



DETERMINING THE EXTENT TO WHICH CULTURAL FACTORS INFLUENCE ACCESS TO PRIMARY EDUCATION AMONG NOMADIC PASTORALISTS IN LOIMA SUB-COUNTY, TURKANA COUNTY.

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ABSTRACT

The current study aimed at determining the extent to which cultural factors influence access to primary education among nomadic pastoralists in Loima Sub-County, Turkana County. Access to primary education among nomadic pastoralist communities in Loima Sub-County, Turkana County, presents a multifaceted challenge influenced by various cultural factors. Numerous studies emphasize the centrality of cultural norms and practices in shaping educational opportunities for nomadic pastoralist children. The study was guided by Russell's theory on education, propounded by the British philosopher, logician, mathematician and Historian and adopted the descriptive and correlation research designs which are considered appropriate for gathering information regarding respondents' behaviour, feelings and perceptions about educational issues. According to Man's (2015), target population is the totality of persons, events, units, organization or other sampled units which concerns the key research issue. The target population was 471 which included 160 parents, 9 sub-county education officers, 147 pupils and 155 pupils. Edie Seva See and Mary Musni formula was used to calculate the sample size of all teachers, parents, pupils and sub-county education officers which was 123. The study used a structured questionnaire containing both open ended and close ended questions to collect data from teachers, parents, pupils and sub-county education officers. From the findings, early marriages, insecurity and gender inequalities were the significant cultural factors, that had significant influence on access to primary education to a large extent. The study concluded that, cultural factors such as early marriages and gender inequalities influence access to primary education among nomadic pastoralists and recommends that the government of Kenya, non-governmental actor's and other organizations create awareness among the nomadic pastoralist communities not adopting regressive cultural practices that hinder development.

Keywords: Cultural Factors, Nomadic Pastoralists, Education Among Nomadic Pastoralists and Nomadic Pastoralists in Turkana

INTRODUCTION

According to (Ng'ang'a, S. K., Bulte, E. H., Giller, K. E., Ndiwa, N. N., Kifugo, S. C., McIntire, J. M., Herrero, M., & Rufino, M. C, 2016) the term "education" refers to the process of obtaining desired behaviours', knowledge, and attitudes via learning, maturity and experience for the benefit of both the individual and society as a whole. There are three types of education: formal, non-formal, and informal (Ng'ang'a et al., 2016). Learners are supposed to be prepared via their educational experiences for the shifts in mind set and interpersonal dynamics that are required to

ensure the efficient operation of the dynamic contemporary economy (Häsler, B., Msalya, G., Garza, M., Fornace, K., Eltholth, M., Kurwijila, L., Rushton, J., & Grace, 2018). There is a rising understanding of necessity to make considerable headway in expanding services to nomadic groups if the national aim for Education for All (EFA) is to become a reality.

Access to primary education among nomadic pastoralist communities in Loima Sub-County, Turkana County, presents a multifaceted challenge influenced by various cultural factors. Numerous studies emphasize the centrality of cultural norms and practices in shaping educational opportunities for nomadic pastoralist children. Cultural values related to traditional livelihoods, gender roles, and community dynamics significantly influence decisions regarding schooling. For example, Hazel et al., (2014) highlight how the cultural emphasis on cattle herding and mobility can impede consistent school attendance among nomadic communities.

Research indicates a myriad of challenges hindering educational access to nomadic pastoralist communities. These include geographical remoteness, insufficient infrastructure, and nomadic lifestyles that disrupt consistent schooling. Moreover, deeply ingrained cultural beliefs often prioritize cattle herding over formal education, particularly for boys. (Scoones, 2021) underscores the impact of these challenges, emphasizing the need for tailored interventions to address cultural barriers to education.

Gender dynamics within nomadic pastoralist communities exacerbate educational disparities. Traditional roles assign girls domestic responsibilities, limiting their access to schooling compared to boys. Addressing these gender inequalities requires targeted interventions that challenge entrenched cultural norms. (Benti, D. W., Biru, W. T., & Tessema, W. K, 2022) provides insights into the gendered nature of educational access among nomadic pastoralists, highlighting the need for gender-sensitive approaches in education programming. Community-based initiatives that integrate indigenous knowledge with formal education have shown promise. Furthermore, flexible schooling models tailored to nomadic lifestyles (Iannotti & Lesorogol, 2014) can help overcome cultural barriers and ensure inclusivity in education.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Kenyan children have the right to basic, free, high-quality, and required education thanks to many important reforms, efforts, laws, and policies. However, because of how they live, thousands of school-age children in Turkana County and other pastoralist areas of Kenya are not able to go to school. There isn't much proof that the number of kids going to primary school in Turkana County has gone up at the same rate.

According to Stites (2024), the wandering pastoralist society is one of these groups that hasn't gone to school because of the way they live. Formal schooling is usually only for people who don't move around much, which means that the wandering pastoralist group has never been able to get an education. The 2018–2019 Turkana County Integrated Plan says that only half of children in Turkana (6–13 years old) are registered in primary school (53.2% for boys and 46.6% for girls), while the national average is 92.5% (94.6% for boys and 90.5% for girls).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fujita, M., Roth, E. A., Nathan, M. A., & Fratkin, E. (2004) looked into how the fee-free education (FFE) program helped close the gap between boys' and girls' access to basic education in the pastoralist communities of Loliondo in the Longido District. The study used a mixed method, with the qualitative part being more important than the quantitative. It found that before the FFE policy was put in place, there was a big difference between boys and girls in their ability to go to uniform

primary school enrollment. With the arrival of FFE, there is a big rise in the number of girls. (2014) Iannotti and Lesorogol One interesting thing that was noticed is that the gap between boys and girls in school retention grew at the same rate as the gap between boys and girls in access to education closed. To sum up, FFE methods need to change from a more traditional policy-based approach to one that involves the community in order to close the enrollment gap and keep students. To meet policy goals, this study suggests that the community should learn more about how to apply FFE.

Even though the Kenyan government made primary school free, there are still a lot of girls in Loima who don't go because they get married young and aren't taken to school like boys. This study aims to find the main cultural factors that keep boys and girls in pastoralist communities from going to school equally.

An investigation by Asenso-Okyere (2012) into how parents in pastoralist communities in West Pokot County, Kenya feel about the execution of the free primary education policy found that parents in these communities do not mind the idea of free primary education. But because they are so attached to their traditional practices, getting an education is very hard for them (Riginos, C., Porensky, L. M., Veblen, K. E., Odadi, W. O., Sensenig, R. L., Kimuyu, D., Keesing, F., Wilkerson, M. L., & Young, T. P. (2012). The study showed that the students in West Pokot have a good view of school and want to go to school to make their lives better when they are not raising animals and fighting for rare animals in their areas. This study, on the other hand, was done in West Pokot and focused on how parents felt about the free primary education policy for pastoralists. The current study, on the other hand, will be done in Loima Sub County to find out how cultural factors affect nomad pastoralists' access to primary education in Loima Sub County, Turkana County.

Miller (2014) looked at how parents in Kotido District, Uganda, felt about primary school for all children. The study showed that even though parents liked the idea of Universal Primary Education (UPE), only 13 (36.1%) had all of their school-age children registered in primary schools. Socioeconomic, regional, and cultural factors all played a role in parents' choices. The study also found that 32 (88.9%) of the parents had not gone to school. This may have affected how they saw the importance of education and their decision to send their children to UPE. Parents were also doubtful that the Karimojong pastoralist society would be able to survive now that UPE was working well. This study adds to our knowledge of the factors that affect primary school entry and suggests that parents should be more involved in creating more education plans that work for disadvantaged groups around the world.

Wilcox, B. A., Echaubard, P., De Garine-Wichatitsky, M., & Ramirez, B. (2019) looked into what makes African nomad parents not want to teach their daughters. They found that the way these parents live their lives culturally affects their decision. In addition, parents who let their girls go to elementary school often pull them out of school to get married. The study said that school counselors should hold meetings with parents and use these kinds of media to talk to parents about how important it is for girls to go to school for the sake of the girls, their families, and society as a whole.

Allando (2015) looked into how many girls in the Maasai community in Tanzania went to regular school. The study used an ethnographic method to look at people's opinions in their natural environments. The results showed that people in the Maasai community have both positive and negative views about sending girls to school. It also showed that girls want to go to school but can't because of how things are at home and at school. Girls can't go to school as much as they'd like because it's too far away. The study came to the conclusion that educating Maasai girls and

women to give them more power is not enough. (2018, Mohammed) So, the community needs to be made more aware of how important it is for girls to go to school. Plus, everyone needs to work together and be dedicated to education in order to solve the problems girls face both inside and outside of school.

THEORETICAL LITERATURE

The study was guided by Russell's theory on education, propounded by Bertrand Arthur William Russell, a British philosopher, logician, mathematician and historian. The theory underscores the need to give equal education opportunities to all children either from rich families, poor, nomadic families and children with special needs to receive the best education. According to Russell, education should take a form that it should be available to all children and they should benefit from it. Both boys and girls should be given the same opportunity to attain the highest level of education in this world. Children with special needs should be given special education to give them equal opportunities in education like others to avoid inequalities in education system.

The nomadic people oppose education in form of sending their children to school to learn. The fear that sending their children to school will expose them to alien cultures which in future destroys the traditional way of life. They believe that the idea of education is good if it only teaches the nomadic way of life and their nomadic traditions. The education that is not teaching the nomadic cultural way of life is not acceptable. This contributes to many nomadic pastoralists not sending many children to school to acquire modern education. They believe and trust that their traditional education was the best, since it respects and preserve their culture. Modern education was seen as something that exposes their nomadic children to alien culture. Children who acquire alien culture are seen as outcast in the society no one who accepts them in the society; instead, they are seen as the lost generation that needs prayers from the elders. This was what affects greatly many children from acquiring modern education, hence only a few children go to school to acquire modern education.

Research Design

The study used a descriptive research design, and the association research design is thought to be a good way to find out about people's actions, feelings, and thoughts about school problems (Rahi, 2017). It is also needed to figure out what led to the current situation being studied (Rahi, 2017). With percentages, rates, and mean scores, the descriptive study method will try to explain the causes and origins of the events, traits, relationships, population, or phenomena that were seen. Sociocultural, economic, and environmental factors are the independent variables in this study. The researcher can't change them because they already happened. Access to basic school would be the result variable that the researcher would look at in the data to find the reasons, links, any connections, and what they mean. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods so that the results could be applied to a wide range of situations.

Target Population

Man (2015) says that the target group is all the people, events, units, organizations, or other sampling units that are relevant to the main study question. The target population was 471 which included 160 parents, 9 sub-county education officers, 147 pupils and 155 pupils drawn from various schools in Turkwell and Lorugum zones respectively within Loima Sub- County, Turkana County.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

(Rahi, 2017) observes that 30% of the target population is a good presentation thus out of the 471-target population 123 was considered as total sample size of all teachers, parents, pupils and sub-county education officers.

Table 1: Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Category	Sampling technique	Sample population	Sample size	Percentage
Teachers	Simple random	147	38	30.89%
Parents	systematic random	160	39	31.71%
Pupils	Stratified random	155	39	31.71%
Sub-county education officers	Purposive sampling	09	07	5.69%
Total		471	123	100%

Data collection

The study used a structured questionnaire containing both open ended and close ended questions. The questionnaire would be used to collecting data from teachers and parents. The study also used interview schedule to conduct interviews for Loima sub-county education officers.

Validity of the research instruments

Rahi (2017) says that validity is how well a test measures what it's meant to measure. The study questions and discussion plan were made to find more experts with the help of managers at the university. To cut down on mistakes, the researcher made sure that the questions were specific to the study's goals and were written in terms that the subjects would normally use. The tools used in the study were looked at by university leaders, who then gave their thoughts. The researcher used the notes from the university managers to make changes to the tools they used to collect data to make sure they were true.

Data Analysis Procedure

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 for Windows was used to code, enter, and analyze the data. To look at the data that was gathered, descriptive statistics will be used. Chi-square and Fisher's exact tests will be used to find the link between different factors in the study, like cultural, socioeconomic, and natural ones, and getting a basic education. By looking at the numbers and Odds ratios, you can find statistical significance. Thematic groups were used to organize and analyze the qualitative data. The collected data was put into tables and graphs to make it easier to understand.

Findings

The study objective was to determine the extent to which cultural factors influence access to primary education among nomadic pastoralists in Loima sub-county, Turkana County. The

questionnaires required the teachers to indicate whether parents in Loima Sub-County were aware of education importance and whether they were concerned with girl-child education. The findings are as demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Parents Awareness and Concern on Education

Category	Count	Column N %
Are parents aware of importance of education	Yes	11 29.7%
	No	26 70.3%
Are parents concerned with girl child education	Yes	7 18.9%
	No	30 81.1%

Source: Field data (2020).

The finding in Table 2 indicates that 70.3% (26) of the teachers were of the opinion that parents in Loima Sub-County are not aware of importance of education; 29.7% (11) shows that parents are aware of importance of education. On the other hand, 81.1% (30) of the teachers indicated that parents in Loima Sub-County are not concerned with girl-child education; 18.9% (7) explains that parents are concerned with girl-child education.

The teachers were also presented with several cultural factors and were required to respond on a Likert scale the extent to which they believed the cultural factors influenced access to primary education in Loima Sub-County. The findings are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Extent to Which Cultural Factors Influence Access to Education

Factors	Very large extent	Large extent	Low extent	Very low extent	No extent
Early Marriages	21 (55.3%)	14 (36.8%)	3 (7.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Cattle rustling	6 (15.8%)	12 (31.6%)	10 (26.3%)	9 (23.7%)	1 (2.6%)
Rites of passage	5 (13.2%)	4 (10.5%)	15 (39.5%)	8 (21.1%)	6(15.8%)
Insecurity	6 (15.8%)	16 (42.1%)	10 (26.3%)	5 (13.2%)	1 (2.6%)
Gender inequalities	20 (52.6%)	10 (26.3%)	4 (10.5%)	3 (7.9%)	1 (2.6%)

Source: Field data (2020)

According to the findings reported in Table 3 that, 55.3% (21) of the teachers are of the opinion that early marriages influence access to primary education to a very large extent, 36.8% (14) indicates that early marriages influence access to primary education to a large extent and 7.9% (3) to a low extent. The findings as reported in table 3 states that 31.6% (12), 26.3% (10), 23.7% (9), 15.8% (6) and 2.6% (1) of the teachers shows that cattle rustling influence access to primary education to a low extent, large extent, very low extent, very large extent and to no extent respectively.

Table 3 also shows that 39.5% (15), 21.1% (8), 15.8% (6), 13.2% (5) and 10.5% (4) of the teachers indicates that rites of passage influence access to primary education to a low extent, very low extent, no extent, very large extent and large extent respectively. It is also evident that 42.1% (16) and 15.8% (6) of the teachers are of the opinion that insecurity influence access to primary education to a large extent and to a very large extent; 26.3% (10), 13.2% (5) and 2.6% (1) states that insecurity influence access to primary education to a low extent, very low extent and to no extent at all respectively. Lastly, 52.6% (20), 26.3% (10), 10.5% (4), 7.9% (3) and 2.6% (1) of the teachers indicates that gender inequalities influence access to primary education to a very large extent, large extent, low extent, very low extent and no extent respectively.

A one-sample t-test was used to test the significance of the Likert scale responses at an indifference point (test value) of 3. From the findings reported in Table 4, early marriages, insecurity and gender inequalities were the significant cultural factors with p-values 0.000, 0.002 and 0.000 all less than the significance level of 0.05. Additionally, the means for the significant cultural factors were 1.52, 2.44 and 1.81 (all less than 3 and closer to 2) implying that early marriages, insecurity and gender inequalities had a significant influence on access to primary education to a large extent.

Table 4: One-Sample T-Test on Significance of The Cultural Factors

	Mean	Test Value = 3		Sig. (2-tailed)	2- Mean Difference	95% Confidence of the Difference	
		T	Df			Lower	Upper
Early Marriages	1.5263	-14.048	37	.000	-1.47368	-1.6862	-1.2611
Cattle rustling	2.6579	-1.922	37	.062	-.34211	-.7028	.0186
Rites of passage	3.1579	.798	37	.430	.15789	-.2430	.5588
Insecurity	2.4474	-3.389	37	.002	-.55263	-.8831	-.2222
Gender inequalities	1.8158	-6.716	37	.000	-1.18421	-1.5415	-.8270

Source: Field data (2020)

The finding agrees with the interviews conducted with Sub-County education officers. For instance, Officer C opined that: “Early marriages especially for girls stops them from accessing primary education since girls are considered as a source of wealth (cows) when married off”

Officer E added that:

“Insecurity in this area leads to boys being left at home so as to provide security to the livestock. It also leads to closure of schools due to fear from attackers from the neighboring communities”

Questionnaires were also presented to the pupils with an open-ended question regarding some of the cultural factors influencing access to primary education in Loima Sub-County. From the responses as shown in Table 5, 87.2% (34) of the pupils shows that early marriages influenced

pupils' access to primary education. Another 66.7% (26) indicates that early pregnancies influence access to primary education and 61.5% (24) being of the opinion that rites of passage such as circumcision ceremonies and initiation influence access to primary education in Loima Sub-County.

Table 5: Pupils Responses on Cultural Factors Influencing Access to Primary Education

Factors	Frequency	Percent
Early Marriages	34	87.2
Early pregnancies	26	66.7
Rites of passage	24	61.5

Source: Field data (2020)

The parents were required to indicate how some cultural factors such as early marriages, cattle rustling and rites of passage have interfered with access to primary education among the pastoral communities in Loima Sub-County.

One parent, Parent 1 indicated that:

“Rites of passage and early marriages created superiority complex and increased drop-out rates since those pupils who have undergone through them find it hard to socialize with those who have not undergone through them”

Another parent, Parent 2 indicated that:

“Cattle rustling being the main a cause of insecurity leading to closure of schools thus a hindrance access to primary education in Loima Sub-County”

Parent 8 while contributing on the influence of rites of passage added that:

“Rites of passage interfere with the school calendar since those participating are forced to leave school during the season of rites of passage”, and added that, “Some when they go never come back to school”.

These results agree with what UNICEF said in 2001, which said that 27% of girls under 19 in East Africa are married, while only 20% of girls under 19 in Northern and Southern Africa are married. Also, Lankester et al. (2015) said that marriage is seen as a happy event and a big step toward adulthood. Fujita et al. (2011) said that the practice of marrying a child before they are old enough is not a reason to celebrate because it takes away their basic rights, like going to school. Premature marriage deprives young boys and girls of the opportunities for personal development in addition to their rights in reproductive health, education and participation in civic life. Fratkin et al., (1999) while assessing the educational statistics of Coast Province in Kenya reported that early marriages led to massive drop-out of girls in both primary and secondary schools.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study it was concluded that, cultural factors such as early marriages and gender inequalities influence access to primary education among nomadic pastoralists. Most of the parents from Loima sub-county do not value girl- child education due to their traditional beliefs and culture. Many girls are denied access to education and many parents opt for boys to attend school than girls this has contributed to low enrolment of girls in Loima sub-county.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the government of Kenya, non-governmental actor's and other organizations to create awareness among the nomadic pastoralist communities not adopting regressive cultural practices that hinder development.

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