		%	%	%	%	%	
Low income limits some men from enrolling and participating in the programme	Male	7.5	5.7	0	20.8	66.0	0.124
	Female	5.1	15.4	5.1	24.4	50.0	
Low income limits some women from enrolling and participating in the programme	Male	9.4	1.9	15.1	26.4	47.2	0.048*
	Female	6.4	6.4	2.6	23.1	61.5	

\*Statistically significant at 0.05 level

Source: Field Data (2020)

Table 5 shows that there were more female respondents (70.5%) than males (67.9%) in the lowest income category of below Kshs 10,000. However, the difference between these proportions is not statistically significant as indicated by the chi-square test ( $p=0.864$ ). The findings however show that the majority of the learners (more than 65%) have household incomes of below Kshs. 10,000 suggesting that they come from low income families. Male learners have greater representation in higher income brackets. To assess the impact of household income on BALDP participation, respondents were presented with two statements and asked to give their

Low income also limits the learners' access to essential learning resources such as books, stationaries, and transport to and from the learning centres. The findings are consistent with the study by UNESCO (2013), which found that in Ugandan BALDP, money was a major barrier hindering enrolment and class attendance. Although the adult literacy classes in Uganda were free, many did not attend classes because they could not abandon activities that bring food on their tables and attend those classes. The findings are however not consistent with the study by Wanja (2012), which found that male learners had greater financial resources than females, which gave them an

advantage when it comes to enrolment and completion of BALDP. Current findings show that in Nakuru West, the household financial status of male and female learners is more or less the same.

#### Occupation influence on Gender Participation in BALDP:

The second household economic factor that was investigated was the learner's occupation. Respondents were asked to identify the category that best describe their occupation. The distribution of respondents across the three categories is presented in Table 7. Results in Table 7 show that the largest segment of male respondents (43.4%) were self-employed, 28.3% were employed for wages, and the remaining 28.3% were unemployed. On the other hand, the majority of female learners (62.8%) were unemployed with 21.8% being self-employed, and 15.4% being employed for wages. From these findings, it is evident that the majority of male learners are working either in self-employment or for wages while the majority of the female learners are not working. The findings suggest that the occupation status of male learners could be responsible for their low participation in the BALDP. The findings are consistent with the Severians and Dam (2012) who found that the enrolment and completion to higher education programmes was higher among women than men because many women were reliant on their husbands to provide for them and their children, which gave them the opportunity to pursue higher education. Men on the other hand, were discouraged from continuing with education due to their work responsibilities that they needed to fulfil in order to provide for their families.

The study by Severians and Dam (2012) however focused on higher education rather than basic adult education, which is the focus of the current study. To assess how occupation shapes gender participation in BALDP, respondents were asked to give their views on various issues. Their responses are summarized in Table 8. Results in Table 8 show that more male respondents (52.8%) than females (47.4%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that their participation in the BALDP had been negatively affected by the nature of their occupation. The chi-square test however showed that difference between the number of males and females who agreed with this statement was not statistically significant ( $p=0.141$ ). The finding denotes that the nature of work in which learners are engaged is not primarily responsible for gender differences in BALDP participation in Nakuru West. Similarly, more males (62.2%) than females (42.2%) agreed with the statement that they are not able to effectively participate in learning at their centre because they are too tired after a long day at work. The chi-square test showed that the difference between the number of men and women who agreed with the statement was not statistically significant ( $p=0.074$ ). This finding implies that occupational fatigue does not have a significant influence on gender participation in BALDP. It suggests there is no significant difference in the level of occupational fatigue among male and female learners. This may be explained by the fact that although majority of the women are not engaged in economic activities, most are usually active during the day performing family and other responsibilities.

**Table 8. Occupations of Male and Female Learners**

Occupation	Male (%)	Female (%)
Employed for Wages	28.3	15.4
Self-Employed	43.4	21.8
Unemployed	28.3	62.8
Chi-Square 15.074, df= 2, p=.001		

Source: Field Data (2020)

**Table 8. Influence of Type of Occupation on Participation in BALDP**

Key: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= undecided, 4= agree, and 5 = strongly agree							
Statement	Gender	1	2	3	4	5	X-Test (P-value)
		%	%	%	%	%	
My participation in the basic adult literacy development programme has been negatively affected by the nature of my occupation	Male	30.2	15.1	1.9	24.5	28.3	0.141
	Female	16.7	30.8	5.1	20.5	26.9	
I am not able to effectively participate in learning at the centre because I am usually too tired after a long day at work	Male	18.9	13.2	5.7	26.4	35.8	0.074
	Female	32.1	23.1	2.6	24.4	17.9	
I am not able to fully engage in learning at the centre because of work responsibilities	Male	9.4	17.0	13.2	37.7	22.6	0.002**
	Female	29.5	29.5	3.8	16.7	20.5	
My class attendance has been hampered by my busy work schedule	Male	9.4	20.8	7.5	13.2	49.1	0.003**
	Female	25.6	33.3	3.8	17.9	19.2	

\*\*Significant at the 0.01 level

Source: Field Data (2020)

**Table 9. Influence of Access to Learning Resources on Gender Participation in BALDP**

Key: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= undecided, 4= agree, and 5 = strongly agree							
Statement	Gender	1	2	3	4	5	X <sup>2</sup> Test p-value
		%	%	%	%	%	
My participation in the programme has been hindered by lack of teaching and learning resources such as books	Male	17.0	18.9	3.8	11.3	49.1	0.183
	Female	12.8	16.7	3.8	29.5	37.2	
My class attendance has been negatively affected by the long distance between my home and the centre	Male	15.1	24.5	1.9	20.8	37.7	0.579
	Female	21.8	23.1	0.0	24.4	30.8	
Both male and female students have equal access to teaching and learning resources	Male	7.5	5.7	0.0	22.6	64.6	0.342
	Female	9.0	9.0	2.6	32.1	47.4	

Source: Field Data (2020)

In addition, more males (60.4%) than females (37.2%) agreed with the statement that they are not able to fully engage in learning because of work responsibilities. This time, the chi-square test showed that the difference between the number of males and females who agreed was statistically significant (0.002). These findings imply that work responsibilities have a significant influence on the gender disparities in the participation in BALDP. Specifically, the finding suggests that male work responsibilities differ significantly from those of female learners resulting in low enrolment, attendance, class involvement, and programme completion among the males. Also, more males (62.3%) than females (37.3%) agreed with the assertion that their class attendance had been hampered by their busy schedules. The chi-square also showed that the difference in the number of males and females who agreed with this statement was statistically significant ( $p=0.003$ ). These findings also imply that busy work schedules have a significant influence on gender participation in BALDP. In particular, the findings indicate male learners have busier work schedules than female learners leading to low enrolment, class attendance, class involvement, and course completion. The findings are consistent with Severiens and Dams (2012) who found that it is easier for Dutch men than women to find well-paying blue collar job after high school, which reduces the men's motivation to pursue higher education. This explanation is also plausible in the Kenyan BALDP setup. It is probable that low participation by men in the BALDP is attributed to the ease of getting well-paying blue-collar jobs by men with low literacy, which reduces their desire to join the BALDP. On the other hand, difficulty in obtaining well-paying blue-collar jobs by women with low literacy may serve as an incentive for more women to join BALDP in order to improve their marketability in the job market.

**Access to Learning Resources influence on Gender Participation in BALDP:** The final household economic factor that was examined was access to learning resources. Respondents were asked to give their views on several statements that measures the extent to which access to learning resources influence their participation in BALDP. Their responses are summarized in Table 9. Results in Table 9 show that more females (66.7%) than males (60.4%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that their participation in the programme had been hindered by lack of teaching and learning resources such as books. The difference between number of males and females who agreed was however not statistically significant ( $p=0.183$ ). This implies that access to learning resources such as books do not affect male and female learners differently. In particular, the finding denotes that male and female learners have similar access to teaching and learning resources and thus, this variable cannot explain why the participation of male learners in the BALDP in Nakuru West is lower than that of female learners. On the other hand, more males (58.5%) than females (55.2%) agreed with the statement that their class attendance had been negatively affected by the long distance between their home and the centre. The chi-square test nonetheless showed that the difference between number of males and females who agreed with this statement was not statistically significant ( $p=0.579$ ). The findings imply that distance from learners' home to the learning centres do not affect male and female learners differently. The findings connote that male and female learners experience similar difficulties in accessing the learning centres and therefore, this factor cannot explain low participation in BALDP among male learners.

Also, more males (86.8%) than females (79.4%) agreed with the assertion that both male and female have equal access to teaching and learning resources. The difference between the number of males and females who agreed with this statement was not statistically significant ( $p=0.342$ ). These findings reinforce earlier findings, which showed that majority of the men and women attending the BALDP classes in Nakuru West come from low income household and thus have similar challenges when it comes to accessing teaching and learning resources.

## DISCUSSION

Findings of the study showed that participation in BALDP in Nakuru West is greater among females than males. Women have high enrolment rate, class attendance, class involvement, and programme completion rate. These findings led to the conclusion that there are elements within the BALDP in this area that discourage the participation of male learners. The household economic factor responsible for low BALDP participation among men is the occupation status of men. Results showed that men and women had more or less similar level of household income as well as similar access to teaching and learning materials. Therefore, the two factors could not explain the low participation of men in BALDP. However, findings revealed that the majority of the men were working either for wage or in self-employment while the majority of females were unemployed. These findings implied that work responsibilities could explain the low level of BALDP participation among men. Women tend to have more time and flexibility to enrol and attend classes because majority of them are not currently engaging in any economic activity. The unemployment status of most women also act as an incentive for them to enrol and complete the BALDP with aim of gaining employment in the future. Most males may not have this incentive because they are already engaged in some economic activity. The study thus concludes that to improve participation of males in BALDP, there is a need to make the programme accommodative to the work schedules and responsibilities of male learners. There is also a need to enlighten learners about the benefits of the programme beyond helping them gain employment.

To address the conflict between work responsibilities and learning among male learners, the directorate of adult education in Nakuru West as well as instructors in the learning centres should make their classes more flexible and accommodative to the work schedules of the learners. They should consider holding the classes in the evenings when the men are out of work or during weekends. To create an incentive for males who are already in employment to enrol and complete the programme, the Directorate of Adult Education should create awareness regarding other benefits of BALDP besides improving employment skills, such as improving the adult learners' life skills and self-esteem, enhancing the learners' participation in community and political activities such as voting, and improving the learners' self reliance. The study examined the influence of household economic factors on gender participation in BALDP. Household economic factors do not by any means provide a comprehensive explanation of the gender disparities that characterize the BALDP in Kenya. Future studies should explore the influence of different set of factors such as the infrastructure in the learning centres, social integration within the centres, labour market factors, religious beliefs, and

psychological elements such as learners' academic self-concept.

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