

Research Article

SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS ON PUPILS ACCESS TO PRIMARY EDUCATION IN TURKANA SOUTH SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out the effects of socio-cultural factors affecting pupils' access to education in Turkana south sub-county. The research adopted descriptive survey design. The study used stratified random sampling, purposive and simple random sampling to come up with the sample size of 126 respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires. The data was analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics. The analyzed data is presented in the form of frequency tables, charts, and bar graphs. The study established that socio-cultural factors had influence on the pupils' access to education in Turkana South sub County.

Keywords: Access, Boys, Girls, Primary Education, Socio-cultural.

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of free primary education (FPE) in 2003 by the Kenyan Government enabled many children join schools in larger numbers. In many parts of the country many schools lacked infrastructure especially schools in rural areas such as Wajir, Mandera, Garissa and Turkana. The Kenyan government has supported education in the ASAL areas by providing primary schools feeding programme to help the poor children access education. Bursaries through CDF has been provided, grants and scholarships is given to those performing well in the national examination to join the national schools and universities. Despite the government's efforts of providing a free chance to every Kenyan child, some children are still yet to be reached. Many children are still out of school globally and it's because of the socio-cultural factors that need to be addressed before the child is set free to access education. The Koech's report raised some cases that were addressed by the national government in its efforts to implement the system. The shared endeavors of education is to ensure that children get quality education bearing in mind that education is a tool that brings transformation to communities, societies and even nations. (Kumssa, Jones & Williams, 2009) noted that the pastoralists value animals more than education. Education is an instrument that can enable societies all over the world to extricate themselves from poverty and the harsh environment they live in hence empowering themselves economically is a better solution (Teachers' image vol.14 2007) Turkana county like other counties is striving to achieve the best in providing education for her children. Accessing education for the children in Turkana South has not been reached due to many challenges. O'malley (2007) stated that attacks leads to the deaths of teachers and students, the destruction of infrastructure may result to, severe psychological trauma to those exposed to the killings of cattle rustling repeatedly hence schools may end up being closed. Children fear to go to school. Teachers and parents become scared and desert the area. The enrolment and pupils' participation become affected.

Katam (2012) points out that most schools in areas prone to attacks may register high dropout rates. The socio cultural factors remain the dominant causes of both boys and girls not to achieve highly in education. Mostly girls assist their parents by taking care of their younger brothers and sisters. Ondalo (2011) states that it was common to spot many young girls in lower classes, but as time goes the faces of the girls becomes fewer and fewer in that there is something wrong. They normally feel ashamed of schooling with their younger brothers and sisters and eventually may drop out of school. Most cultural practices are still being traditional in orientation and discriminative in nature, girls themselves are greatly disadvantaged hence become victims of such traditional practices while boys easily embrace in the new ways. Wangeci (1996) noted that women stayed at home while men go hunting. This shows women having no rights in life at all. Achoka *et al.*, (2007) points out that dropout rates has been affected with such factors as early marriages, unwanted pregnancies, and negative effects of tourism, parental level of education as well as the gender disparity. From west Pokot, Poghisi (2012) on poor learning outcomes lamented that the minority communities would continue lagging behind in some parts of Kenya if efforts were not put to stamp out the retrogressive cultural practices such as early marriages and old age rituals that kept girls out of schools. Kanchora (2004) in his study had noted that gender violence has provided a grim picture of the rigid culture practices that make the main concern of the pastoral communities. Siegel (1997) argued that parents react differently whenever things go wrong between boys and girls. Parents also believed that females do not have qualities of independence initiative and assertiveness, (Mampele 1994). Their cultural attitudinal difference has been changed. Eshiwani, (1996) states that girls had not been encouraged to enter those academic disciplines that were dominated by men since cultural influence was still strong in many parts of Kenya. Psacharopoulos and Wood hall (1985) noted parents; particularly mothers favoured boys' education because they would depend on their sons at the time of their old age assurance. Investment in a son's education is seen as security in their future old age. Some parents fear that by schooling their daughters they may become disoriented by cultural set up to become immoral. If the parents are more educated children score higher on standardized

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examinations than those children whose parents are not educated. They can better communicate with their children on matters to do with the school homework, activities and the information being taught at school. They can better assist their children in the work and participate at school. Trusty (1999), says that these parents are more likely to attribute varying educational levels to socio – cultural factors hence they have the urge to enroll their children and push them through their educational courses (Holmes, 2003). Parents who are educated can provide an environment that suits the success of their children. The school authorities can provide guiding and counseling advises to parents for creating a positive environment for the improvement in students’ quality of work (Marzano, 2003). Parents decisions affect children in a school learning system such that learners whose parents regulate and supervise their activities can encourage their children and provide moral support in wherever they are by far more having been involved in school issues, and their children will have higher chances of remaining in school generally helps children (UNICEF, 1999). The success of children heavily depends upon the parental involvement in their academic activities to attain the higher level of quality in academic, Success (Barnard, 2004). Both of the above ideas agree in that there will be good results when parents are involved in their children’s work. Outa (2010) had noted that, girls who had not and financially endowed men, gradually disintegrating the sanctity of marriage. He continued saying that when girls are supported to acquire education, they become very responsible in keeping the fairly fabrics stronger. (Batenbya *et al.*, 2014) points out those boys who are negatively affected by the premature nuptials are –forced to back out of school and take up unskilled job to help their families. Lubaale (2013) reports that, child marriage do prevents boys from accessing education, enjoying good health bonding with their age-mates as they stick to follow the cultural believes and taboos. Following culture strictly on land ownership can be seen as the Maasai or the Turkana periodically due to the harsh and severe famine tend to invade urban e.g. Nairobi or Katilu farms to graze their animals on any available green patches during the dry spells. Diana Santillan supported the idea of the boy child that they are also affected by the early child marriages and she said boys do have crucial roles in managing early marriages. Their parents believed in boy child responsibility hence future heirs. Some communities have tried to empower the girl child by motivating them through the mass media, they provide with some of the physical facilities such as laboratories, boarding facilities and the infrastructures by the help of the Constituency Development Funds (CDF) for the girls to feel secure and concentrate in learning. The benefit of education for girls can be explained by the effect that education has shown up on girls’ achievement. They acquire and use new personal, social and economic behaviors that in turn affect societal change (Moulton, 1997). Inadequacy of facilities forces girls to either share or improvise as these are disliked by many girls who finally give up. The availability of physical and instructional facilities such as classroom, computer, workshops, dormitories, school vehicles, textbook, laboratories and electricity has revealed a significant influence on a girl child performance (Odaga and Hevene 1995)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Pupil’s Access to Education

Some of the socio-cultural beliefs and practices that contribute to the low access of education to pupils are shown in the table below. The head teachers and the teachers were presented in the list about socio-cultural factors that could influence pupils access

to education. They were to indicate the level of influence of the factors.

Table 1: Response on Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Pupils’ Access to Education

Social -cultural factors	Head teachers				Teachers			
	NA	O	N	NO	NA	O	N	NO
Nomadism	20	60	20	00	10	30	50	10
Child labour	20	00	60	20	00	10	60	30
Poor upbringing	40	20	40	00	10	30	40	20
Teenage pregnancy	00	20	40	40	00	10	70	20
Circumcision	00	00	40	60	00	10	30	60
Negative attitude towards education	20	60	20	00	10	30	50	10
HIV/AIDs	20	80	00	00	00	20	50	30
Believes /taboos	20	40	40	00	00	20	60	20
Moralism	40	60	00	00	10	30	40	20
Drug abuses	40	60	00	00	00	20	50	30

Key NA-Not at all, O-often-Neutral, NO-Not Often

The head teachers responses as shown in the Table 1 above indicates that some socio-cultural factors have high influence on the pupils access to education. They include the prescribed moralism practice 3 (60%), the negative attitude towards education 3 (60%), circumcision 3 (60%) indicated that it is not done often. Child labour and teenage pregnancy had the lowest level of influence on pupils’ access to education as indicated by 1 (20%) and 2 (40%) respondents respectively. The other practices which had influence on education access were irresponsible parents, divorce and separation in the families. From the teachers, the most prominent factors were as follows; HIV/AIDs which was rated often 5 (50%), negative attitude towards education by parents was rated often too 5 (50%), moranism practice was rated neutral at 40%. Parents who responded to the interview questions reported to have known few of the parents whose children dropped out of school following some of difficult issues yet to be solved by government. The pastoralist parents do migrate in search of pasture. They move together with their children to more secure places. Young men and women move from rural areas to big towns to look for jobs. Lack of money force some poor parents not take their children to school instead they prepared to stay with them at home. An orphan child whose parents die of HIV/AIDS performs poorly in school hence drops out of school since no body to care and provide for him. The head teachers and the teachers suggested that parents need to participate in good upbringing of children by instilling discipline to them. Parents to embrace education as the key success in life. They were of the view that stakeholders fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS by mobilizing all the school age children to go to school and that parents must be encouraged to support school authority by taking part in the development of the school programs and projects. The interviewer asked the head teachers and the teachers what they think the pupils should do. They responded that the pupils should adhere to school rules and regulations, have a positive attitude toward education and work hard to achieve better results. For self-development and fulfillment they should use the available resources more intensively. They should avoid immortality and embrace on peer teaching and counseling.

Table 2: Socio-Cultural Factors with no Major Influence on Pupils’ Access to Education

Socio-Cultural Factors	No Influence	Low Influence
Child labour	40	60
Circumcision	60	40
Early marriages	40	60

The other socio-cultural factors mentioned above did not have any major influence on the pupils access to education. These includes child labour at some low influence rate as opined by 34 (58.2%) of the respondents, circumcision at no influence rate of 36 (61.4%) and low influence 20 (35.3%), early marriages at no influence rate of 17 (28.4%) and low influence 36 (60.2%). The teachers reported the other socio-cultural factors which had influence on pupils access to education as indicated in Table 3 as family migration, uncooperative parents, inheritance (boy child responsibility), local media stations, sexual immorality affecting mostly upper primary girls, lack of motivation by parents and irresponsible fathers among others.

Table 3: Socio-Cultural Factors with Effects on Pupils Access to Education

Socio-Cultural Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Family migration	10	100
Uncooperative parents	8	80
Inheritance (boy child responsibility)	4	40
Local media stations	5	50
social immorality	8	80
Affecting mostly upper primary girls	10	100
Lack of motivation by parents	5	50

In the Table 3 above, most teachers believe that regular relocation of parents, uncooperative parents, sex immorality and adolescent girls' behavior are the major factors influencing access to primary education. Other factors include lack of motivation towards schooling, social media and the great responsibilities given to the boy child. In the interviews, the researcher asked whether parents are biased in educating of their children and 60% of the respondents responded that parents don't show exactly gender preferences in the education of their children. Some prefer boys' education than girls. Similarly 8 (80%) teachers responded the same. The following socio-cultural factors were undefined by parents who were interviewed on what could have led to pupils dropping out of schools; parent's ignorance and negative attitude towards education by uneducated parents, separation and divorce, child labour, boy child responsibilities (inheritance), moranism where they claimed that boys in upper classes were the main victims and early marriages. The eighty one pupils who had a discussion with the researcher on why pupils drop out of schools cited the following social-cultural factors as being the most common. That careless drunkard parents were to blame, orphanage children due to frequent cattle rustling killings, HIV/AIDs and unwanted pregnancy. The key informants responding to the open ended questions also identified the following socio-cultural factors that lead to low access to education by pupils in the county. They claim that cultural practices such as moralism which normally recruits

young boys in the areas around the schools who consequently drop out to go and join these sects, teenage pregnancies resulting from teenage school girls who are cheated by young men from neighboring counties to work as casuals workers for the Chinese roads contractors and tallow oil drillers. HIV/AIDs orphaned children normally lack parental love and care as well as a proper guidance from their weak and aged grandparents as a result, such pupil tend to rebel and they always complain of their unmet personal needs. The findings both in Table 3 and from the interviews concurs with those of Mabunde, Likoko & Barasa (2020) who established that parenting behaviour existing in the home set ups play a significant role in influencing the academic performance of the students in public day secondary schools. However, generalizability was limited as Mabunde, Likoko & Barasa(2020) focused on academic performance. Therefore, the current study focused on pupils' access to fill the gap.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study concludes that regular relocation of parents, uncooperative parents and sex immorality are the major factors influencing access to primary education, while circumcision, child labour and early marriages had little influence. This shows that social-cultural factors may contribute negatively to children's access to school.

RECOMMENDATION

The study recommended that the government should develop policies to minimize the effects of social cultural factors on access to education among boys and girls in Arid and Semi-Arid lands.

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