



Effects of Cultural Practices on Boy Child's Progression to Succeeding Classes in Secondary Education in Loima Sub-County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Education is an important component of life in any community since it shapes the individual and provides hope for the future. Every child and the community must be educated. Secondary education is critical to national development because it provides training, which is required for economic and social progress. Secondary school attendance rates in Sub-Saharan Africa remain the lowest in the world. The study's goal was to investigate the influence of cultural practices on boys' progression in secondary education in Loima sub-county in Turkana County. The study applied systems theory, which was proposed by biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1968. The study included both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This study utilized a descriptive survey research approach. The target population was 134 people, including 6 secondary school principals and 128 teachers from 6 secondary schools. The study included all 6 secondary school principals and 128 teachers, who were chosen using census sampling. The study collected data through the use of questionnaires. The collected data was examined using percentages, frequencies, means, standard deviations, correlations, and linear regressions. The study discovered that cultural practices influence boys' progression in secondary education in Loima sub-county.

Keywords: Cultral Practices, Education, Progression, School Attendance

1. Introduction

There is rising concern that boys' secondary progress in pastoral communities is slowing. Gender equity in education has been a long-standing topic. Gender is a culturally and socially formed idea that governs how women and men should conduct themselves and behave in various societies. As children get older, their parents and society educate them how girls and women should behave, act, and take responsibility, just as boys and men are taught how to conduct, act, and accept responsibility. This is reinforced throughout adulthood (Undarya and Enkhjargal, 2011).

Men and women, being social beings, want to belong and gain favor by adhering to social and cultural norms within their culture (Eagly, 2014). Boys' perceptions of gender roles and how they relate to school may influence their academic retention. Most societal stereotypes portray boys as superior, and boys may feel inadequate and disappointed if they do not meet the stated school standards. According to Abagi (2013), a pastoralist in Botswana, boys receive so much attention that they no longer value education.

According to Amma (2010), in pastoralist communities, herding is the most common child labor occupation among boys. Furthermore, nomadism removes boys from school as they accompany their parents in quest of grass for the herds. This has an impact on their retention in school, with some students being forced to quit out entirely. The primary economic activity for pastoralists is cattle husbandry. This provides a source of income as well as pride and social standing for the family. Boys inherit family money due of their role in maintaining family lineage. Several studies (Chelimo 2012 and Emuria 2016) have demonstrated that some boys have dropped out of school to engage in herding under the notion that they will inherit family riches, so securing their future and eliminating the need for education. Boys have been implicated in raiding and cattle rustling, which is an established tradition employed by pastoralists to replenish their livestock, particularly after lengthy periods of drought or disease outbreak. Boys join males in these activities because of their manhood. Cattle rustling and livestock acquisition force youths to buy animals for bride prices as they prepare for adulthood and marriage. In addition to removing boys from school, this action causes the displacement of many families, students, and teachers. For example, in northern Nigeria, Olaniyan and Yahaya (2016) discovered that cattle rustling is driven by pastoral culture and customs that impart livestock husbandry to nomadic pastoralists and discourage non-pastoral groups from owning cattle, resulting in disputes. Boys are participating in these raids because of their masculinity, which results in fatalities and school withdrawals. Firuli (2013) agrees that fighting over pasture causes families to leave the conflict-affected areas in search of pasture elsewhere, resulting in students dropping out of school entirely when they relocate.

Cultural practices impact males' worldviews in a variety of areas, including schooling. According to Bista (2014), Kane (2014), Garises (2013), and Hanlon (2017), cultural practices and traditional values influence boys' educational transitions by altering their worldview. Cultural activities and attitudes associated with rites of passage typically result in a shift in attitude toward school. According to a study conducted by Bahago (2011), boys'

school retention in some cultures is low due to a variety of cultural norms and beliefs that indoctrinate and socialize them to perform their gender-assigned responsibilities rather than attend school. According to Dunne (2015), pastoralists are averse to cultural changes, particularly those related to educational decisions, because education is viewed as a neutralizer of their culture.

Boys are seen as cultural caretakers in Turkana society, hence they are the first to be excluded or denied entrance to school in order to minimize cultural dilution. As they go through life, the Turkana community's boys participate in elaborate rites of passage ceremonies. During these times, students receive extensive cultural training that prepares them for life. It has been observed that several changes occur during these rites, which may disrupt the boys' schooling. Koringura (2004), for example, noted that boys' attitudes shift following circumcision; they behave and expect to be regarded as adults, making school an uncomfortable place for them. It has been noticed that some teachings encourage boys to acquire hegemonic masculinities, which denigrate the feminine gender, even female professors. Local media has reported cases of teachers being attacked by elementary school students in pastoralist communities as a result of culturally reinforced gender stereotypes.

Keeping cattle, goats, and camels demonstrates a man's economic and social strength in the Turkana culture. This status must be safeguarded at all costs, which means that boys, who are considered more manly than girls, are assigned the burden of herding. In addition, a UNICEF (2015) research in Botswana found that boys are pulled out of school or denied entry altogether to become cattle herders, a task imposed on them by masculinity, stereotype, and society. A separate study in Botswana, Mungoo (2017), discovered that herding has a negative impact on boys' school access, engagement, and transition. Ruto (2014) agrees that pastoralist boys' access, retention, and transfer to school are hampered by their nomadic lifestyle and herding practices. Research conducted by Olaniyan and Yahaya (2016) among pastoralists in northern Nigeria reveals a similar tendency in which boys are withdrawn from school to herd, which may include relocating from one location to another, disrupting the boy's academic calendar. The Turkana are mostly pastoralists, with some still practicing nomadic lifestyles. Some boys skip out of school to accompany their fathers on their search for pasture. Girls have remained in school throughout, particularly in areas where boarding facilities are available.

The role of boys inheriting family property ranked high among the factors that influence boys' transition. When a family has large herds of cattle, camels, and goats, they are considered wealthy, and boys from such families see their future as secure and may not see the need for formal schooling. In the Turkana community, as in many African tribes, boys are seen as the protectors of family values and traditions, and they are given a significant advantage in inheriting family wealth over girls. This concept frequently leads to the mistaken belief that inheritance is all that guys require to ensure their future. Inheritance of family riches may appeal to guys more than the unforeseen benefits of education. Similarly, Koriang's (2014) study of the Turkana cultural worldview indicated that male offspring are highly prized since they provide societal standing to their parents and inherit their father's possessions.

2. Cultural practices and Boys' Progression in Secondary Education

The objective was to determine whether cultural practices influence boys' advancement through secondary education in Loima sub-county. Principals and class teachers completed questionnaires to collect data.

2.1 Principals Response on Cultural Practices and Boy's Progression

Principals were asked to explain why males do not progress in secondary education in Loima sub-county. Boys miss a significant amount of school during rites of passage; boys avoid going to school because of their cultural obligation to serve as herders in their communities; boys who inherit cattle from their families may be discouraged from attending school; after rites of passage, boys perceive themselves as adults; and during times of unrest, boys are perceived as community defenders; thus, some may skip class to protect their neighborhood. Principals were asked to answer to these issues by selecting from the options of strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, or strongly agree. Table 1. displays the findings from an investigation of cultural behaviors and males' advancement through secondary education.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Principals Response on Cultural Practices and Boys' Progression

Statements on Principals response on Cultural practices and boys participation in secondary schools (N=7)	N	Mean Statistic	Range	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
					Statistic	S.E	Statistic	S.E
Boys miss a significant amount of school during rites of passage.	7	4.58	3	0.494	2.5108	0.6787	1.8627	2.6681
Boys avoid going to school because of their cultural obligation to serve as herders in their communities.	7	2.08	3	1.032	1.4676	0.4615	1.0620	0.7228
Boys who inherit cattle from their families may be discouraged from attending school	7	2.13	3	1.161	2.5782	1.0475	1.7144	1.1700

After rites of passage, boys perceive themselves as adults	7	3.12	4	1.272	2.4314	0.6168	2.1623	1.9235
Boys are perceived as community defenders during times of unrest; thus, some may skip class to protect their neighborhood.	7	2.96	4	0.684	2.1332	0.7416	0.8684	1.8411
Composite values			2.974				0.929	

KEY: 1- Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree.

Source: Field Data 2023

The principals strongly agreed that boys skip a significant amount of school during rites of passage (mean = 4.58, SD = 0.494). The principals disagreed that boys leave school due to a traditional commitment to serve as herders in their villages. (Mean: 2.08, SD: 1.032). The principals also disagreed that boys who inherit cattle from their families should be discouraged from attending school (mean = 2.13; SD = 1.161). The principals were unsure whether boys consider themselves as adults following rites of passage (mean = 3.12, SD = 1.272). The principals were also unsure whether males are viewed as community defenders during times of turmoil, as common gossip outside the community suggests that some may skip class to safeguard their neighborhood (Mean = 2.96 SD = 0.684). Based on these findings, it is possible to conclude that the primary cause of school absenteeism in this area is while boys are going through rites of passage. This should be done during school holidays to prevent disrupting the school calendar.

2.2 Class Teachers Response on Cultural Practices and Boys 'Progression

Class teachers were requested to explain why boys do not progress in secondary education in Loima sub-county. Boys miss a significant amount of school during rites of passage; boys avoid going to school because of their cultural obligation to serve as herders in their communities; boys who inherit cattle from their families may be discouraged from attending school; after rites of passage, boys perceive themselves as adults; and during times of unrest, boys are perceived as community defenders; thus, some may skip class to protect their neighborhoods. Class teachers were asked to answer to these factors by ticking the options of strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, and highly agree. Table 2 displays the findings from an investigation of cultural practices and boys' progression in secondary education.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of class teachers' response on Cultural practices and boys' progression in secondary education

Family attachment (n=68)	SD		D		NS		A		SA		Mean	Std.
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Boys miss a significant amount of school during rites of passage.	3	3%	13	13%	4	4%	39	38%	43	42%	4.04	1.123
Boys avoid going to school because of their cultural obligation to serve as herders in their communities.	9	9%	21	21%	11	11%	38	37%	23	23%	3.44	.865
Boys who inherit cattle from their families may be discouraged from attending school	12	12%	46	45%	13	13%	19	19%	12	12%	2.74	.675
After rites of passage, boys perceive themselves as adults	8	8%	21	21%	9	9%	31	30%	33	32%	3.59	1.234
Boys are perceived as community defenders during times of unrest; thus, some may skip class to protect their neighborhood.	6	6%	12	12%	3	3%	43	42%	38	37%	3.93	1.356
Composite values												

LEGEND: 1-1.49 strongly disagree, 1.5-2.49 Disagree, 2.5-3.49 Undecided, 3.5-4.49 Agree, 4.5-5.0 strongly Agree.

Source: Field Data 2023

The class teachers agreed that boys miss a significant amount of school during rites of passage (Mean = 4.04, SD = 1.123). A group of 43 (42%) respondents strongly agreed, 39 (38%) respondents disagreed, 4 (4%) respondents were not sure, 13 (13%) respondents disagreed and 3 (3%) respondents strongly disagreed. The class teachers also agreed that boys avoid going to school because of their cultural obligation to serve as herders in their communities (Mean = 3.44, SD = 0.865). Another 23 (23%) respondents strongly agreed, 38 (37%) respondents agreed, 11 (11%) respondents were not sure, 21 (21%) respondents disagreed, and 9 (9%) respondents strongly disagreed.

More than half of the class teachers were not sure that boys who inherit cattle from their families may be discouraged from attending school (Mean = 2.74, SD = 0.675). In the analysis, 12 (12%) respondents were strongly agreed, 19 (19%) respondents agreed, 13 (13%) respondents were not sure, 46 (45%) respondents disagreed and 12 (12%) respondents strongly disagreed.

More than sixty percent of the class teachers agreed that after rites of passage, boys perceive themselves as adults (Mean = 3.59, SD = 1.234). 33 (32%) respondents were strongly agreed, 31 (30%) respondents agreed, 9 (9%) respondents were not sure, 21 (21%) respondents disagreed and 8 (8%) respondents strongly disagreed. Further, the respondents agreed that the boys are perceived as community defenders during times of unrest; thus, some may skip class to protect their neighborhood (Mean = 3.93, SD = 1.356). 38 (37%) respondents were strongly agreed, 43 (42%) respondents agreed, 3 (3%) respondents were not sure, 12 (12%) respondents disagreed and 6 (6%) respondents strongly disagreed.

2.3 Variation of Principals and class teachers' views on cultural Practices and boys' progression

The researcher sought to establish the extent to which Principals' and teachers' views differ on the ideology of cultural practices and boys' progression to succeeding classes in secondary education in Loima sub-county. The chi-square test used respondents' views to establish the extent to which the views of teachers and principals differed. Data is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Differences in the views of Principals and teachers on Cultural practices and boys' Progression.

Cultural practices and boys' progression in secondary schools	Mean		Weighted mean	Chi square	p-value
	Principals	teachers			
Boys miss a significant amount of school during rites of passage.	4.58	4.04	4.31	5.692	1.654
Boys avoid going to school because of their cultural obligation to serve as herders in their communities.	2.08	3.44	2.76	89.365	.000
Boys who inherit cattle from their families may be discouraged from attending school	2.13	2.74	2.435	19.256	1.632
After rites of passage, boys perceive themselves as adults	3.12	3.59	3.355	21.524	.952
Boys are perceived as community defenders during times of unrest; thus, some may skip class to protect their neighborhood.	2.96	3.93	3.445	2.964	2.315

Table 3. revealed that only one factor significantly influenced administrators' and teachers' perspectives on cultural practices and boys' growth in secondary education. Using the chi square test, the principals and teachers had differing perspectives on the statement "boys avoid going to school because of their cultural obligation to serve as herders in their communities." (Mean = 2.76), the chi-square value ($\chi^2(2) = 89.365$, $p < 0.0001$) at $\alpha = 0.05$ demonstrated a difference in opinion between school principals and class teachers. The school principals disputed (mean = 2.08) that boys avoid attending to school due of their traditional commitment to serve as herders in their communities, however the class instructors agreed (mean = 3.44). However, there was no disagreement between school principals and classroom instructors on the remaining four criteria. As a result, their overall perspectives were consistent.

Table 3's findings are consistent with those of Ternenge and Torkuma (2021), who evaluated socio-cultural and economic factors as correlates of undergraduate academic achievement at Benue State University in Makurdi.

Conclusion

According to the analysis, boys' advancement in secondary education is negatively correlated with cultural practices. This result emphasizes the significance of cultural elements in determining academic performance and the necessity of culturally aware teaching methods in Turkana county.

Acknowledgement

Highlight the success stories of boys from the Turkana community who have excelled in education. These role models can inspire other boys and demonstrate that academic achievement is attainable regardless of cultural background.

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