

Socio-Cultural Factors and Retention of Boy Child in Public Primary Schools in Turkana West Sub-County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Retention in school has positive consequences for individuals throughout their lives. This study presents the current factors that contribute to retention of boy child in public primary school, with a view of getting possible solution for countering the problems that causes boy child not to retain in school. The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of the socio-cultural factors on retention of boy child in public primary schools in Turkana West Sub-County. The research was guided by the classical liberal theory of equal opportunity. The research adopted a descriptive survey method. This design was considered appropriate because data was collected at one point in time across many individuals. The target population of the study comprised of 62 Head Teachers, 62 Deputy Head Teachers, 62 Senior Teachers and 62 Guidance and Counseling Teachers. The 14 Chiefs of Turkana West Sub-County were also included as part of key informants in the study. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). Quantitative data collected was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics to generate percentages, means, standard deviations and frequencies. Inferential statistics was done using linear regression model. The study results were presented using tables and figures. The findings for the study demonstrated that socio-cultural factors have a negative effects on boy child retention in public primary schools in Turkana West Sub-County.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The education of boy child is one of the problems confronting the education systems both in the developed and developing nations in the thirty-first century especially boy child underachievement and retention in school (Hodgkin & Newell, 2007). Some of the countries experiencing challenges in the education of boy child include the U.S.A, UK, Australia, Canada, and the Caribbeans, have a gender parity of 110 girls for every 100-boy child (UNESCO, 2005). Countries like the US have come up with new ways of solving the problem of underachievement, i.e., mix high performer learners with poor performers in class (Francis, Skelton & Read, 2019). A survey of gender and education indicate those boy children are facing a host of problems. Silova and Magno (2004) highlight some of the challenges there such as retention in school to look for work. An inquiry into the education of boy child in Australia shows that more boy child than girls are retained in school, being suspended and playing truant. USA, Canada and UK are also experiencing the same challenges with boy child in

school. Another major concern in these countries is that fewer boy child than girls are getting into colleges or universities. In the Southern African region, the following countries tend to be biased against boy child in that there are more girls than boy child enrolled in school: Lesotho, Mauritius, Kenya, South Africa and Swaziland (UNICEF, 2004).

In Kenya, figures on registration numbers in the Ministry of Education between 2015 and 2016 indicate that there are more girls in primary schools than children. More girls than boys go to kindergarten, but more boys than girls go to class one.

The situation at primary level therefore suggests that boy child start schools much earlier than girls. Article 20 of the Kenyan constitution says; "all persons shall have the right to education, primary education shall be compulsory." Furthermore Education Act 2010 stipulates that parents are expected to ensure that a child is registered with a school and regularly attends school. Though it is compulsory for children of primary school age to attend school, parents do not

always ensure that their children attend school and remain in school. This situation is will make worse because there is no recognized agency to enforce the law. The law on compulsory education is also weak on the grounds that if a learner turns 18 years before he or he finishes primary education then the learner has no obligation to remain in school. The retention in school of boy child as early as primary school contributes to gender differences that exist at primary level. According to UNESCO (2005), differences in gender at primary level can result from differences at entry to primary, completion at primary and at transition from primary to upper primary phase.

Sage (2011) says that schooling helps not only the practicing individual, but also their families. By rising the income of the poor, education leads to the economic prosperity of every society. Sang states that study has shown that without a significant national literacy rate, no country maintained steady economic growth. Dyer (2002) also states that lack of schooling is the major factor in making people poor; therefore higher involvement in education should be a key element in reducing poverty.

Hoffman (2001) says that maintaining and succeeding means ensuring that all boys have complete and equal interest in and advancement across higher education. From a global viewpoint, Nash (2000) suggests that the retention of students especially under-represented minorities have become a major challenge for American institutions. The loss of boys back to school after around a year typically results enhanced financial losses and a lower promotion rate for the institution as well as impacting the institution's views of donors, politicians, parents and boys. In comparison, the high costs of hiring young children can be illustrated by collegiate administrators. Dyer (2002) states that boy retention in certain countries of the world is still an immense challenge.

According to Towns (2001) the retention of school pupils is a crucial concern that can be rendered a great deal by multiple school administrators globally to ensure it stays cohesive. That is simply because schools are targeted at ensuring that they provide students with support from the outset before they finish their education levels. The inability to ensure the retention of students at school will still lead to certain problems or restrictions for schools generally. This may include, but not limited to, parents' lack of faith in schools' competence to provide sustainable education for their children, teachers' lack of confidence in the sustainability of their educational practice, and others. The success of the school will also be influenced.

African schools continue to face a great deal of difficulties, in particular in making sure their boy is kept inside the schools during their schooling. This also raises concerns about what is exactly to be done or not to make sure that students are kept at school during their entire course of study. The teacher is one of the factors posed in relation to the retention of pupils in primary schools in Africa. Good teachers will ensure that the kid will understand and make the learning process enjoyable for the kid (Miller, 1997). But the situation is adverse to education in most African countries and has led many kids in schools. However the two years of teacher preparation do not supply the teacher with a master's degree in the subject and pedagogical expertise in all seven subjects (UNESCO, 2005).

Orodho (2005) found that physical and educational tools are very necessary for boy-learning when he researched access to and involvement in primary education in Kenya. Ndemba (2014) indicates that free primary education has stretched facilities to the limit. Books, tables, maps and other content for teaching / studying are not appropriate in most situations. The consistency of the instructional materials available is poor. In some cases the manuals are not welcoming to students and they are stereotyped and often sexually driven. This influences academic consistency and simultaneously dissuades learning.

Orodho (2005) indicates that institutional factors have also been known to have some serious effects on the pupil retention rate in Kenya. This is because most of the schools in the country especially after the Free Primary School Program introduced by the government the classes have become overcrowded and the teacher to boy child ratio has gone up considerably hence presenting serious effects on the quality of primary education in the nation. This has led to many boy child either dropping out to look for alternatives sources of income or look for better schools.

Fafunwa (1983) pointed out that access to schooling and the preservation of retentions were one of the most important issues since the colonial government was independent in 1963. This study came at a time when illegal activities have created a high degree of instability in the world. Print and electronic media reports appear to show that more than 85% of crime in Kenyan youth is carried out by school-leaving youth. This has been a cause for grave concern. This appears to suggest that our school system is in turmoil and thus needs to be reoriented and restructured to meet national objectives. Turkana West has substantially advanced since independence in raising

the level of literacy, but the sub-county is failing to ensure that primary school enrollments are poor and high. In the 1990s the government introduced a Social Action Program to boost children's enrolment and decrease pupil attrition, which did not meet the intended targets. Such retentions at high level can contribute to absolute analphabetism. The governments also expend funds on encouraging primary school enrollment for children and their guardians. It seems though, that there are few outcomes for these programs, since they cannot be very incorporated with a proper education strategy. These rewards include free books from states, food-supply schemes for school children.

Socio-cultural beliefs and perceptions affect education tremendously. The society is influenced by culture and behavior and defines the way of life. Orodho (2003) found that there are deep and substantial geographical and gender inequalities in access and involvement in education in the high school in Kenya. The Global Monitoring Report 2000 for the EFA (UNICEF) suggests that boy participation in development countries is generally increased at the global level, thus reducing gender equity. There is a development that encourages more access for children than girls to schooling.

1.1. Attitude of Boy Child towards School

Boys find school dull and believe it's a waste of time being in school so they don't make much effort to function at school and reach low school. They don't value schooling and feel that education does little for them and needs to find decent employment after graduation (Rayment, 2006). Lack of interest in school among boy child indicates that they are psychologically disengaged from school even though they still go to school (Hammond, Linton, Smink & Dew, 2007). Finally the lack of interest in school drives them to retention.

1.2. Drug Abuse and Retention of Boy Child in School

Smoking, alcohol and drug abuse is another problem facing boy child. Johnston, (2007) states that much of the substance use among the youth starts through learning from peers. Johnston (2007) explains that a person with friends who use drugs is more likely to try the drug, and that users are also more likely to make friends with other people who use drugs. A

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Socio-Cultural Factors and Retention of Boy-Child in Public Primary Schools in Turkana West Sub-County

The respondents were presented with a list of socio-cultural factors that were perceived to determine retention in public primary schools and were needed to specify the magnitude to which they felt each factor determined retention of boy-child in the study area.

research conducted in the U.S.A by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2006) showed that poor academic performance among boy child who use alcohol, smoking and drugs. Poor academic performance leads to low motivation and loss of self-esteem, eventually to retention in school (Rumberger, 2001). If parents are sufficiently involved in the boy child education, they will monitor his activities and also supervise him. The problem of poor performance would be identified at an early stage and rectified. Then boy child would not have to suffer low self-esteem due to poor academic performance and eventually retention in school. Johnston (2007) highlighted that the most widely will illicit substances by primary school learners was marijuana followed by inhalants such as glue. Other substances included hallucinogens, crack and heroin being the least will by primary school learners.

2. METHODOLOGY

Turkana west Sub County was the study's location. The district has four education zones namely: Lokichoggio, Kakuma, Pelekech and Oropoi. The main source of livelihood in this area is pastoralist and nomadic. Animals like cow, goat, sheep, camel and donkey are kept as source of food and wealth. The researcher carried out the research in the district, as she is more familiar with the district.

This research used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to the survey design. Descriptive survey design was used to provide researchers with the means for collecting information, summarizing, presenting and analyzing in preliminary and exploratory experiments (Luke and Ruben 1992) to explain. Descriptive survey study undertaken by Orodho (2002), Borg and Gall (1985) was organized to generate statistical data regarding educational aspects.

The target population for the comprised of 62 Head Teachers, 62 Deputy Head Teachers, 62 Senior Teachers and 62 Guidance and Counseling Teachers. The 14 Chiefs of Turkana West Sub-County will also be included as part of key informants in the study. This study used questionnaire to gather information from teachers, Deputy Head Teacher, Senior Teachers and Guidance/Counseling Teachers. Interview schedules gathered information from head teachers and Chiefs as key informants.

Table 1 Socio-Cultural Determinants of Boy-Child Retention in Public Primary Schools

	No Influence	Very Low	Low	High	Very High
Negative attitude towards education by parents	3 (2.6%)	12 (10.3%)	20 (17.1%)	60 (51.3%)	22 (18.8%)
Organized criminal gangs	3 (2.6%)	13 (11.1%)	66 (56.4%)	22 (18.8%)	13 (11.1%)
Child labor	2 (1.7%)	16 (13.7%)	19 (16.2%)	51 (43.6%)	29 (24.8%)
Circumcision and initiation rites	0 (0.0%)	7 (6.0%)	21 (17.9%)	55 (47.0%)	34 (29.1%)
Overemphasis on girl child education in the region	2 (1.7%)	31 (26.5%)	30 (25.6%)	27 (23.1%)	27 (23.1%)

Source: Field Data (2020)

According to table 1 findings, it is clear that majority of the respondents as presented by a total of 70.1% (82) of the respondents indicate that negative attitude towards education by parents influence drop-out rates for boy-child is high and very high, 17.1% (20) indicate that parent's attitude influence on boy-child drop-out rates is low, 10.3% (12) indicate that it is very low and 2.6% (3) indicate that parental attitude has no influence on drop-out rates for boy-child.

On the other hand, 56.4% (66) of the respondents indicate that the influence of organized criminal gangs on drop-out rates for boy-child is low, 18.8% (22) indicate that it is high, 11.1% (13) indicate it is very high, another 11.1% (13) indicate it is very low while 2.6% (3) indicate that organized criminal gangs has no influence on drop-out rates for boy-child in public primary schools.

The influence of child labor on drop-out rates for boy-child in public primary schools is high as shown by a combined response of 68.4% (80) of the respondents who indicated that it's influence is high and very high, 16.2% (19), 13.7% (16) and 1.7% (2) of the respondents indicated that child labor influence on drop-out rates for boy-child is low, very low and has no influence respectively. Moreover, 75.1% (89) of the respondents indicated that circumcision and initiation rites have a high and very high influence on drop-out rates for boy-child in public primary schools, 17.9% (21) indicated that circumcision and initiation rites have a low influence on drop-out rates for boy-child and 6.0% (7) indicated that they have a very low influence on drop-out rates for boy-child in public primary schools.

A total of 52.1% (61) of the respondents stated that overemphasis on girl child education in the study region has a very low and low influence on drop-out rates for boy-child, 46.2% (54) indicated that it has a high and very high influence while 1.7% (2) indicated that it has no influence.

According to the key informants, traditional rites such as circumcision and sensitization campaigns towards the girl-child education were the main socio-cultural

determinants that influenced boy-child retention in public primary schools in Turkana West Sub-County. For example, Chief B was of the opinion that:

"There have been increased campaigns by the NGOs and CBOs in this area sensitizing the community towards educating the girls but with a low focus on boys"

Chief B on the other hand stated that:

"Traditional rites of passage for the boys regard them as men who can engage in activities such as marriage and income generation and are therefore treated as adults which make them feel superior to remain in primary schools, thus dropping out of school"

The findings agree with Orodho (2003) who found that cultural factors have a significant influence on access and retention of pupils in schools. For instance, Orodho (2003) noted that circumcision as a gateway to adulthood has led to pupils being pushed out of school as once a pupil undergoes this rite, then he/she is deemed ready for marriage and raising a family. A strong relationship existed between level of education and circumcision by demonstrating that out of every 10 pupils who had dropped out of school from ASAL, 7 of them (70%) were circumcised. A report by MOEST (1998) cited lack of interest by the parents as a reason for pupils dropping out of school. As a result, parents have a negative attitude towards schooling, as they cannot see the immediate benefit.

4. CONCLUSIONS

From the study findings, it's concluded that socio-cultural factors have negative effects on retention of boy-child in public primary schools.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study further recommends that the community should be sensitized in adopting modern rites of passage that have little effects on boy child retention in schools. Such rites include conducting circumcision once pupils complete class eight, educating the pupils on the significance of such rites and how they should not interfere with their education goals etc.

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