# Effect of Gender Roles on Retention of Boys in Primary Schools in Kenya

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**Abstract:** *Retention of pupils in school is important in the attainment of educational goals. There has been concerted effort to ensure girls remain in school and some positive results have been realized over time. However, there is a growing concern that retention of boys in primary schools particularly in pastoral regions in Kenya is declining. This study sought to address this concern by establishing the influence of male gender roles on retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County. The study employed mixed methods research design, specifically parallel convergent approach. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires from 211 head teachers 223 class teachers and 339 class eight boys while qualitative data was collected using interview schedules from five Sub-county Quality Assurance and Standards Officers. The study established that male gender roles in particular herding, rite of passage, inheritance of family wealth, cattle rustling, child labour and community defense influenced retention of boys to varying degrees in this area. In view of this, the study recommends increased sensitization of the community on harmful cultural practices such as adjustment of rite of passage time to coincide with school holidays, government to initiate economic empowerment of parents to reduce child labour, schools to come up with school-community initiatives to demystify schooling to the community so as to discourage boys drop out, the government through the ministry of education should establish more boarding schools and rescue centers for boys escaping harmful cultural practices and schools should use alumni and other local professionals to mentor the boys.*

**Keywords:** Pastoralist, Gender roles, Retention, Culture, Boy, Education

## 1. Introduction

Gender equity in education has been a pertinent issue for a long time. Gender is culturally and socially constructed concept that is tied to how women and men should conduct themselves and behave in a given society. As children grow up parents and the society teach them how girls and women should behave, act and take responsibility, similarly boys are taught how boys and men should behave act and take up responsibility. This is continuously reinforced into adulthood (Undarya & Enkhjargal, 2011). Men and women as social beings strive to belong and seek for approval by complying and conforming to the social and cultural norms within their society (Eagly, 2014). Boys' understanding of gender roles and how these relate to school may influence their school retention. Most cultural stereotypes depict boys as superior and the boys may feel inadequate and frustrated when they do not measure up to the stated school expectations. Abagi (2013) notes that among the pastoralist in Botswana, boys are given so much recognition to the extent they do not value school.

Parents are the first educators for children, their own educational attainments can act as an inspiration to their children towards education. The literacy levels of parents have been found to affect the access, retention and performance of children in school. For instance, in Liberia, a household survey of out-of-school children, UNICEF (2012) revealed that many parents in Liberia are themselves uneducated, so they do not recognize the importance of educating their children. The study further showed that many children dropped out due to high levels of poverty combined with low parental support for education due to ignorance. Other studies (Ruto 2014; Olaniyan & Yahaya 2016 and Mungoo 2017) have shown that illiteracy levels are high among the pastoralist communities living in arid and semi-arid regions due to marginalization which in turn impact on schooling of their children. Literacy plays a key role in making informed decision critical to schooling of children.

Child labour affects boys school retention and performance. A study on boys' dropout carried out in Rwanda by UNESCO (2015) showed that many boys engaged in child labour to support their families and to earn enough money to pay for their own school fees. Similarly, Rena (2007) examined the factors affecting the enrolment and the retention of boys in primary education in Andhra Pradesh, India. The study revealed that children dropped out of school so as to assist in household and agricultural activities. Amma (2010) indicates that among the pastoralists' communities, herding is the most prominent child labour activity afflicting the boys. In addition, nomadism withdraws the boys from school as they accompany their parents in search of pasture for the herds. This affects their retention in schools where some pupils are forced to drop out of school all together. Among the pastoralists the key economic activity is the livestock keeping. This is a source of livelihood as well as pride and social status for the family. Inheritance of family wealth is bestowed on the boys because of their role in the continuity of family lineage. Several studies (Koringura 2004; Chelimo 2012 and Emuria 2016) have shown that some boys have dropped out of school to engage in herding with the assumption that they will inherit family wealth hence their future is secured and they do not need education. Boys have been involved in raiding and cattle rustling as an old tradition that has been used by pastoralist to restock their livestock, especially after long periods of drought or disease outbreaks. The boys join men in carrying out these activities by virtue of their masculinity. The cattle rustling and acquisition of livestock compels boys to acquire livestock for

bride price in preparation for adulthood and marriage. In addition to taking boys away from school, this activity leads to displacement of many families, pupils and teachers. For example, in northern Nigeria Olaniyan & Yahaya (2016) observed that cattle rustling is caused by pastoral culture and traditions which confers cattle husbandry to the nomadic pastoralists and recommend against ownership of cattle by non-pastoral groups leading to conflicts. By virtue of their masculinity boys are involved in these raids leading to fatalities as well as withdrawals from school. Firuli (2013) concurs that conflict over pasture make families leave the conflict affected areas to seek for pasture elsewhere hence pupils drop out of school altogether as they migrate.

The proliferation of fire arms among the pastoralists has interfered with boys education. Moru (2010) explains that the Pokot pastoralist community has used armed violence through raiding and cattle rustling from time immemorial to restock herds, expand grazing lands, gain access to water and pasture resources and to increase social status. In recent years, Mkutu, (2017) reiterates that this practice has become more sophisticated, more violent and more destructive due to the proliferation of modern small fire arms. Such activities keep boys out of school because culture expects them to join men in carrying out these activities.

Cultural practices shape the world view of boys on many spheres of their lives including schooling. Studies by Bista (2014), Kane (2014), Garises (2013) and Hanlon (2017) have argued that cultural practices and traditional values influence retention of boys in education by altering their world view. Cultural practices and values of rite of passage normally lead to change of attitude towards school. A study by Bahago (2011) revealed that boys' school retention in some cultures is poor due to numerous cultural norms and values which results in them being indoctrinated and socialized to undertake their gender assigned roles instead of attending school. Dunne (2015) opines that pastoralists are resistant to cultural changes, especially as regards to those related to decisions about education because they see education as neutralizer of their culture. In most cultures the boys are viewed as custodians of culture hence they are the first ones to be withdrawn or denied school to avoid cultural dilution.

The boys in the Pokot community undergo elaborate rite of passage ceremonies as they progress from one stage of life to another. During these times they undertake detailed cultural teachings that prepare them for life. It has been noted that may changes occur during these ceremonies which may interfere with schooling of the boys. For example, Koringura (2004) observed that boys undergo attitudinal changes after circumcision, they behave and expect to be treated like adults which makes school uncomfortable place for them. It has been observed that some of the teachings make boys develop hegemonic masculinities which make them undermine the female gender including female teachers. Cases have been reported on local media where teachers have been attacked by primary school pupils in pastoralists' areas due to gender stereotypes perpetuated by culture. For example, the Kirimoni primary school, Samburu county

incident where female teachers were assaulted by standard six boys, (Njiru, 2017 July, 19th).

In developing countries, low completion rates have been a subject of interest to academicians, researchers, and policy makers for a long time. Studies have shown that there is an emerging trend around the world concerning boys' retention in school that is worrying. In Kenya, girls had lagged behind in education for a long time but concerted effort from the government, civil rights activists and non-governmental lobby groups have seen this trend change and now the retention of girls in school is on upward trend. Focus needs to shift to the boys who are slowly slipping away into the position girls were decades ago.

In West Pokot County, current statistics indicate that there is a steady decline in the number of boys as they progress from one class to another an indication of wastage. The highest rate of dropout is experienced in class seven as they transit to class eight. If this trend continues unchecked, the future economic, political and social productivity of the men in West Pokot County in will be jeopardized. This study aimed to establish the influence of male gender roles on retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County, with a view of coming up with recommendations which can be utilized by stakeholders to inform education policies on retention.

## 2. Methods

The study employed mixed methods research design in particular parallel convergent approach. This involved collecting, analysing and integrating quantitative and qualitative research in a single study. Quantitative data was derived from the closed ended items in the questionnaires while qualitative data was derived from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire and the interview schedules. The design was chosen because it allows the findings to be confirmed, cross-validated and corroborated within a single study. The independent variable in this study was the male gender roles whose indicators were the rite of passage, herding, cattle rustling, family leadership and wealth inheritance. The dependent variable was retention. Retention was measured by looking at the interclass transition and drop-out rate.

### 2.1 Target Population and Sample size

The study targeted all the 663 head teachers, 790 class eight class-teachers and 6861 class eight boys in all the 663 public primary schools in West Pokot County. The five sub-county Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) formed part of the population. This constituted a target population of 8319. Yamane's (1973) formula was used to obtain a sample of 897 respondents i.e. sample of 249 head teachers, 265 class teacher and 378 pupils.

### 2.2 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

Content validity of the instruments was ascertained by subjecting the instrument to expert judgement. Their input

was used to make corrections on content and face validity of items of the study instruments.

The researcher used Cronbach's alpha to establish the internal consistency of the research instruments. The scores generated were subjected to a test of reliability through internal consistency based on Cronbach Alpha and a coefficient of .81 was obtained indicating that the instrument was reliable.

## 3. Results

To achieve the objective of the study, Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) were interviewed and some of their responses reported verbatim while the teachers and pupils were asked to rate the information provided on the influence of male gender roles on boys' retention in schools based on their level of agreement with statements provided in the questionnaires. The ratings were based on a five-point Likert scale of 1-5; where 1 represented Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 represented Disagree (D), 3 represented Not Sure (NS), 4 represented Agree (A) and 5 represented Strongly Agree (SA). Responses were graphically presented in Figure 1.
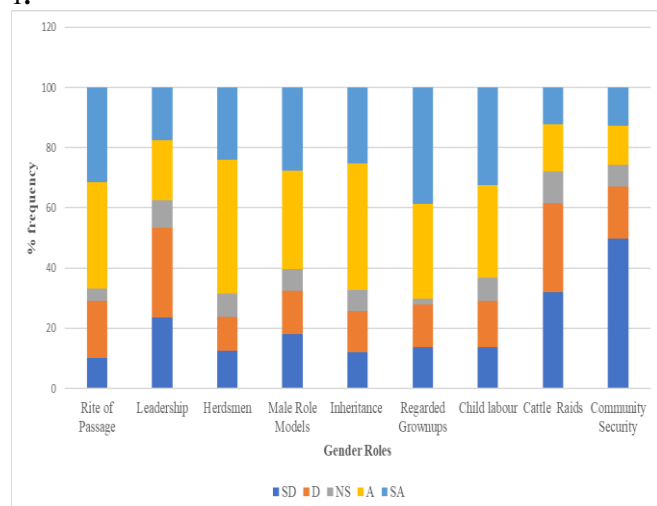


**Figure 1:** Responses on Influence of Male Gender roles on Retention

Figure shows that after the rite of passage, boys regarded themselves as grownups which raised expectations of their new status. In this regard, they expected recognition from all including teachers in the school. The study revealed that a majority of the respondents (70.2%) agreed with this statement (31.5% agreed, 38.7% strongly agreed) that rite of passage changed one's status. This implies that once boys undergo rite of passage, they have the notion that it is a passage from childhood to adulthood where they are allowed to acquire wealth, marry and make adult decisions. They will behave like mature men expecting everyone around them to recognise their new status including teachers. This is aggravated by the semi-literate support staff within the schools who keep watch on the boys to see whether they flout the community teachings. This in turn may create conflict between the teachers and boys leading to boys dropping out. One QASO in support of the above finding observed that:

*Some of the support staff in the schools such as watchmen, cooks and cleaners act like custodians of the culture. At times they incite the circumcised boys against being treated as children by the teachers. This conflict often leads to indiscipline of the boys in school and eventually drop out.*

The implication is that most of the time, the boys are under scrutiny and pressure from members of the community to ensure that they adhere to teachings associated with rite of passage. Among the Pokot, rite of passage is marked by circumcision and seclusion of boys where indoctrination about their culture takes place. The boys emerge feeling that they are mature men who cannot simply take any instructions from the teachers and particularly the female teachers due to the misogynistic teachings they undergo. As adult male members of the community, the boys are expected to be independent and to work hard to accumulate sufficient wealth in form of cattle for bride price in preparation for marriage and adulthood (Koriang2014). Additionally, the rite of passage takes as long as three months which takes boys away from school. Majority (66.9%) of the respondents agreed (agreed 35.4%, 31.5% strongly agreed) that the rite of passage ceremonies consume as much time as an entire school term. This affects boys' performance by keeping the boys away from school. The teachings therein indoctrinate the boys such that they emerge with a negative attitude towards school. A feature on Nation Media (2016, January, 24th) on the Pokot Creed stated that formal classes remained almost empty as boys remained hidden in the bushes as they took part in circumcision rituals. The community values this stage in life so much so that the boys who fail to participate in them are considered outcasts. The value attached to rite of passage emerged during interview with the QASOs. For instance, a QASO stated:

*Circumcision ceremonies are very important among the Pokot. Uncircumcised boys are classified together with women and children and have no say in the community. Once they have been initiated and released from seclusion, the boys are expected to behave like adult males and should be treated as such. Some are not restricted to drink traditional brew yet this is against school rules and the Children Act of 2001.*

As a community that circumcises boys to mark the rite of passage from childhood to adulthood, after circumcision, boys are perceived as adult and therefore expected to take up responsibilities of the adult men. The circumcised boys are not supposed to mingle with the uncircumcised. This often makes the school environment unfavourable to them since majority of pupils in primary schools are not circumcised. Kibogy (2012) on a study on phenomenon of male dropout in Keiyo district alluded that when boys are faced with a choice between obeying school rules or the elders, the boys are more inclined to obey the elders' teachings than the teacher. A similar scenario played out among the pastoralist in Botswana, a study by Mungoo (2017) revealed that due to hegemonic masculinities after rite of passage boys acquire some sense of entitlement which may lead to indiscipline in school. Koringura (2004) in a study on factors influencing

enrolment, participation and transition in West Pokot also revealed that those boys who had undergone circumcision often got attitudinal changes, they perceived themselves as adults and felt that school was meant for children.

Herding is a common activity among the pastoralist communities. It is a form of child labour that is mainly undertaken by the boys in the community. This study findings revealed that a majority (68.5%) of the respondents agreed (44.5% agreed, 24.0% strongly agreed) that herding influenced retention of boys. Keeping of cattle, goats and camels show economic and social prowess of a man in the Pokot community. This status must be protected at all costs meaning that boys who are termed masculine compared to girls are tasked with the responsibility of herding. In agreement, a study conducted by UNICEF (2015) in Botswana showed that boys are taken out of school or denied entry altogether to become cattle herders a task that falls on them by virtue of masculinity, stereotype and culture. In a separate study in Botswana Mungoo (2017), found out that herding negatively affects school access, participation and retention of boys. Ruto (2014) also agrees that the nomadic way of life and herding are among the barriers to boys' access and retention in school among the pastoralists. A study done by Olaniyan & Yahaya (2016) among the pastoralists in northern Nigeria shows a similar trend where boys were withdrawn from school to herd which sometimes includes moving from one place to another disrupting the boys school calendar. The Pokot are largely pastoralist some of whom still practice nomadism. Some boys drop out of school as they are withdrawn to accompany their fathers in search of pasture. All this while, girls remain in school especially where boarding facilities have been provided for them.

Other forms of child labour apart from herding were found by this study to negatively affect boys' retention. Majority of the respondents 63.3% agreed (30.8% agreed, 32.5% strongly agreed) that boys engaged in casual labour other forms of child Labour such as mining, *boda boda* (motorcycle) transport business as well as hawking in order to support their families. In support of this observation, a study on child dropout by Bahago (2011) revealed that some boys are just enrolled in school for fun as they are withdrawn later when it is convenient to the parents to engage them in various activities that contribute to the household economies. In fact, a QASO had this to say:

> *In my sub county many boys are tasked to look after animals like cattle and goats while others engage in gold mining and boda Koxinga transport business in order to provide for their families. Some however do it out of their own accord as they try to assert their independence. These are forms of child labour which keep young boys out of school.*

High levels of poverty in some families led to engagement of boys in child labour activities. It has been noted that boys engage in herding either for an employer for pay to their family or unpaid by herding for their own families or relatives (Boyden, Heissler, Porter & Zharkevich, 2016). According to Kurgat (2014), some boys may also engage in child labour activities against the wish of their parents as a way of exerting their masculinity as young men trying to acquire their individual wealth. The community expects the boys to behave as adults and this restricts the parental control on activities that boys engage in. For example, Koirala & Acharya (2015) pointed out that some parents find it difficult to restrain their sons from participating in income generating activities once they have gone through initiation rites because they are mandated by the elders to take up adult roles.

Child labour is not unique to the Pokot scenario, many governments have fought to keep children in school, a report by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2017) indicated that 152million children were engaged in child labour globally. (Amma 2010) in a study on combating child labour revealed that during drought search for food is the most important activity. Since pupils cannot attend school while hungry, they are involved in the search for food thus dropping out of school altogether. Rotich (2015) study on influence of school feeding programme on pupils' participation in school in West Pokot indicated that despite the school feeding programme in some schools, children aged 10 to 19 years still sacrifice their education in favour of economic activities in order to meet their basic needs and those of their families. Justino (2012) agrees that many of the barriers to boys' retention are socio-economic and socio-cultural including child labour, poverty, displacement, nomadism, disability and ethnicity. The results concur with Ijaiya (2011) who found out that improved interest in school highly correlated with learners' perceived relevance of school compared to fulfillment they get from engaging in casual labour. In contrast to child labour that is usually forced, there is a degree of willingness among some Pokot boys to undertake these activities. An interview with a QASO indicated:

> *Unlike many cases where children are forced into child labour by their parents, some boys among the Pokot do it willingly as an obligation to their community and family. Even in cases where the family would prefer the boys to go to school, such crucial decisions are sometimes left to the boys. These boys are not cognitively mature to make such important decisions and end up making wrong choices.*

Boys at the primary school level are still too young to make informed decisions and yet parents bestow this responsibility upon them. This implies that both the parents and the boys share the blame of child labour that keeps the boys out of school. The parents allow child labour as a contribution to household economies by the boys while the boys engage in child labour to assert themselves that they are old enough to make independent decisions.

The role of inheritance of family property by boys also ranked high among the factors that influence boys' retention. About 67.2% of the respondents agreed (42.1% agreed, 25.1% strongly agreed) that when a family has many herds of cattle, camel and goats, they are regarded as wealthy and boys from such families see their future as secured and may not see the need for formal schooling. In the Pokot

community and indeed many African communities, boys are believed to be the custodians of family values and traditions and they are accorded a lot of preference and an upper hand in inheriting family wealth over the girls. This notion often leads to the wrong assumption that inheritance is all the boys need to secure their future. This finding concurs with a report on a Standard Newspaper feature, (Njiru, October, 4, 2017) which indicated that the education sector had suffered a major blow as cases of dropouts had increased in Baringo County despite free education. One of the head teachers in that report had indicated:

*In my school, boys are more affected because they prefer to take care of their parents' livestock over going to school because that is their culture. They do it in anticipation of eventually inheriting and taking over the wealth from their parents.*

Inheritance of family wealth may be more appealing to the boys because it is more tangible than the unforeseen returns on education. Similarly, study by Koriang (2014) on the Pokot cultural world view revealed that male children are highly valued since they give societal status to the parents and inherit their father's property. As regards inheritance, a QASO observed that:

*Cattle keeping is the main stay of most Pokot families especially in the dry low lands. The more the animals one has the wealthier they are regarded; they even marry many wives and beget many children to inherit this wealth. Only the boys and not girls inherit their fathers' wealth. Boys from such families feel they are wealthy and may not value education.*

It would be expected that the preferential treatment accorded to the boys over girls would be advantageous to then in all aspects including education, but to the contrary this entitlement in this case works to negatively impact on the boys' education.

High levels of parental illiteracy contributed to low retention of boys. The findings showed that majority of the respondents (60.4%) agreed (32.8% agreed, 27.6% strongly agreed) that the community had very few educated role models for the boys to emulate. This implies that the general population from where the boys come from consist of parents' majority of whom lack formal education. As a result, the boys are left to look up to the traditional opinion leaders such as clan elders, *morans*, medicine men, seers, and traditional religious leaders for guidance. Kurgat (2017) opines that the readily available role models among the Pokot are the healers, fortune tellers, astrologers, seers' clan elders and *morans*. These opinion leaders may provide valuable guidance to the boys on community values but not in education. The effect of community role models in the retention of boys cannot be downplayed. Hunte (2017) found out that when boys lack proper role models, they will seek out negative role models to fill the gap either at home or in school. This then implies that lack of academic role models in the community may discourage boys from attending school. Plummer (2015) in a separate study on the low rate

of retention in the Caribbean attributed the low retention of boys to increase in single parenthood and lack of male role models for the boys at home.

As for the leadership role that boys performed after rite of passage, this study found that it did not affect boys' retention to a large extent. Only a minority 37.4% of all respondents agreed (19.9% agreed, 17.5% strongly agreed) that the leadership role that boys played after rite of passage affected their school attendance. Kurgat (2017) explains that the Pokot community does not bestow leadership to the boys immediately after circumcision. The Pokot community is regimented into age groups, each group has a specific leadership role in the community and after circumcision, the young boys await another rite of passage called *Sapana* to usher them into *moranism* and community leadership at the age of 18 to 20 years asserts Kurgat. This may explain why at primary school age leadership is not the main contributory factor to drop out. This finding however contradicts with the findings by Abagi (2013) in a study on factors influencing the establishment of mobile schools in Botswana which revealed that after rite of passage boys were considered head of the family and were considered in decision making, this recognition as leaders put boys on a high pedestal such that education to them was seen as secondary and this led to school dropout.

The role of cattle rustling and raiding ranked lowest on its impact on retention of boys among the study variables. A minority (27.8%) of all respondents agreed (15.5% agreed, 12.3% strongly agreed) that cattle rustling and raiding was a contributory factor to boys drop out. The Pokot culture has been known to encourage cattle rustling for a long time. However, the strong disagreement by majority of the respondents could be attributed to the fact that the act of cattle rustling has been criminalized with hefty penalties by the Kenyan government. This may explain why it is no longer very prevalent in many sub counties of West Pokot according to this study findings. The vehement denial of the effect of cattle rustling by the school boys could partly be due to their effort to defend their culture when depicted in negative light. This is in contrast with Kumssa (2012) who found out that boys were actively involved in cattle rustling and upon successful raiding escapades boys became highly motivated as they see themselves as grownups ready to accumulate wealth with the end result being school drop-out. The reduction in cattle rustling could also be due to urbanization and cultural shift. Moru (2010) explains that even though the Pokot pastoralist community has engaged the male members in raiding for many years, western education has significantly penetrated the community with those living in urban areas gradually discarding this cultural practice. A QASO noted that:

*Many people believe that cattle rustling is the main activity in Pokot culture, but many Pokot people have abandoned this culture because of government policies. It is only in the few areas in central and north Pokot where they still practice cattle rustling that boys rarely go to school there.*

The observation that there is reduction in cattle rustling however contradicts a recent study by Mkutu (2017) on guns and governance among Rift Valley pastoralist who noted that cattle rustling in recent years has become more rampant, more sophisticated, more violent and more destructive due to proliferation of modern small fire arms. Media reports too seem to depict a continuing rampancy of cattle rustling. For example, a recent report on the Star Newspaper (Etyang, 2019, July, 9th) implied that insecurity was a threat to education in Turkana County due to rampant cattle rustling across the West Pokot border which had led to killing of teachers, students and closure of some schools. As much as cattle rustling may have reduced significantly, its effect cannot be down played especially in the sub-counties where the practice is still rampant. This aspect requires more investigation through further research by use of different approaches.

The role of community defence against external aggression, cross border raids and conflicts has reduced significantly following reduction in cattle rustling. Only 25.7% of all respondents agreed (13.1% agreed, 12.6% strongly agreed) that that boys drop out of school to defend the community from external aggression. This implies that security has improved in West Pokot County and to a large extent security forces have been deployed by government to keep peace. This has relieved the men and by extension the boys from playing this role thus according them an opportunity to attend school. In the few areas where raids are still rampant however, the community often mobilizes young men including school going boys to protect the community. Such activities derail school attendance and often lead to school dropout by the boys involved. Firuli (2013) agrees that conflict over pasture and water is one of the factors that lead to fights and displacement of families dislodging pupils from school leading to drop out. Tungesvik (2010) notes that, generally, there is too much expectation on the boy child with regard to protective roles and that boys suffer more given their cultural preservation roles. A QASO observed;

> *Insecurity is still a main concern due to cross boarder conflicts especially with Baringo, Turkana and Elgeyo-marakwet counties. In these areas, families are almost always constantly moving and disrupting school programmes. Cases have been reported where schools have been attacked injuring pupils and staff leading to school closures for long periods.*

Although the findings of this study indicate that boys' protective role was not a key deterrent to boys' retention, it is important that it is addressed in the areas where insecurity is still high and boys are still engaged in this protective role so as to emancipate the boys affected. The government should improve security in the affected areas. In addition, the opinion of the majority of the teachers was that the government should increase boys primary boarding schools as well as boys rescue centres to keep the boys away from harmful cultural practices and enhance their retention.

A null hypothesis was tested to establish if there existed any significant influence of male gender roles on retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot county ($\alpha$=0.05 level of significance). The null hypothesis stated that:

**There is no statistically significant influence of the male gender roles on retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County**

Linear regression analysis was used to test the relationship between male gender roles and retention of boys. The results are summarized in Table 1, 2 and 3.

**Table 1:** Regression Test Results for Influence of gender roles on Boys' Retention in school

| R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| .411[a] | .169 | .168 | .429 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Male Gender Roles

A relationship between the two variables was reflected on an R of 0.411 and adjusted $R^2$ of 0.168. This showed that approximately 17% of the variance on retention was accounted for by its linear relationship with gender roles including rite of passage, herding, child labour, leadership, cattle rustling and community protection roles. The rest 83% was accounted for by other variables not in this model.

**Table 2:** Coefficients Test Results for Influence of Male Gender Roles on Boys' Retention

| | Unstandardized Coefficient | | Standardized Coefficient | T | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| Constant | 3.551 | 0.068 | | 52.184 | 0.000 |
| Gender Roles | 0.212 | 0.017 | 0.104 | 12. 534 | 0.004 |

Table 2 provides the information needed to predict boys' retention in primary school from gender roles. Gender roles contributes significantly to the model, this means that a unit increase in the gender roles will result in 0.212 influence on retention of boys in school. ($\beta$ = 0.212, t = 12.534, p < 0.05).

**Table 3:** ANOVA[a] Test Results for Influence of Male Gender Roles on Boys' Retention

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regression | 1.830 | 1 | 1.830 | 8.356 | 0.004[b] |
| Residual | 168.856 | 771 | .134 | | |
| Total | 170.686 | 772 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Retention
b. Predictors: (Constant), Male Gender Roles

ANOVA results in Table 3 indicate that the regression model applied was statistically significant to predict the boys' retention in school. This was supported by a probability (p) value of 0.004 at $\alpha$ = 0.05level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis adopted. These findings led to the conclusion that there was a significant influence of male gender roles on boys' retention. The findings of this study imply that failure to address the gender roles affecting boys will continue to undermine their retention in school. Therefore, the Ministry of education and the county government of West Pokot need to create awareness on the negative impact of the male gender roles on boys' retention and put measures in place in order to enhance it.

## 4. Conclusion

This study concludes that male gender roles influenced boys' retention to varying degrees. Rite of passage takes a lot of school time, the values inculcated during this period were contrary to school values and boys emerged from seclusion unwilling to take instruction from teachers leading to drop out. Herding/child labour led to dropout of boys to engage in income generating activities for their families and themselves, this role fell on the boys by virtue of their masculinity. Inheritance of family wealth by the boys misled them to believe on a secure future without schooling leading to drop out

## 5. Recommendations

To counter effects of child labour, the study suggests that the government through the ministry of education should come up with strategies to cushion and economically empower pastoral communities so that they can release the burden of labour from the children. This can be done through provision of markets for their livestock and livestock products.

The county government of West Pokot should work with religious organizations and relevant community-based organizations to strengthen the participation of boys in schools by replicating the models used successfully to improve girls' retention such as establishing boys rescue centres.

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