

Socio-Cultural Practices That Influence The Maasai Boys To Dropout In Public Primary School In Kenya. The Case of Osupuko Division, Narok County.

Ntaiyia S Julius¹, Onyiko Kennedy Karani² & Joseph Misati Akuma³

1. *Post-graduate student at Maasai Mara University*
2. *Lecturer of Social Work, Department of Social studies, Maasai Mara University*
3. *Senior Lecturer of Sociology, Department of Community Development and Environmental Management, The Cooperative University of Kenya*

ABSTRACT

Education is the basic human capital and social development against ignorance and poverty across the world. It enables individuals to acquire skills, knowledge and abilities for a better future. Free primary education introduced by the Kenyan government to all children of school-going age is characterized by high dropout rates. The school dropout phenomenon is not only a concern to Kenya but a global challenge. It has a negative impact on individuals, families and the country at large. The dropout rate among the Maasai boys is a concern to the stakeholders in the Osupuko division. The present study sought to determine how socio-cultural practices influenced the Maasai boys to dropout in public primary schools. The study utilized the Classical Theory of Equal Opportunity with a descriptive research design. The target population comprised of 415 school dropouts, their parents, 20 head teachers, 5 area chiefs, 3 cultural leaders and 2 education officers. Simple random sampling was used to select the school dropouts while convenience sampling was used to select parents. Purposive sampling was used to select key informants. The sample size of 62 school dropouts, 62 parents, 6 head teachers, 5 area chiefs, 3 traditional leaders and 2 educational officers as respondent's and key informant respectively were used in the study. Questionnaires and interview schedule were used to collect data. Data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively and was presented using tables and graphs. The results showed that socio-cultural practices like Moranism (Maasai warriors, age set/group systems, initiation ceremonies, appointments as cultural leaders and rites of passage contributed to school dropout. Further, the study established that the boys are taught to be dominant and to be aggressive so as to serve as a pillar for social protection in the community. From the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn. Maasai social-cultural practices such as rites of passage, "Moranism" (warriors), boys' chauvinism, age set/group system, pastoralism which is a subsistence strategy dependent on herding of animals such as sheep, goats and cattle by young boys who migrate from one place to another in search of pasture, ear piercing, tooth removal and tattooing are school dropout pulls practices.

KEY WORDS: Socio-cultural practices, School dropout, Boys

Date of Submission: 02-12-2021

Date of Acceptance: 16-12-2021

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is considered as the essential insurance against ignorance and poverty. It enables individuals to have the information, knowledge, abilities, and confidence they require to attain a better and promising future (UNESCO, 2011).

Education is considered a basic human right and an important aspect that helps in improving the socio-economic and social development of the human resource. In its efforts to promote human resource, social and economic development, the government of Kenya implemented a policy for Free Primary Education (FPE) for every child who is in the age-bracket of going to primary school and any interested adult (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017). The government of Kenya is fully supporting and promoting Free Primary Education by ensuring that the program is funded every year by the Ministry of Education (Orodho, 2014).

Several countries worldwide are experiencing school dropout challenges. It is approximated that over one million pupils who were to graduate from primary school in 2012, did not earn certificates (Mhele & Ayiga, 2013).

School dropouts face extremely bleak economic and social prospects. In many African countries, traditional circumcision or initiation, rites of passage, the appointment of traditional leaders, and other socio-

cultural rituals are old traditions, practiced especially for Maasai community young boys. These are still intensely practiced in most African countries, including Kenya and Tanzania. They are inherited from one age group to another. Among the Maasai community of Kenya and Tanzania, community leaders are the custodian of traditional knowledge and it is the library of socio-cultural practices for continuity from one generation to another in the society. They predominantly preside over boys' circumcision, which occur in young warrior's initiation institutions called the "Manyatta" (*Maasai cultural homestead*) (Ogur, 2014). These institutions train boys on the importance of culture and other traditional customs at a special place called "Emanyatta." Several cultural practices are performed in different stages before and after circumcision and other different levels in life. "Morans" are usually trained as social protection pillar in society for several months and years in the forest away from their homes and are also trained on how to shield the community as warriors. "Morans" are identified among the Maasai boys who have just undergone circumcision, socio-cultural rituals and some have been appointed as age set and age group leaders and given powers to direct, command and kill. However, after the boys return to their villages, they rarely continue with their education because they are perceived as men who are not supposed to be questioned or punished especially by females, including female teachers. This behavior leads to increased cases of school dropout among the newly initiated Maasai boys (Owino, 2013).

It has been established that dropout is higher among boys compared to girls in marginalized communities like the Maasai. According to UNESCO (2013), the dropout is higher for boys in the Maasai community than girls. Ogur (2014) also found that boys attain lower level of education and tend to dropout earlier. This implies that there may be some unknown causes contributing to high rates of boy dropout. The life-threatened boys in Africa undergo so many struggles due to the community's expectation and conditioning of the boys. Much attention has been given to empowering the girl child. African societies believe that the boys can do it alone. They fail to recognize that Africa is a tough place to survive due to high levels of poverty. The struggles of boys in the Africa continent start from the time of conception (Parr, 2013).

Across the world, empowerment of the female gender has registered positive results due several campaigns, strategies and measures by advocacy groups geared towards uplifting the standards of women. This has been done with the common endeavor to safeguard, improve, support, and empower the rights and position of the girl child in the society (Wandati, 2017). Due to this, the boys have been disadvantaged and their well-being is not focused by society. This has led to unending struggles of the boys who have been left to struggle for their own empowerment (Wandati, 2017).

In Osupuko division, there is a high dropout rate among the boys. Some of the major challenges for boys include; socio-cultural practices, family/ parental related practices, early marriage, defilement, illiteracy, and child labor. According to statistics by the Ministry of Education, school dropout rate for boys in Osupuko, Narok south, has been rising since 2009. For instance, in 2009, the dropout was 1.9%, in 2010, the rate was 4.2%, in 2011, the rate was 4.5%, and in 2011 the rate was 5.7%. In addition, the dropout rate for Maasai boys in Narok south, sub-county in 2012 was 6.1%, in 2013 was 5.9% and in 2014 was 6.8% (Ministry of Education, 2015). Thus, this study sought to determine some factors influencing dropout among Maasai boys in public primary schools in Osupuko Division, Narok County.

Education is a key aspect for many nations, both developed and developing. This concern about access to education has been not only at the national level but also at the society, family and individuals' level. In the current educational setting and systems, school dropout has been a major challenge (Schargel & Smink, 2014).

In countries like Kenya, the pupils' dropout is very common in schools and contributes to waste of funds for free primary education. This problem produces citizens who are inadequately prepared to be absorbed into the country's labor force. The school dropout rate in Kenya stands at 2.1% for boys (Fan & Wolters, 2014). The Maasai boys' dropout was contributed by socio-cultural practice such as pastoralism, where the Maasai move with their families and livestock from one area to another in search for water, and green pasture. Boys' child is at the center of these activities (Republic of Kenya, 2014).

Kainuwa & Yusuf, (2013) reported that, at least 24 pupils do not report back when the term begins in pastoral communities. This has negatively affected education as many children do not attend school. Boys are particularly the most affected since they are encouraged by their parents and the community to ensure that they focus on taking care of society issues such as herding of livestock. They do it in anticipation of taking over from their parents (Kainuwa & Yusuf, 2013).

Socio-cultural practices refer to those practices related to an individual's lifestyle and it is shown through their attitudes, virtual beliefs, values, and pedagogy systems expressed from age to age through the society's socialization systems (Limangura, 2008). (Mwangi, (2016) notes that, beliefs, duties, and practices affect the boys's choice to stay or withdraw from school. It affects their choice to dropout and their academic performance. Socio-cultural practices are centered on issues that reflect the traditional practices of labor and unequal chances. (Said, 2015).

Socio-cultural has a pattern of the custodians of tradition culture to perform it duties. This suggests that conformity to cultural beliefs depends on what is considered masculine or feminine either in occupation, and

attitudes. In Osupuko division, socio-cultural practices such as “Moranism” livestock farming influence the boys’ learning process and dropout rate because they are forced to take care of the parents’ livestock (Odhiambo, Shinali & Pere, 2016).

Other socio-cultural norms include prohibiting boys to show any form of physical weakness and emotions. The boy is not expected to share out his emotional weaknesses as this may contribute to him being intimidated, including dropping out of school (Brophy, 2013). Social issues such as diseases also lead to high dropout rate among the boys.

Schargel and Smink, (2014) point out that, orphans may put pressure on older relatives who become their primary caregivers. However, in most cases, the older relatives fail to provide basic needs to the orphans due to poverty, forcing the older siblings to assume adult roles. This leads to school dropout among the boys. In some cases, the learners may be forced to relocate from their familiar neighborhood making siblings to split apart, causing the mental harm for well-being and they become unable to continue with their education. Boys are more affected because they are told to behave maturely right from their childhood and adolescence. After circumcision, they can be asked to take care of their young siblings in a mature way (young parenting) despite their age. If not well monitored and evaluated, some religious beliefs and doctrines can cause indiscipline cases among boys especially adolescents (Quiroga, Janosz, Bisset & Morin, 2013).

Odhiambo, et al., (2016) note that boys in the Maasai community bear the heaviest burden for the family responsibilities; including livestock grazing, socio-cultural rituals, act as security pillar, performing age set and age group ceremonies. On other occasions, the Maasai traditional community perceives the boys of age 8-10 years to be ‘a man.’ He is therefore, expected to contribute by providing the basic needs of the family (Maina, 2018). Socio-cultural practices and livestock herding has contributed to the Maasai boys being sacrificed academically. In the Maasai culture, boys are supposed to be taking care of livestock at age 5 years. Consequently, he is trained on how to use basic weapons like spear, sword, arrows, and bow at the same age. He is expected to provide security in the community and grazing of livestock as his duty, it is for this reason why policy makers are blaming and criminalizing Maasai socio-cultural practices and traditions as leads to school dropout in Osupuko division.

Andiema (2021) observe that in the African tradition, young boys are subjected to rituals such as circumcision, facial and body scarification such as ear piercing against their will to prove their manhood. During this exercise, the tradition does not allow the use of any pain killers, and there is no fidgeting of the body or twitching of an eye during this activity, since it will be considered a sign of cowardice and immaturity. Once a boy’s is negatively branded or labeled by society, the tag is carried to his adulthood. Society neither forgives nor forgets the wrongdoing of the boys easily (Wandati, 2017).

It is mandatory for young Maasai boys to stand outside in the cold weather and receive a cleansing cold shower before circumcision. Circumcision in most African traditions is believed to act as a transition from childhood to adulthood. In most instances, for the Maasai community boy, the society ensures that the boys commits to circumcision by being threatened using these words: “if you kick the circumcision equipment, we shall kill you, if you escape by running away from the knife; your community will disown you”. During circumcision fidgeting is not accepted at all. It is during this time that the boys are taught not to escape or run away from anybody or wild animals during any physical confrontation, and it is believed that in culture and lifestyle a real man should not at all cost be defeated or run away from a fight (Wandati, 2017).

In Maasai community, a boy should show all characteristics of manhood like taking care of livestock, killing dangerous wild animals, and being circumcised. The Maa speakers of Kenya and Tanzania predominantly have male circumcision, which occurred as a process of young warrior’s initiation (Ogur, 2014). This also relates to the socio-cultural aspect of “moranism” among the Maasai community of Kenya.”

These rites of passage have been associated with diverse aspects of internal efficiency such as progression of students from one level to another level. In a study focusing on social-cultural factors influencing transition from primary to secondary schools in Narok County.

Odhiambo, Shinali & Kipeen (2016) examined the influence of rites of passage on internal efficiency components. The study used a sample drawn from primary school students, form one students, primary and secondary school teachers in Narok County. The study results found that male circumcision hampered progression from primary school to high school. In this context, the study found that rites of was the reasons for failure to join high school This was attributed to the boys who had failed to join high schools being lured by respect accorded to boys who maintained the cultural practice. The study revealed that some boys preferred “Moranism” lifestyle instead of proceeding to high school. Both studies adopted descriptive research design and uses interview guide and questionnaires to collect data. The study used both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Stratified sampling technique was used in the former study while the current study adopted simple random, convenience and purposive sampling techniques. The target population in the current study slightly varies to 415 school dropouts, 415 parents to the school dropouts, 20 head teachers, 5 area chiefs, 3 traditional leaders and 2 education officers in Osupuko Division of Kenya.

Njuguna (2018) carried out a study in Narok South Sub-County to investigate the influence of selected Maasai cultural practices specifically circumcision, early marriages, “moranism” and nomadic pastoralism on internal efficiency in public secondary schools. The selected indicators of internal efficiency were dropout’s rates, repetition rates and transition rates. The target population was 170 respondents comprising of (34) principals and (136) class secretaries in public secondary schools in Narok South Sub-County. Purposive sampling was used to select (31) principals while stratified sampling was used to select (124) class secretaries to form a sample size of 155. The study found out that all internal efficiency factors were influenced by the cultural practices. Both studies were carried out in Narok County. However, the former was carried out in Narok North Sub-County while the current study was carried out in Narok South Sub-County. The target population of the current study is 415 school dropouts, 415 parents to the school dropouts, 20 head teachers, 5 area chiefs, 3 traditional leaders and 2 education officers in public primary school in Osupuko Division, while the former study targeted 170 respondents comprising of (34) principals and (136) class secretaries in public secondary schools in Narok South Sub-County. Also, the present study was carried out among dropouts in primary schools while former study was carried in Secondary schools.

Andiema (2021) looked at how various cultural practices have affected girl child education in West Pokot County, Kenya. The study was conducted in Central Pokot Sub County primary schools targeting 12 Head teachers and 120 teachers. The results of the study showed that the status of girl-child education was low. Cultural factors like; early marriages, female genital mutilation, child labour, widowhood practices and taboos influenced girl-child education. The study found out those cultural factors in the study area affected girl-child education negatively as it slowed down their transition, academic performance and also the acquisition of knowledge required at the basic education level. The current study sought to focus at boy child in Osupuko division. The study determined how the social cultural factors influencing school dropout in Osupuko division Narok County.

Munyalo (2020) observed that learners in pastoral communities have been experiencing challenges in acquiring basic education because of social cultural factors such as cultural rites, early marriages and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The study found out that there was less retention rates in the public primary schools though there were mitigation strategies that were developed. The study established that there was high rate of gender imbalance in primary schools in North Horr Sub County of Marsabit County. Pupils’ educational aspirations were being thwarted by social cultural factors such as female genital mutilation, nomadism, early marriages and community low perception of education. This reduced the rate of retention in primary schools. The current study determined how socio-cultural factors influencing Maasai boys to dropout of public primary schools Osupuko division, Narok County.

The rites of passage continue to be a major contributing factor in some communities on school Dropouts especially after primary school education. In a study on causes of school dropout in Saboti Sub County of Trans Nzoia County, Cherotich (2017) examined the causes of school Dropouts amongst the boys in the area. The study was undertaken through use of the descriptive research design and utilized a target population made of pupils and teachers within primary schools. Amongst the social cultural factors leading to school dropouts, 57.1% of the respondents indicated that circumcision was a leading cause of school dropout in the area. This was attributed to the circumcised boys feeling they don’t fit in a school set up and was noted to be more prevalent amongst the older boys. The difference between this study and the former is that, the former study targets the influence of learner characteristics on school dropouts, while the current study sought to investigate the influence of school-related practices, socio-cultural practices and parental/ family-related practices on school dropout of the Maasai boys in public primary schools.

The United Nations Sustainable Development goal seeks to ensure that by the year 2030, all girls and boys have equal access to quality basic education. However, the goals of universal primary education and education for all have not been attained in many countries as a result of various factors. Mwakio (2017) indicates that cultural factors tend to affect the girls’ capacity to access education more than other factors, especially in developing countries. Mwakio, further notes that the cultures of pastoral communities to which the Pokot tribe belongs accommodate customary laws and values that the community lives to perpetuate social reproduction. However, certain rituals practiced in the community, strictly adhered to, are major obstacles for girls in accessing education including FGM, early marriages, girls being seen as not significant and propagation of teenage pregnancies (Krop, 2017). The research however doesn’t feature the boys. The current study will divert the focus from girl child to boy child in a new locality.

A study carried out by Mwihi & Ongek (2019) investigated the factors that influence boys’ dropout from public secondary schools in Kinangop sub-county, Nyandarua County. The objectives of the study were to find out how socio-economic, socio-cultural and learner characteristics influence the dropout of the boys from public secondary schools in Kinangop sub-county of Nyandarua County. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The researcher targeted 26 public secondary schools in Kinangop sub-County, where a sample of 148 respondents comprising of 16 principals and 132 class teachers. The 16 principals were also selected to

participate in the study. The socio-economic, socio-cultural and learner characteristics were found to be influential for boys dropout from public secondary schools. The challenge still remains for the primary school pupils. The current study focuses on how this social cultural practices influence dropout of boys pupils in Osupuko Division, Narok County.

Odhiambo, et al. (2016) investigated the socio-cultural practices influencing the transition rate of pupils from primary to secondary schools and to suggest strategies that would help increased the transition rates. The study was conducted in public primary and secondary schools in the Central Division of Narok North District. A descriptive survey design was used involving both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study established that several social-cultural practices hindered learner transition to secondary schools. The study recommended that there is a need to protect children from unlawful practices that prevent them from pursuing secondary education. Parents and pupils should be sensitized about the benefits of education. Guidance and Counseling in schools should in turn be strengthened to assist the pupils who have personal challenges to build their self-confidence and self-esteem. The current study however, focused on how "Moranism" and its traditions influenced the Maasai boys to dropout of public primary schools in Osupuko division, Narok County.

Njuguna, J. N. (2018) investigated the influence of selected Maasai socio-cultural practices on internal efficiency in public secondary schools in Narok South Sub County, Narok County. The investigation targeted the influence of circumcision, early ears piercing marriages, "moranism" on internal efficiency in public secondary schools. The selected indicators of internal efficiency were dropout rates, repetition, and transition rates. The researcher adopted the production function theory. Ex-post factors research design was used. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze background information while inferential statistics was used to determine the influence of selected Maasai socio-cultural practices on internal efficiency. The study depicted that "Moranism" had a significant level of influence in dropout ($P < 0.0080$). The current study adopted the descriptive research design to study how "moranism" influence Maasai boys to dropout of public primary schools.

Further, Njuguna, J. N. (2018) determined that the age set and age group system of the Maasai also affected the education system. The study investigated the influence of selected Maasai socio-cultural practices on internal efficiency in public secondary schools in Narok South Sub County, Narok County. The selected indicators of internal efficiency were dropout rates, repetition rates, and transition rates. The research adopted the production function theory. The ex-post factor research design was used. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze background information while inferential statistics was used to determine the influence of selected Maasai socio-cultural practices on internal efficiency. These findings also agree with Nyanzi (2017) who accounts that gender disparity in primary school dropout is a result of early marriage, pregnancy and sickness, including peer pressure from age group and male chauvinism. The study depicted that age sets had a significant level of influence in dropout. The current study focused on how the age set influences the boys to dropout of public primary schools in Osupuko division, Narok County.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Osupuko Division of Narok County. It neighbors Narok North, Narok West, and Narok East regions. Osupuko division comprises five (5) locations, namely, Naroosura, Ntuka, Enkutoto, Olenkulo, and Maji. The Division has 20 public primary schools. It is mainly a semi-arid region and the least developed area of the larger Narok south. The main economic activities are livestock keeping, horticultural production, and tourism (NCIDP, 2017). Find maps of the study area attached as Appendix vi, a and b.

The study adopted the descriptive research design which was the most applicable for the study. It explored the factors that influence the Maasai boys from dropping out of public primary schools in Osupuko division, Kenya. This method of investigation involves collecting information, analyzing, presenting and interpreting data to describe a phenomenon in its current condition (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The study also consulted an array of literature regarding school dropouts (Gorard, 2013).

The target population in this study was Maasai boys who had dropped out of school in the last 5 years, their parents. In the last five years, the County education office projects that 415 boys had dropped out of public schools in Narok County. The research also targeted 415 parents of the dropout, 20 head teachers, 5 area chiefs, 3 traditional leaders and 2 education officers from the Division.

This study adopted simple random sampling procedure to select the school dropouts. Convenience sampling was used to select their parents in that for every school dropout that was sampled to participate in the study, his parents were surveyed too. Purposive sampling was used to recruit the key informants - head teachers, area chiefs, traditional leaders, and County Education Officer. The data was collected from both primary and secondary sources during this study. The study consulted the library and already existing sources of information to get the secondary data on school dropout among the Maasai boys. Primary data was obtained through the use of the study questionnaires and structured interviews.

III. FINDINGS

Socio-cultural Determinants of School Dropouts

The table 1 below presents socio-cultural practices that the boys have cited as the determinants of school dropout.

Table 1: Socio-cultural Determinants of School Dropouts

STATEMENT	NS	SD	D	A	SA	MN
Herding of livestock made me dropout of school	6%	6%	2%	40%	46%	4.14
Socio-cultural practices "Moranism" made me dropout of school	4%	6%	16%	40%	34%	3.94
Age set and age group influence made me dropout of school	4%	12%	18%	36%	30%	3.76
Rite of Passage Contributed to my school dropout	4%	6%	12%	42%	36%	4.00

Sources: Research, (2020)

The findings show that 6% of the dropouts were not sure that herding (taking care of livestock) contributed to drop out of school, 6% Strongly Disagreed, 2% Disagreed, 40% Agreed and 46% Strongly Agreed with the statements. Further, the study inquired whether socio-cultural ceremonies "moranism" made the boys dropout of school. Out of the 50 respondents, 4% were Not Sure with the statement, 6% strongly Disagreed, 16% Disagreed, 40% Agreed and 34% strongly agreed.

On age set /group influence on boy's dropout of school, 4% were Not Sure with the statement, 12% Strongly Disagreed, 18% Disagreed, 36% Agreed and 30% Strongly Agreed. This clearly indicates that age set and age group do affect boy's dropout.

Concerning the rites of passage, 4% were Not Sure with the statement that rite of passage contributes to school dropout 6% Strongly Disagreed, 12% Disagreed, 42% Agreed and 36% Strongly Agreed.

The researcher also sought the opinions of parents about the socio-cultural determinants of school dropout. **The table 2 below reports the findings.**

Table 2: Parental Responses on Socio-cultural Practices on Dropout

STATEMENT	NS	SD	D	A	SA	MN
Herding (taking care of livestock) made me dropout of school	0%	34%	15%	32%	19%	3.37
Socio-cultural ceremonies "moranism" Made me dropout of school	3%	10%	18%	48%	21%	3.74
Age set and age group influence made me dropout of school	2%	7%	16%	48%	27%	3.94
Rite of Passage Contributed to My School dropout	3%	27%	21%	36%	13%	3.27
Type of Respondent = Parent						

Sources: Research, (2020)

Table 2 above revealed that out of 62 parents surveyed, 34% Strongly Disagreed that herding (taking care of livestock) contributed boys to dropout of school, 15% Disagreed, 32% Agreed and 19% Strongly Agreed. The study further inquired whether cultural practices such as "moranism" made the boys to dropout of school. On this one, out of 62 parents surveyed, 3% were Not Sure with the statement, 10% Strongly Disagreed, 18% Disagreed, 48% Agreed and 21% Strongly Agreed.

On age set and age group's influence on boys school dropout, 2% were Not Sure with the statement, 7% Strongly Disagreed, 16% Disagreed, 48% Agreed and 27% Strongly Agreed. This indicates that age set and age group systems do influence boys to dropout of school.

On whether the rites of passage contributed to boys dropout, out of the 62 parents surveyed, 3% were Not Sure with the statement that rite of passage contributes to school dropout, 27% Strongly Disagreed, 21% Disagreed, 36% Agreed and 13% Strongly Agreed.

The researchers further sought the opinion of the head teachers on socio-cultural determinants of school dropout. We found out that in the Maasai traditions, the male gender is trained to dominate the woman. This has caused the Maasai boys to disrespect the female teachers. The place of a woman is the second in this community. In this case, the Maasai boys patronize, disparage, denigrate female teachers in the belief that they are inferior to them as males and thus deserving of less than equal treatment or benefit as noted by one of the head teachers coded **HT006**.....

“Our Maasai boys do not regard female teachers, they show no respect; most boys/ “morans” believe that it is unethical for female teacher to punish the boy who is a superior organ of the community, leading to school dropout. Consequently, they believe that it’s a taboo for any female to punish a man. Thus, whenever they are being punished by female teachers, they just walk away leading to school dropout in order to keep the Maasai culture alive.” Another chief reiterated that, “Boys believed that they cannot be punished by female teacher, especially after initiation. It is an abomination for a Maasai man to be punished by women and this leads them not to show respect to female teachers.”

They key informants also cited Maasai cultural practices such as rites of passage, “moranism” (warriors), circumcision and herding of cattle as the key pull factors that fuel school dropout among the Maasai boys. Boys’ dropout of school to participate in socio-cultural practices that usher them to adulthood. Most of them fail to return to school afterwards and spiral to oblivion. Another head teacher coded **HT001** indicated that...

“Maasai boys’ dropout of school to take part in socio-cultural practices like “moranism”. It is believed that “morans” (warriors) all boys must participate in these socio-cultural practices in order to be appointed as cultural leaders or gain recognition in the community. We as teachers and government administrators are trying the best, we can to provide guidance to the boys to balance cultural related issues and learning but it seems to be hard for them since there is no support from parents and rest of the society.”

The area chief, coded **C001** noted that boy’s dropout of school to herd livestock and train as “morans” for social protection...

“Most boys in my sub-location dropped out of school because of herding of livestock and “Moranism”. Most of the families have a large herd of animals and they cannot employ somebody to look after livestock while boys/ “morans” are there. Culturally, it is the responsibility of young boys called “morans” to take care of family property including livestock.”

A senior Chief, coded **C002** indicated that;

“Yes, I agree that the Maasai socio-cultural practices are very important to our country and also to the community. However, it is sad to note that most of the school dropout cases results from socio-cultural practices like cultural ritual /ceremonies, age set /group which are being valued in the society more than education and usually take very long time to participate. Hence boys do not go back to school.

Also, initiation ceremonies, rite of passage and appointment of traditional, cultural leaders contribute greatly to school dropout. The culture recognizes boys/ “morans” as the defense organ of the community, and they provide security to the society as well as their properties. Due to his honour, they tend not to show respect to teachers, especially for female teachers.”

The County Education Officer said,

“Social cultural activities are predominant in Maasai region. Most of the young boys prefer attending Maasai traditional ceremonies during school days. After attending the ceremonies, they interact and conclude that there is no need of going back to school thus increasing school dropout. For example, in the year 2018 a huge number of boys dropped out of school due to the “Eunoto Oor Moran - Erenjai” (age- group ceremony). This activity is considered very important in the Maasai community since it an acts transition to separate age groups and graduation to manhood. To my surprise, these are the activities that the community invests like nothing else with a large amount of resources/ money that are solicited across the community to feed and perform those cultural practices. If these resources could be used to invest in educating a boy within the same community, dropout would be a thing of the past. This includes building of classes which has been a challenge for a long time”.

The assistant staffing officer further noted that....

“It is very important to acknowledge cultural background at a community. However, it is sad also to note that the same culture is pulling us back by facilitating causing school dropout. For example, cultural rituals like the age set /group systems are being valued in the society more than education. Appointment of traditional or cultural leaders, age group leaders and age set leaders are key roles that must be distinct before initiation to set the leadership framework. These contribute greatly to school dropout. The culture also recognizes “morans” (warriors) as the social defense organ of the society to provide security for their properties.”

IV. DISCUSSION

In terms of the socio-cultural determinants of school dropout among boys, the study found that more than a half of the respondents revealed that boys are introduced to herding livestock at a very tender age of 5 years old. This is the genesis of school dropout. Parents prefer their boys to move with livestock in search of greener pasture and water. This in turn leads to absenteeism and eventually school dropout. The finding concurs with what Maina (2018) who argue that Maasai traditional community perceives the boys of age 8-10 years to be 'a man' and therefore, it was expected to provide the basic needs in the family by taking care of livestock.

The study also found out that Maasai boys sacrifice education to pursue "moranism". The boys are also expected to provide protection to the society. The boys are introduced to techniques of protection both for the community and their resources especially livestock at a very tender age of 5 years old. This finding converges with Odhiambo, et al., (2016) whose results indicated that boys in the Maasai community bear the heaviest burden for the family responsibilities, including livestock grazing and protecting the family.

The study also found out that, majority of parents and boys agreed that initiations ceremonies that mark the hallmark of passage from childhood to adult rob many Maasai boys of a chance to further progress with their studies. These cultural rites of passage are sequential in nature in that the boys transition from initiation, "moranism" and finally community elders. For instance, after initiation boys take several months at home taking milk, meat and blood. Another stage begins where boys are shaved and given new small "shukas", sword and spear while using read arched and begins "moranism" for a period of time. All this time wasted was intended for schooling and dropping out of school becomes automatic. This finding was supported by Ogur (2014) which stated that Maasai people of Kenya and Tanzania predominantly have and had boys' traditional circumcision which occurred in young warrior's initiation called "Manyattas", this translates to "moranism" among the Maasai community hence boys tend to dropout of school.

The study found that age set and age group influence school dropout, while the rites of passage and appointment of traditional leaders' leads to early school dropout for boys. The age set and age group start before initiations ceremonies and age sets (esirit) and range for a period of between 2 to 4 years and age groups (orpororr) range between 5 to 15 years to repeat itself, and the same period for "moranism". Another stage of (Emanyats) commences, "emanyatta oor moran (Eunoto), emanyata oo ng'usidin" and "emanyatta oo lorikan" stages from "moranism" to elderly in that order respectively. All the participants are supposed to be at school which leads to school dropout. These findings also agree with Nyanzi (2017) who accounts that gender disparity in primary school dropout is a result of marriage, pregnancy and sickness, including peer pressure from age group and male chauvinism.

The study also established that the socio-cultural related practices contributed greatly to boys' dropout. This is reflected in Wandati (2017) findings that indicate in most African traditions; young boys are subjected to rituals such as; facial, body scarification and ear piercing against their will. There are several reasons for ear piercing; cut ears usually take time to heal and the reason for this is for decoration and for singing the cultural songs forcing them to dropout of school. This is also in line with Maina (2018) who indicated that socio-cultural practices and livestock herding have contributed to the Maasai boys to be sacrificed academically.

The study found that among the Maasai community, boys grew up with more superior powers in the society more than their female counterparts. The boys are not supposed to bow before any female person despite of her age. It is prestigious for the Maasai society to be a male person. The study found that, it is clear that the boys are facing great challenges of school dropout. It was also noted that, the society had molded and shaped the Maasai boys on how to behave within the community. This has directly affected and translated on how boys should behave not only at home but also in school. It is also noted that the Maasai elders are the custodians of culture and it is their obligation to coach and train young "morans" for continuity and retention of cultured values within the society. It was found that Maasai boys and elders are the experts and professional custodians for monitoring and implementation of socio-cultural practices and they do play a huge role in social sustainability and development of the community.

V. CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, the following conclusion was drawn: Maasai social-cultural practices such rites of passage, "Moranism" (warriors), boys chauvinism, age set/group system, pastoralism which is a subsistence strategy dependent on herding of animals such as sheep, goats and cattle by young boys who migrate from one place to another in search of pasture, ear piercing, tooth removal and tattooing are school drop pull practices.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the outcomes of this study:

- a) Managers or policy makers need to stop blaming and criminalizing Maasai socio-cultural practices or traditions and, rather, seek innovative ways to engage these socio-cultural practices and its custodians.

- b) The government should also initiate programmes that allow boys to return to school if they wish, like girls after pregnancy after cultural practices.
- c) In as much as socio-cultural practices are predominant in Osupuko division, boys should be empowered to balance between education and social issues through guidance, and counseling programmes.
- d) The managers need to tap into the thinking patterns of the custodians of tradition culture, understand it and find a social approach to incorporate education for positive development

REFERENCES

- [1]. Abuya, B., Oketch, M., & Musyoka, P. (2013). Why do Pupil's dropout when Education Is "Free"? Explaining school dropout among the urban poor in Nairobi. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 43(6),740-762.
- [2]. Andiema, N. C. (2021). Influence of Culture on Girl Child Education in Central Pokot Sub County, Kenya. *East African Journal of Education Studies*, 3(1), 26-38.
- [3]. Brophy, J. (2013). *Motivating students to learn*. Routledge.
- [4]. Cherotich, J. (2017). Factors Influencing Dropout Rate Among Boys in Public Primary Schools in Saboti Sub County Trans Nzoia County, Kenya (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).
- [5]. Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage Publications.
- [6]. Mwihi & Ongek, (2019) Sixth International Conference, September 23-26, 2019, Abuja, Nigeria from African Association of Agricultural Economists (AAAE) No 295854.
- [7]. Fan, W., & Wolters, C. A. (2014). School motivation and high school dropout: The mediating role of educational expectation. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 84(1).
- [8]. Gorard, S. (2013). *Research design: Creating robust approaches for the social sciences*. Sage.
- [9]. Kainuwa, A., & Yusuf, N. B. M. (2013). Influence of socio - economic and educational background of parents on their children's education in Nigeria. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 3(10), 1-8.
- [10]. Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*. New Age International.
- [11]. Krop, L. O. A. (2017). Influence of Institutional Factors on Girls' Completion Rates in Primary Education in Central Pokot Sub County, Kenya Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi.
- [12]. Lewis, S. (2015). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches. *Health promotion practice*, 16(4), 473-475.
- [13]. Limangura, H. N. (2008). The impact of socio-cultural factors on drop-out rates among secondary school girls in west Pokot district Doctoral dissertation.
- [14]. Maina P. (2018). Impact of neglect of boys and how it was affected by socio - Economic development in Mwiki ward.
- [15]. Meyers, L. S., Gamst, G., & Guarino, A. J. (2016). *Applied multivariate research: Design and interpretation*. Sage publications.
- [16]. Mhele, K. & Ayiga, N. (2013). Factors influencing high dropout rates of girl child from education: A case study of black women in North West Province, South Africa, 28(1), 111–138. Ministry of Education Science and Technology. (2007). *A Report on the Task Force on Affordable Primary Education*. Nairobi: MOEST. 61.
- [17]. Ministry of Education, (2015). Report from Ministry of Education, factors affecting school dropout Rates in Primary Education, Kenya Unpublished, University of Nairobi.
- [18]. Mugenda, O. & Mugenda, A. (2012). *Research methods dictionary*. Nairobi: Applied Research & Training Services (Arts Press).
- [19]. Mugenda, O. & Mugenda, A. (2003). *Research methods: quantitative and qualitative approaches*. (1st ed.). Nairobi: African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS).
- [20]. Munyalo, M. S. (2020). Analysis of Social-Cultural Factors that Affect Pupils Retention in Primary Schools in North Horr Sub-County, Marsabit County-Kenya Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, KeMU.
- [21]. Mwakio, N. (2017). Overcoming obstacles to educational access for Kenyan girls: A qualitative study. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 18(2), 260-274.
- [22]. Mwangi, L. W. (2016). Determinants of boys' academic performance in public primary schools in Mukurweini sub-county, Nyeri-Kenya Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Kenyatta University.
- [23]. Njuguna, J. N. (2018). Influence of selected Maasai cultural practices on internal efficiency in public secondary schools in Narok South Sub County Narok County Kenya. Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Egerton University.
- [24]. Nyanzi (2017) <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/4/10/academic-stella-nyanzi-charged-with-cyber-harassment>

- [25]. Odhiambo, F., Shinali, M. C., & Pere, S. K. (2016). Influence of socio-cultural factors on the transition of learners from Primary to Secondary schools in Central Division, Narok County, Kenya.
- [26]. Ogur, B. (2014). Home and school-based factors influencing students' participation in public day primary schools in Nyatike sub county, Kenya Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi.
- [27]. Orodho, J. A. (2014). Policies on free primary and primary education in East Africa: Are Kenya and Tanzania on course to attain Education for All (EFA) Goals by 2015. *International Organization of Scientific Research (IOSR) Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (IOSR-JHSS)*, 19, 11-20.
- [28]. Owino, O. J. (2013). Institutional factors influencing implementation of life skills education curriculum in public primary schools in Kehancha Division-Kuria West District, Kenya. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Nairobi, Nairobi. Accessed on 30th November.
- [29]. Parr, A. (2013). Academic Achievement Motivation and High School dropout: An Integrative Model Academic Achievement Motivation and High School dropout.
- [30]. Quiroga, C. V., Janosz, M., Bisset, S., & Morin, A. J. (2013). Early adolescent depression symptoms and school dropout: Mediating processes involving self-reported academic competence and achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105(2), 552.
- [31]. Republic of Kenya (2014). Osupuko Division primary schools' enrolment Kilungu: Government Printers.
- [32]. Said, B. S. (2015). Assessment of the Influence of socio-cultural, Economic, and School factors on dropout of female Primary School Students in Muheza District Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, The Open University of Tanzania.
- [33]. Schargel, F., & Smink, J. (2014). Strategies to help solve our school dropout problem. Routledge.
- [34]. UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2011). Financing education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Meeting the challenges of expansion, equity and quality.
- [35]. UNICEF (2013). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159032X.2017.1301050>
- [36]. UNICEF (2015). Progress on sanitation and drinking water: 2015 update and MDG assessment. World Health Organization.
- [37]. Wang, K. T. (2015). Research design in counseling. Nelson Education.
- [38]. Wandati M. 2017. Is Poverty in Africa Self-Inflicted? Dispatch- Uganda's News Monthly. Published: November 9, 2016. From: <http://dispatch.ug/2016/11/09/is-poverty-in-africa-self-inflicted/> (Retrieved on 4 November, 2017).
- [39]. Wlodkowski, R. J., & Ginsberg, M. B. (2017). Enhancing adult motivation to learn: A comprehensive guide for teaching all adults. John Wiley & Sons.

Ntaiyia S Julius, et. al. "Socio-Cultural Practices That Influence The Maasai Boys To Dropout In Public Primary School In Kenya. The Case of Osupuko Division, Narok County." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 26(12), 2021, pp. 57-66.