

**SOCIO-CULTURAL PRACTICES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON  
RETENTION OF BOYS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN WEST  
POKOT COUNTY, KENYA**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any university or institution for certification. This thesis has been complemented by referenced sources dully acknowledged. Where text, graphics, pictures or tables have been borrowed from other sources including the internet, these are specifically accredited and references cited using the current APA system and in accordance with anti-plagiarism regulations.

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## **DEDICATION**

To my dear mother Jepkemei Kamarei, who although she did not attain formal education has been a constant source of encouragement and support.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>ASALs</b>	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
<b>B.Ed.</b>	Bachelor Education
<b>CDE</b>	County Directors of Education
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention to End Discrimination against Women
<b>EAPRO</b>	East Asia Pacific Regional Office
<b>EFA</b>	Education for All
<b>FGM</b>	Female Genital Mutilation
<b>FPE</b>	Free primary Education
<b>GOK</b>	Government of Kenya
<b>GPI:</b>	Gender parity index
<b>IIEP</b>	International Institute of Education Planning
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>KCPE</b>	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
<b>KCSE</b>	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
<b>M.Ed.</b>	Master of Education
<b>MOEST</b>	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
<b>NGEC</b>	National Gender and Equality Commission
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental organizations
<b>PTE</b>	Primary Teacher Education
<b>QASO</b>	Quality Assurance and Standards officer
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SFP</b>	School Feeding Programme
<b>TSC</b>	Teachers Service Commission

<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programmes
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children Education Fund
<b>UPE:</b>	Universal Primary Education

## ABSTRACT

Retention of pupils in school is important in the attainment of educational goals. Although there has been concerted effort to ensure girls remain in school, there is a growing concern that retention of boys in primary schools particularly in pastoral regions in Kenya is low. If this remains unchecked it could lead to wastage of potential human capital as the boys would be unproductive economically, socially and politically. This study sought to address this concern by establishing the influence of socio-cultural practices on retention of boys in public primary schools in West Pokot County. The study objectives were to: establish the influence of male gender roles, establish the influence of institutional practices, determine the influence of parental support and to determine the influence of teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions on retention of boys in public primary schools in West Pokot County. The study was anchored on Tinto's theory of student retention and Connel's theory of hegemonic masculinity. This study employed Convergent Parallel Mixed Method approach in data collection and analysis. The target population was 8319 comprising of 5 sub county Quality Assurance and Standards officers (QASOs), 663 head teachers, 790 class teachers and 6861 class eight boys. Yamane formula was used to obtain a sample of 249 head teachers, 265 class-teachers and 378 class eight boys. Purposive sampling, cluster and simple random sampling were used to select the respondents. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from the teachers and pupils while interview schedules were used to collect qualitative data from the QASOs. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis while qualitative data were analysed through thematic content analysis according to the objectives of the study. The study found out that participation in rite of passage indoctrinated and kept boys away from school for long durations, inheritance of family wealth falsely promised a secure future for the boys while herding/child labour kept boys away from school leading to drop out. In addition, lack of male role models due to few male teachers in school, lack of parental support in terms of lack of follow up on academics, lack of commitment to boys schooling, negative attitude and perceived low returns from education stood out as key impediments to boys' retention. The study concludes that socio-cultural practices influenced boys' retention. This study recommends that school managements could engage alumni and successful professional in the county to mentor the boys. To change the negative parental attitude towards education, the county government could embark on sensitization programmes on the benefits of education to the boys. Additionally, the Teachers Service Commission could consider deliberate gender balancing in posting teachers to West Pokot County in order to address the shortage of male role models. Finally, the national government could replicate effective models employed in girl's campaigns such as construction of boys boarding schools and rescue centres, re-integration of boys back to school after dropout and affirmative action programmes in order to enhance boys' retention in public primary schools in West Pokot County.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This study sought to establish the influence of socio-cultural practices on retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County. This chapter covers the background to the study; the statement of the problem; the purpose of the study; the objectives and the hypothesis; significance of the study; limitations and delimitations of the study. It also presents the theoretical framework, conceptual framework and the operational definition of terms.

### **1.2 Background to the Study**

Gender equity in education has been a pertinent subject for a long time. Gender refers to the social construct of being either male or female. These social constructs determine the specific roles played by males and females as dictated by culture. Hofstede (2011) defines culture as a set of shared values, attitudes, goals and practices that characterize an organization. Culture is the way of life of a group of people and cultural practices define human interactions between different genders. According to Farland-Smith (2019) the culture in which a person learns and their daily social interactions determines to a large extent what is learnt and how it is learnt. Some cultures expect the learners to accept all the norms without question. Cultural institutions include the home, the school, media, sports and the arts. Hanlon (2017) agree that people's way of life and experiences are products of culture and they determine the actions and behavior of an individual.

Retention according to Sakwa (2012) involves staying in school until the end of a course while dropping out is departing prematurely before completion. Hence, dropouts are pupils who leave school before completing a given cycle of education in which they are enrolled. Worldwide, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), goal number 4 in particular, seeks to ensure that there is an inclusive, equitable, quality education and lifelong learning for all by the year 2030. The gender debate has always viewed the boys as the advantaged group and attention has for a long time been directed towards women and girls.

According to UNESCO (2015) many children who have been out of school are girls but recently issues have been raised concerning boys' retention in school. Torres (2011) agree that although girls constitute the majority of children out of school worldwide, in East Asia countries including the Philippines, boys account for the majority. An earlier study done by UNICEF (2009) on the rates of enrolment in Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines and Thailand had indeed revealed that boys' enrolment rates were significantly lower than those of girls.

There are some socio-cultural practices that have been found to interfere with boys' retention in school. In Thailand a study by Bailey (2012) on boys' poor performance pointed out that traditional and cultural attitudes and behaviours were associated with boys' drop-out from school. Among these attitudes and behaviours assigned by culture are the gender roles that have been found to be the main factor. In patriarchal societies men are regarded as being superior and the mentorship of boys in all fields is the preserve of male members of the society. Zyngier (2012) pointed out that culturally, as boys mature, they become

preoccupied with how to ensure that their behavior conforms to prevailing masculinity standards of their culture. To illustrate that, Bailey (2012) added that as boys approach adolescence, the peer group begins to have a stronger influence and eventually replaces the parents as the center of control. Reddock (2014) in a study on interrogating Caribbean masculinities in Jamaica revealed that for many teenage boys, the authority of the peer group surpasses the authority of the adults in the boy's lives. In another study in Jamaica by Figueroa (2010) on boys' underachievement, it was found out that boys aggressively asserted their masculinity by resisting school, developing disruptive behaviours and underrating certain subjects.

Besides gender roles assigned by culture, institutional practices have been found to play a key role in the retention of boys in school. Human interactions between learners and teachers and the interaction amongst learners themselves can influence the ability of boys to remain in school. A study by Kane (2018) on co-educational versus single schools in Melbourne Australia found that mixed schools helped to tone down the macho cultures within boys' schools. Nicaise (2010) also established that the interaction among learners in co-educational school activities coupled with favourable school practices and close interpersonal relationships were linked to school persistence for male learners in Thailand.

Moreover, other school characteristics come into play to influence pupils drop out. For instance, Goolamally and Ahmad (2010) observed that being studious and hardworking are considered feminine attributes. In a study by Kosciw, Diaz and Bartiewicz (2010) on factors contributing to hostile school environment in

America, they reveal that boys may view certain categories of learning activities such as reading as being feminine. Other studies have shown that the difference in academic performance between boys and girls may contribute to some extent to the drop out of boys. Garises (2013) analyzed grades covering 1.6m elementary, high school and university students and showed that girls get better grades by 6.3% compared to boys at all ages in most subjects including math and science. The identified gap in performance between boys and girls may contribute to some extent to the drop out of boys in cultures where boys are taught to be superior to girls.

Over time, role modelling has been found to play a significant role in school retention. As Dunne (2015) has argued, positive actions by role models produce constructive behaviours in children that cannot be inculcated in the classroom. Indeed, it is recognized that those personalities of social imminence to the students such as parents, guardians and relatives have the greatest model effect for them. As a matter of fact, teachers can be considered to have near to the same social closeness to the children as the parents. Subsequently, when children are faced with earnest role models, they will latch onto them and their ideals and emulate them (Farland-Smith 2014). Farland-Smith study further emphasized that role models of similar gender have a greater influence than those of opposite gender. Results of the UNICEF (2009) report nevertheless indicated that at the lower education levels, female teachers were more than the male teachers. The dominance of female teachers at that level of education exposes boys to inadequate role models in their early years of schooling. Lack of role models for the boys in the schools has been compounded by qualified male teachers who

leave the education sector to pursue better-paying jobs. Lack of role models exposes the boys to seek role models outside the school and the boys may be lured out of school in the process (Goolamally and Ahmad 2010).

Parental support has also been associated with children retention in school. A study by Nyarko and Vorgelegt (2011) established that children whose parents actively participate in their education have positive attitude towards school. This was found to have encouraged the learners to actively participate in school enhancing their retention. Rogers (2012) likewise agree that parents influence their children's academic outcomes by checking their homework, reading together and following up on performance. In that context, lack of parental support may send the wrong signal to the boys that their parents do not value education and may inform their decision to withdraw from school.

Some parents may encourage their boys to engage in child labour. Child labour has been a persistent issue for many countries as far as retention of pupils in school is concerned. Many children are withdrawn from school to participate in activities that contribute to household economies. ILO (2018) defines child labour as work that is disadvantageous to children by robbing them of their childhood, self-respect and potential. The report approximates that about 152 million school age children are involved in child labour globally. Work affects children education by denying them the chance to attend school, compelling them to drop out of school or exposing them to the contending pressures of work and school. In a study in Ethiopia, Boyden, Heissler, Porter and Zharkevich (2016) found out that for many children the choice is between how much time and effort

should be allocated between school and work rather than choosing between school and work. Still in Ethiopia, Crivello and Gaag (2016) on their study on boys and young men negotiating gender, poverty and social worth showed that education was not a priority but it was often tailored around household or paid labour. Boyden et al (2016) further notes that the decision to engage in child labour depend on the kind of work available at hand and the apparent returns to education. This shows that education for boys can be sacrificed for immediate gratification from child labour.

It has also been noted that the perception that boys are superior to girls may also sometimes work to the detriment of the boys when it comes to retention. For example, in Lesotho, Abagi (2013) found that men and by extension boys were considered heads of the families and the sole decision makers. This practice was entrenched in customs, common law and national constitution. Abagi explained that this recognition puts boys on a high pedestal such that education to them is seen as secondary. As a result, the number of girls in schools in Botswana was higher than those of boys. Contrarily, in the out of school programmes the number of male learners was higher than that of girls. Still in Botswana, UNICEF (2015) study findings indicated that some boys were taken out of school or denied entry to school altogether to become cattle herders, a task that fell on them by virtue of masculinity, stereotype and culture. In addition, Mungoo (2017) includes indiscipline, low motivation and hostile learning environment as key contributors to dropout of boys in schools in that country. With regard to socio-economic and socio-cultural factors, Hari (2011) and Justino (2012) concur that

child labour, poverty, displacement, nomadism, disability and ethnicity are barriers to boys' retention.

The problem of retention of children in school in pastoralist communities has further been compounded by warring communities due to cattle rustling. In northern Nigeria, Olaniyan and Yahaya (2016) noted that pastoralist culture and tradition was one of the major reasons of cattle rustling. It encourages cattle rustling as a way of replenishing stock after a long drought. Some traditions confer cattle husbandry to the nomads and fight against non-pastoral groups who dare to rare cattle. By virtue of their masculinity boys are withdrawn from school to participate in the raids. Olaniyan and Yahaya (2016) further state that as the herders migrate from northern Nigeria towards the South in search of pasture, their livestock are stolen by Boko Haram militia who not only recruit and indoctrinate the young boys but also damage schools making it difficult for students and staff to continue with learning.

In Kenya, the challenges facing boys' retention in school have not gone unnoticed. Scholars, popular media, and the general public are beginning to notice this development. The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA, 2016) reported that while 679,000 boys enrolled in standard one at the onset of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003, the number of boys dropped to 453,300 by the time they were in class eight in 2010. The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC, 2015) reported that there was a general observation in all the counties that the boy-child encounters challenges that tend to hamper their enjoyment of opportunities for advancement more so in education. Cases of boys' dropout

continue to be reported in various parts of the country (Njuguna and Muchanje, 2019; Memusi 2017, Nyaboke et al 2011; Wanjala 2018; Emuria 2016). The Standard Newspaper (Njiru, 2017, October 4<sup>th</sup>) reported 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 interviewed explained that, boys were more affected because of their choice to take care of their parents' cattle with the hope of eventually inheriting from the parents.

The school environment has been touted to determine school persistence and within the school are rules and regulations that must be observed by the learners. The mentality of male superiority is perpetuated in schools and boys may find it difficult to adhere to school rules when enforced by female teachers thus dropping out of school. Some studies have pointed out that boys and girls are punished differently when they flout school rules. For instance, Chege (2009) observed that there is a difference in the way boys and girls are treated in schools. While girls are more frequently praised than boys, boys are punished more harshly than girls when they commit an offence. Teachers also see girls as being well behaved and serious with their studies while boys are viewed as being disruptive, easily distracted and attention seekers. This implies that there are higher chances of boys engaging in indiscipline which could lead to their drop out.

Obae (2010) lamented that in some schools, teachers do not create a friendly atmosphere where boys can interact freely with them and share their concerns. Societal perception of boys as being superior to girls, complicates it further for

the boy. For instance, Garises (2013) alludes that boys may feel challenged when girls perform better than them in class, they may take this as a threat to their masculinity and yet research has shown that girls in general do perform better in academics than boys.

In West Pokot County, cultural activities comprising mainly of pastoralism, cattle rustling for restocking, elaborate rites of passage for boys, *moranism*, protection from external aggression and practice of patriarchy may appeal to the boys thus luring them out of school. West Pokot County Integrated Development Plan (2018-2020) indicate that insecurity and inadequate teachers are some of the challenges facing primary education. Insecurity in West Pokot is rampant across all its borders. A report on the Star Newspaper (Etyang, 2019, July, 4<sup>th</sup>) implied that the insecurity was a threat to education in Turkana County due to rampant cattle rustling across the West Pokot border, the alumni of Katilu Boys' High School reported that this had led to killing of teachers, students and closure of some schools. They called upon the government to beef up security as it was a threat to schooling.

Farland- Smith (2019) observes that cultures have censorship roles that tend to protect the moral and attitudinal knowledge of their members. Among the Pokot, Kurgat (2017) inform that those who play censorship role are the traditional leaders, fortune tellers, astrologers, overseers, clan elders and *morans*. They are reported to have a negative attitude towards formal education. For example, Koringura (2004) revealed that the traditional leaders viewed formal education negatively as an agent of destruction of the community structures when it was

first introduced in the region by colonialists. Although culture is dynamic, not much has changed in Pokot culture since then. As Farland -Smith (2019) pointed out, socio-cultural environments encompass both the home and the school and noted that culture has a strong bearing on what goes on within the school. In West Pokot County, there has been a decrease in the enrolment of boys as they progress from one class to another in primary schools. The greatest decrease is experienced between class seven and eight. Table 1.1 shows the enrolment trends of boys for the last five years. The bold figures indicate the trend in enrolment from class four to eight for the 2019 standard eight class.

**Table 1.1: Boys' Enrolment Trends from Class 1-8 in West Pokot County**

<b>Class</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
Class one	13538	14410	15461	16324	16388
Class two	13212	13722	14185	14902	15599
Class three	12963	12495	13239	13644	14462
Class four	<b>12536</b>	12250	11975	12711	13469
Class five	11070	<b>11987</b>	11541	11297	12019
Class six	10082	10541	<b>11079</b>	10059	10974
Class seven	9048	9260	9334	<b>9794</b>	9998
Class eight	6248	6408	6589	6661	<b>6861</b>

Source: West Pokot County Education Office (2019)

The statistics on Table 1.2 indicate a trend in West Pokot County where the enrolment of the 2019 class eight boys dwindled as they progressed from class one to class eight. The dropout rate was 4.4% in class four in 2015, 7.6% in class five in 2016, 11.6 % in class six in 2017 and spikes to 29.9% in class seven in 2018 as they progressed to class eight. In total, 45% of boys in the 2015 cohort

had dropped out by the time they were in class eight. That percentage was too high considering the government effort on free primary education, non-repetition of classes and 100% transition. Munene and Ruto (2014) noted that boys were slowly slipping into the position girls were decades ago in terms of school retention. It is against this backdrop that this study investigated the socio-cultural practices and their influence on retention of boys in public primary schools in West Pokot County in order to propose measures that can be applied to enhance retention of boys in school.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The reviewed studies indicate an emerging trend around the world concerning boys' low retention in schools that is worrying. In Kenya, there has been concerted effort by the government through the constitution and policies such as Free Primary Education (FPE), gender mainstreaming, affirmative-action, advocacy as well as intense lobbying by Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to increase retention of girls in schools. That has produced results over time. Unlike the girls, emerging low rates of retention of boys associated with socio-cultural practices in public primary schools in arid, semi-arid lands and pastoral regions has not been given sufficient attention.

West Pokot County in particular, is known to be rich in social-cultural practices some of which could be detrimental to boys' retention. Current statistics in the county indicate that there is a decline in the number of boys enrolled as they progress from one class to another with class seven to class eight experiencing high rates of dropout. If this trend continues unchecked, the future economic,

political and social productivity of the men in West Pokot County will be jeopardised. Therefore, this study set out to examine the influence of socio-cultural practices principally, the influence of: male gender roles, institutional practices, parental support and cultural perceptions on retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

This study aimed at establishing the influence of socio-cultural practices on retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County, with the intention of proposing suggestions which can be utilised by stakeholders to inform decisions on enhancing retention of boys in school.

#### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To establish the influence of the male gender roles on retention of boys in public primary schools in West Pokot County.
2. To establish the influence of institutional practices on retention of boys in public primary schools in West Pokot County.
3. To determine the influence of parental support on retention of boys in public primary schools in West Pokot County.
4. To determine the influence of teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions on retention of boys in public primary schools in West Pokot County, Kenya.

## **1.6 Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were stated and tested:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no statistically significant relationship between male gender roles and retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no statistically significant relationship between institutional practices and retention of boys in primary school in West Pokot County.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no statistically significant relationship between parental support and retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no statistically significant relationship between teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions and retention of boys in primary school in West Pokot County

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The study findings may be useful to the national government as well as the county governments of West Pokot County in addressing issues and challenges of retention of boys in basic education. The findings generated vital information on the enrolment of boys in primary school. That could be useful to the national government in assessing the gains in boys' retention in relation to some of its policies like free primary education policy, school feeding programme, mobile schools' initiative, gender policy and 100% transition policy. Additionally, the Ministry of Education could utilize the information generated to address gender inequalities in primary schools in relation to boys. This may help in achieving aspects of SDGs particularly SDG number four on inclusive, equitable, quality education and lifelong learning for all by the year 2030.

The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) being the institution concerned with teacher management in Kenya, may find the information on the effect of teacher characteristics on retention of boys in school in West Pokot County useful. This could assist them in looking into gender balancing during teacher posting decisions.

Other stakeholders such as NGOs and civil rights bodies could also use the information obtained from this research to come up with programmes that could help drum up support and address retention of boys in education. This could be done through sensitizing the Pokot community on the importance of boy-child education and how to improve the low retention rates of boys in the county. The school management may find the study findings useful in devising ways of mitigating the school related factors that hamper retention of boys in schools. Other researchers interested in pursuing studies on boys' retention in education may find the results of this study informative.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

The study was carried out in West Pokot County, some sub-counties particularly Pokot North and Pokot Central were prone to conflicts and posed a challenge on safety of the research team. Due to that, the researcher liaised with the local administrators such as Chiefs and local community elders to provide security during data collection. Additionally, the local education offices provided a local education officer as a guide to provide logistics on accessing schools on the ground.

Secondly, some respondents particularly the boys were sceptical about providing information freely. This is because information on culture is quite sensitive and confidential due to the socialization the boys get from the community. To overcome this, the researcher assured the respondents of anonymity and confidentiality and also that the responses would not be used against them in anyway.

The third limitation was the rough terrain in most parts of the county. The researcher made prior arrangements to mitigate against any difficulties on access and travel logistics that were encountered during data collection by sourcing the most suitable means of transport. The study coincided with time for the long rains. That hindered access to some areas making it inaccessible by motorised means. With the help of the guide, the researcher and the research assistants trekked to such areas.

### **1.9 Delimitations of the Study**

This study was carried out in West Pokot County focusing on socio-cultural practices of the Pokot community only. Hence, caution should be exercised when generalizing the research findings to other counties and other communities with different socio-cultural practices. Secondly, the study excluded girls because a lot of research had already been done in relation to girls' school retention in West Pokot. Thirdly, the study was carried out in public primary schools only. Boys' retention in the private primary schools and secondary schools may be different from that of public primary schools. Lastly, the study employed the use of

Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods approach in data collection and analysis.  
The use of a different methodology may yield varied outcomes.

### **1.10 Assumptions of the Study**

The study was based on the following assumptions:

- i. That in West Pokot county strong socio-cultural practices of the Pokot people are still upheld.
- ii. That the respondents of the study in the selected schools were well versed with the socio-cultural practices within the county.
- iii. That the participants provided truthful responses.

### **1.11 Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by two theories: Vincent Tinto (1993) Theory of Student Retention and Connell's (1987) Theory of Hegemonic Masculinity.

#### **1.11.1 Tinto's Theory of Student Retention**

This theory explains students' integration process and retention. The theory emphasizes two main issues that interact to bring about students' retention which are academic integration and social integration. The theory states that as both academic and social integration increase, the commitment of students to their education also increases (Tinto, 1993). Beans (2009) concurs that negative interactions and experiences tend to reduce integration which ultimately leads to student drop out. The theory maintains that pupils enrol in an institution from different social backgrounds with different intentions and commitments.

Intentions reflect both aspiration and expectations for the future while commitments refer to the readiness to work toward the accomplishment of their goals (Tinto, 1993). Only students who are very devoted are keen to commit themselves fully to the achievement of their goals while those lacking motivation will be incapable of committing themselves fully to the attainment of such goals. The logical deduction in this study is that pupils who perceive education as important are likely to remain in school in spite of the prevailing socio-cultural practices. This, however, does not guarantee that all pupils will persist and not drop out because individual's educational experiences shown by academic and social integration, frequently alter intentions and commitments. Kuh and Love (2000) further expound that, the extent to which pupils are integrated is determined by their academic achievements, their perception of the worth of their education and the type of interaction they have with their peers and staff.

According to Tinto (1993) the external environment is able to alter the pupils' intentions and commitments throughout the learning experience. For instance, the institutional practices within the school are affected by the social practices inherent in the community. In this context, boys may expect their culture to be respected by the school and failure to which they may view school as going against their expectation. Moreover, when the family systems provide inadequate support, it increases the pupils' intentions to drop out.

Besides, boys' engagement in roles assigned by the community such as herding and nomadism has a strong influence on their intentions to withdraw when they are unable to adjust to the school environment. According to Beans (2009)

retention is a dynamic process that depends on a series of family, interpersonal, academic and environmental pushes and pulls that shape student learning and persistence. Nevertheless, the central idea in Tinto's theory is that the decision by a student to persist or drop out is determined by their extent of social integration. Tinto's (1993) model is relevant because it focuses on both institutional factors and social factors that shape students' retention. This study focused on retention in relation to the socio-cultural practices within the school (institutional practices and teachers and learners' perceptions) and in the community (parental support and male gender roles).

### **1.11.2 Connell's Theory of Hegemonic Masculinity**

Connell (1987) came up with theory of hegemonic masculinity which refers to the existence of a culturally acceptable and ideal standard of male conduct. The theory points out that hegemonic masculinity is characterized by such behaviours as strength, aggressiveness, self-drive, self-reliance and ambition which are celebrated in males but discouraged in females. This expectation impact on the attitude of parents and teachers on how boys should be handled and how they are expected to behave both at home and school. Connell further argues that hegemonic masculinity is closely associated with the subordination of women (Connell, 1987).

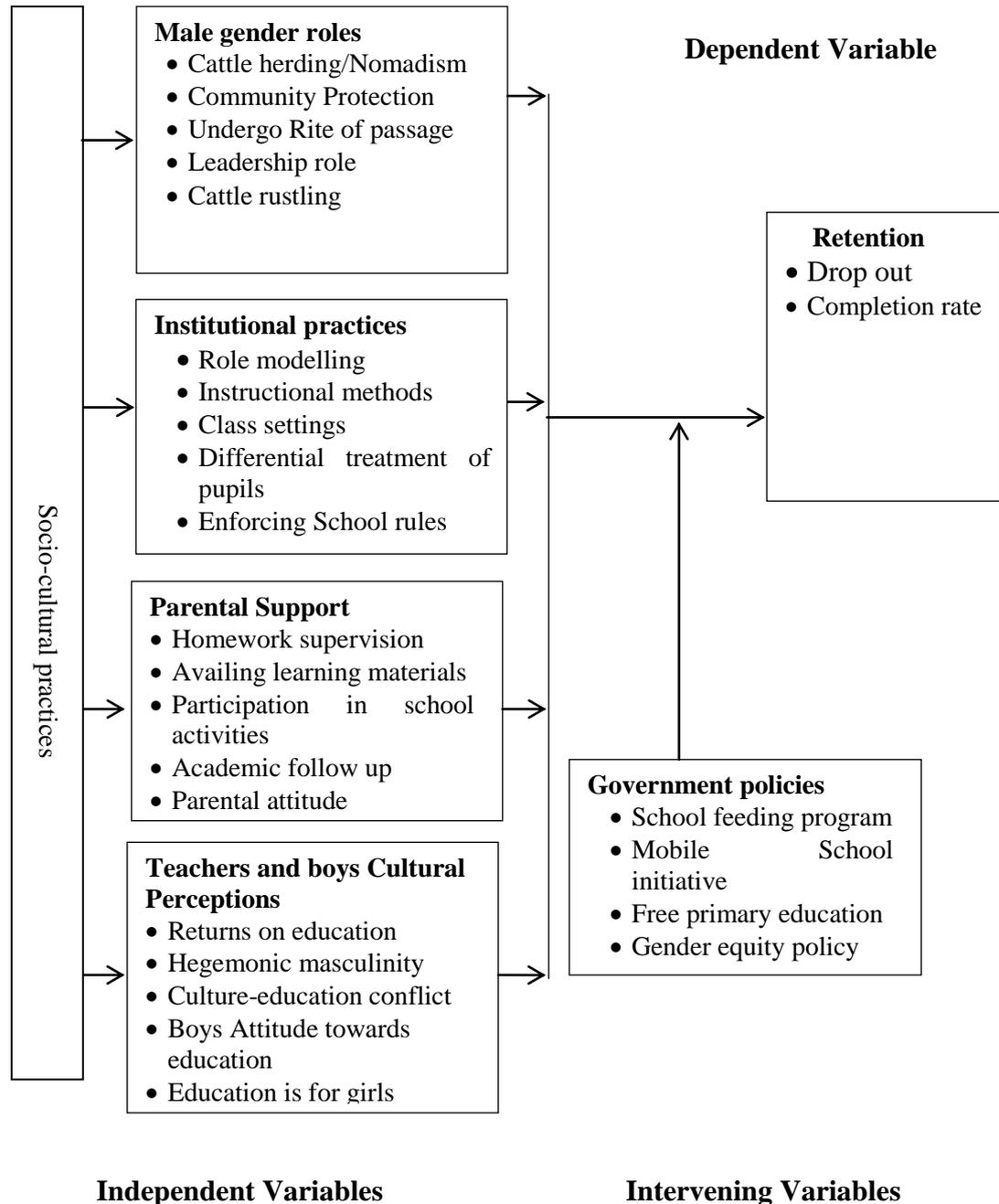
The theory was thus advanced in an effort to give an explanation of the gender roles and patriarchal power in social change. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) explain that the concept of hegemonic masculinity has considerably changed recent thinking about social hierarchy, gender, patriarchy, and sociological

models of gender. Hegemonic practices of maleness are those ways in which accepted modes of masculinity are produced, practiced and supported. In West Pokot County boys undergo circumcision as a rite of passage into adulthood, it is during the seclusion period after circumcision that indoctrination on gender roles occurs. The patriarchal power exercised by the boys after rite of passage shapes their perspective about gender dynamics at home and school. This becomes a benchmark for the socialization of boys in primary schools.

Hegemonic masculinity theory was useful for this study in understanding the behaviour that boys portray after undergoing rite of passage as well as understanding the gender dynamics of classroom interaction between boys and female teachers and their influences on boys' retention in school. Hegemonic masculinity theory was also applicable in explaining the push and pull forces experienced by boys in primary schools as they navigate through and conform to the expectations of both the school and the community.

## 1.12 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between the study variables.



**Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework**

Figure 1.1 shows how retention of boys can be influenced by socio-cultural practices. The socio-cultural practices conceptualized include male gender roles assigned to boys, the institutional practices within the school environment, parental support system for boys' education and teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions. In the context of this study, the male gender roles which were examined included: herding, community protection, elaborate rite of passage, cattle rustling and leadership roles. These roles had been indicated by literature reviewed to influence boys' withdrawal from school as they could drop out to perform these roles in the community.

The institutional practices such as role modelling, class setting, instructional methods, differential treatment of boys and girls and rigid enforcement of school rules were also looked into. These practices are either directly or indirectly influenced by the community way of life and could inform boys decisions on drop out. For instance, in the Pokot community, men are regarded as superior to the women as a result boy may undermine the authority of female teachers leading to indiscipline and drop out of school. In addition, rigid enforcement of rules was found to challenge boys' authority and some boys could exert their masculinity by disregarding teachers' instructions.

Parental support also influences the retention of boys in school either positively or negatively. The parental support examined in this study included: Parental attitude towards education, parental involvement in school activities, academic follow-ups, provision of learning materials and homework supervision motivate the boys to remain in school while lack of the same leads to dropout.

Cultural perceptions are held beliefs and expectation of people. In the context of this study the teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions included: perceived benefits of education, perceived parental attitude towards education of boys, the perceived conflict between education and culture, acquired hegemonic masculinities after rite of passage and the perception that education is for girls. These perceptions informed the decision of the parents to keep the boys in school or not. The perceptions and attitude of the teacher towards the boys informs their decision to motivate the learner to remain in school or not while the learners' choice to remain in school and complete the school cycle is informed by their regard for education.

The dependent variable was retention. Retention was assessed by looking at class drop-out rate and completion rates. High number of dropouts indicated low retention while high completion rates signified high retention rates. The intervening variables were government policies aimed at promoting retention of pupils in school such as school feeding programme, gender equity policy, Free Primary Education policy, 100% transition policy and mobile school initiative. The intervening variables were held constant in this study as they were neither studied nor data collected to analyze them. In spite of the effort by the government, the problem of boys' retention in schools has not been fully addressed. Statistics show continued high dropout rates which has hampered completion of primary school by boys in West Pokot County.

### **1.13 Operational Definition of Terms**

**Boy-child** refers to a male child of school going age in standard eight also referred to in this study as pupil.

**Class-teacher** refers to the teacher assigned to class eight who is in charge of managing all the class functions including teaching, discipline, class attendance and keeps all the class enrolment registers and academic records.

**Completion** refers to the state of a pupil going through the primary education course and sitting for the class eight KCPE Examinations.

**Cultural perception** refers to the way in which education is regarded, understood and interpreted by the teachers and pupils in relation to the Pokot culture

**Dropout rate** refers to the rate of pupils withdrawing from primary school education level before sitting for KCPE national examinations.

**Enrolment** refers to official registration into a school as a pupil. Thus, the number of pupils registered in a school at any given time.

**Institutional Practices** refers to the social practices/ activities within the school environment that limit or improve the retention of pupils in primary education.

**Male gender roles** refer to culturally assigned roles and activities that boys engage in by virtue of being male in West Pokot County for example herding.

**Parental support** refers to ability to provide both material and moral support needed by the boys to remain in school. For example, learning materials, academic follow-up, participation in school activities and positive attitude.

**Public primary school** refers to a primary school that is owned and funded by the national government.

**Pupil attendance** refers to both daily going to school of a pupil and being available in class to learn.

**Repetition** refers to a situation where a learner does not progress to the next class and remains in the same class that they were the previous year.

**Retention** refers to a state where enrolled school pupils progress from pre-primary through to class eight without dropping out of school.

**Socio-Cultural Practices** encompasses the beliefs, traditions and behaviour held in common by the Pokot community. In this study, socio-cultural practices included male gender roles, institutional practices, parental support practices and perceptions of learners and teachers influencing boys' retention.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a review of related literature on the influence of socio-cultural practices on retention of boys in schools. Guided by the study objectives, the review has been organised into the following sub titles: socio-cultural practice in context; male gender roles and retention of boys in primary school; institutional practices and retention of boys in primary school; parental support and its influence on retention of boys in primary school and teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions influence on retention of boys in school. This chapter ends with a sub heading on the summary of the literature reviewed and knowledge gaps identified from the reviewed literature.

#### **2.2 Socio-Cultural Practices in Context**

Several scholars have defined socio-cultural practices as behaviours and way of life that individual members of a given society exhibit for example, language, aesthetics, religion, values, attitudes, social organizations and roles in the community (Kibiego 2010; Figueroa 2010). Kibiego (2010) further observes that peoples' ways of life have a direct or indirect influence on formal education. In the Commonwealth Caribbean countries, Figueroa (2010) found out that social class boundaries were deeply entrenched in the society. Due to the social class the minority indigenous communities who appeared at the lowest rungs of the social ladder lacked access to schools with quality curriculum. As a result, they had the highest rates of dropout.

Socio-cultural philosophers argue that people cannot be considered in isolation from their social and historical backgrounds. For example, Vygotsky (1998) Social learning theory explains the dynamic interdependence between an individual's learning process and their culture. The theory emphasizes that learning is grounded in social relations which are products of socio-cultural development of an actively involved individual. Therefore, school retention cannot be examined without consideration of the culture of the individual and social cultural practices of the communities surrounding the school environment.

Cultural practices are so specific to a group of people such that some behaviours that are abhorred by one culture may be approved and celebrated by another culture. Hanlon (2017) supports this statement and explains that ancient Greeks build bravery and toughness in their boys by sending them to deliberately rob their neighbours. It was a serious crime for a child to be caught stealing. So, the boys would be reprimanded not because of theft but for allowing themselves to be caught. Thus, some cultures regard aggressive child militancy behaviours as acts of bravery, self-defence and toughness associated with maleness. Parents therefore train their boys to be rough and aggressive in order to survive in the event of violent ethnic clashes. This holds true for most pastoralist communities as Emuria (2016) points out that aggressive and militant behaviour exhibited by men and boys is celebrated among the pastoralists. Militancy and aggressiveness are not in line with school culture which could make the school environment unfavourable for such boys leading to their dropout.

When studying socio-cultural factors influencing retention of boys in schools in West Pokot County, the background of how the Pokot people have managed to maintain their culture amidst external influence needs to be considered. Kurgat (2017) presents some insights into the Pokot's strong cultural structures by pointing out that the community is regimented into age groups which are supervised by elders who are believed to intervene between man and their gods.

According to Cheromoi (2019) the Pokot elders were at the forefront in objecting formal education when it was first introduced to the county by the colonial government. They are recorded to have symbolically 'buried the pen' to signify their resistance to formal education which according to them had come to destroy their culture. Koech (2015) observes that, the elders are revered by the Pokot community and their word is taken to be law. Parents are bound to obey them and may not support their boys in attaining formal education if the elders feel that it alienates the children from their culture. The Pokot are a highly patriarchal pastoralist community who place high premium on male gender. Boys are a high-stake investment in terms of social capital and continuity of the community above everything else. Based on the background literature the current study sought to determine the magnitude of the influence that the socio-cultural practices have on retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County.

### **2.3 Male Gender Roles and Retention of Boys in Primary Schools**

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. Undarya and Enkhjargal (2011) observe that this socialization is continuously reinforced into adulthood and shapes the behaviour of the children. Human beings are social in nature and strive to belong and seek for endorsement by observing and conforming to the social and cultural standards within their society (Eagly 2014). The understanding of gender specific roles shapes the world view of children as they grow and conceptualize the world around them including school attendance and retention.

Several studies Beans (2009), Kane (2018), Garises (2013) and Hanlon (2017) have argued that cultural practices and traditional values influence retention of students in schools. Cultural factors may cause families to differ in the priority they place on schooling of the children, and because boys contribute more to household economies through child labour, they are likely to be denied access to schooling (Kane 2018). Bahago (2011) opines that boys' school retention may be deterred in some cultures due to numerous cultural expectations and duties assigned to them by the community by virtue of their masculinity. Bahago further argues that some communities like nomadic pastoralists resist change, they view education and westernization as destructive agents to their culture.

A survey was carried out in Bangladesh by Sabates (2010) to find out the main causes of dropout of boys in schools between 2007 and 2009. The study targeted 9,000 boys aged 6 to 15 from six districts in Bangladesh. The findings suggested that there were more similarities in the causes of dropout among urban males compared to similarities among urban and rural population of students. The

differences were attributed to attachment to cultural dispositions by the rural population compared to the urban populations. This means that the rural populations were more prone to cultural inclinations in form of ethnicity and religious adherences as compared to the urban population. These cultural inclinations predisposed the boys to drop out of school. Similarly, Zapata (2011) carried out a survey of 2,500 Bolivian women to establish why girls drop out of school. It was discovered that ethnicity which is an aspect of culture appeared to be a key factor in explaining gender disparities in education. Culture is diverse and cultural practices are specific to a group of people. This means that dropout rates may be different depending on the specific ethnic group and their cultural disposition.

Mbekenga (2013) investigated the impact of gender roles on female students' retention in primary education in Mugeta and Kunzugu wards in Bunda district in Uganda. The study found out that responsibilities are distributed based on gender and that these gender stereotypes penetrated into school practices such as fetching water and firewood for the teachers by girls while boys till school land. Besides, the study also noted that cultural practices and social values such as betrothal and initiation ceremonies, teenage pregnancies and early marriages led low school attendance and dropout of girls. Thus, the study concluded that gender stereotyped roles, caused by cultural practices and values are responsible for poor retention of girls in primary education.

Similarly, Sichinga (2005) carried out an investigation into the major causes of low enrolment of Yao girls in secondary schools in Malawi and found out that

traditional practices such as rites of passage and early marriages were identified as some of the causes of poor enrolment and school dropout of girls. Unlike the Ugandan and Malawian studies which focused on girls' dropout and found some negative cultural influence, the current study focused on boys' retention in one of the counties in Kenya.

Herding is a common activity among pastoralists, it is a masculine activity that is bestowed upon the boys and denies many boys opportunities to access formal education. It may also lead to drop out for those already enrolled. Experiences on herding and boys schooling from Lesotho are not any different. Pitikoe (2018) carried out a study entitled 'Turning the herding experience into a learning opportunity'. The study targeted 22000 Basotho herders, 30 herders were snowballed and data was collected through qualitative research by way of interviews. The findings in part revealed that boys school attendance suffered due to herding. However, there was extensive informal education going on during herding. The study recommended the integration of formal schooling into herding experiences of the Basotho boys. Also, a study by Amma (2010) on impact of child labour on access and participation in education among pastoralists in Tanzania showed that herding was a key activity that kept boys away from school. In addition, the study revealed that boys failed to attend school during prolonged droughts as they were engaged in the search for food for themselves and pasture and water for the animals.

In West Pokot County, Rotich (2015) notes that there are many young people aged between 10 and 19 years who are engaged in child labour. They undertake

various economic activities such as herding, hawking, and mining so as to meet their basic needs and those of their families. To address these impediments to boys' retention, Justino (2012) suggests that educational policies should be aligned to economic policies such as poverty reduction strategies and improvement of food security as this will reduce the need for child labour.

Traditionally, the Pokot are pastoralist and among many pastoralists communities cattle rustling has been practiced since time immemorial for wealth accumulation, bride price and restocking of animals lost to droughts or diseases. A study conducted by Cheromoi (2019) on effects of cattle rustling on access and participation in primary education in Alale Division of Pokot North Sub-county established that cattle rustling contributed to high rate of pupil dropout. The study showed that cattle rustling led to displacement of many families, pupils and teachers and led to closure of learning institutions. Thus, some boys could drop out of school to participate in cattle raids while others migrated with their parents to safer grounds disrupting the continuity of learning. Cheromoi explains that raiding among men and teenage boys is encouraged by culture due to the high regard with which the Pokot hold their cattle. Boys must have their own cattle to be used for their initiation into leadership (*moranism*) during a rite of passage known as the *sapana*. The boys will not hesitate at any opportunity to acquire cattle even if it is through cattle rustling. Cattle are very important for the Pokot community not only for economic and social prowess but also spiritual in that they are used in rituals to appease the gods during various ceremonies.

Moru (2010) observe that the male members of the Pokot pastoralist community have used the age-old tradition of cattle rustling and violence to acquire livestock, dominate over grazing land and increase their wealth and social prowess for a long time. Some studies have indicated that cattle rustling practice has metamorphosed into an economic activity for elite businessmen who provide market for the stolen livestock. (Kumssa, 2012; Leff, 2012; Mahmoud, 2011; Njiru, 2012; Omolo,2010). Mkutu (2017) noted that cattle rustling had become more violent, complicated and more destructive due to the wide spread use of illegal fire arms. Such activities kept some boys out of school because they take up these roles by virtue of their masculinity.

Unlike the literature reviewed which focused on girls and other practices other than gender roles, the current study focussed on influence of male gender roles such as engagement in rite of passage, leadership role of boys, herding, cattle raiding and community defence roles on retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County.

#### **2.4 Institutional Practices and Retention of Boys in Primary School**

It has been noted that boys in general are affected by their masculinities in school as they navigate the educational process. Boys and girls are affected differently by the school environment and school practices in their pursuit of education. In comparison to girls, Anderson (2015) explains that girls score relatively higher grades than boys in school, on the other hand, the boys are held back in class more, drop out more and exhibit more behavioural problems leading to their suspension. Zyngier (2012) reiterates that learning as a process depends on

learning environment and schools which are more engaging arouse more interest and positive attitude of boys towards education.

The retention of boys in school until completion will depend on how conducive learning environment is. This includes both the physical environment as well as interpersonal relationships within the school. Dean (2016) posits that availability of adequate school infrastructure and learning materials are quite crucial for promoting learning. The introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) increased school enrollment and stretched the learning facilities to the limit. Mbilinyi and Omari (2010) explain that as a result of high enrollment following the FPE, classrooms were jammed, there was shortage of teaching staff coupled with inadequate desks and textbooks. The congestion and lack of learning materials could discourage learning leading to drop out. A study conducted in Bangladesh by Nkinyangi (2014) show that teaching and learning materials, school infrastructure, the quality of teachers, proximity to school and a rigid and congested curriculum significantly influenced retention of learners in school. This shows that the school environment contributes a great deal to the continued stay of boys in school or their dropout.

Too often, schools themselves hurt the cause of boys' education. Several studies have shown that there are more female than male teachers in many primary schools. This skewness in teachers' gender may impair the world view of boys who may view education as a female agenda. The absence of male role models in schools has been cited as a contributor to low retention of boys. For example, Plummer (2015) observed that low rate of retention of boys in the Caribbean was

attributed to lack of male presence in school as well as the home caused by an increase in single parent households mainly headed by women. Similarly, in Guyana, Hunte (2017) pointed out that when boys lacked proper role models to look up to, they sought and emulated undesirable role models at home or in school. That resulted in anti-schooling attitudes in some boys which inhibited their academic progress leading to drop out due to frustration.

Figuroa (2010) notes that in Jamaica women fail to instill discipline on the boys because they believe it is a preserve of the male figures in the society. This has disadvantaged boys by permitting the boys to explore negative masculine identities undeterred. Kelleher (2012) opined that when boys lacked male role models in school, they developed an anti-schooling attitude that prevented their educational success. The negative attitude has the potential to lead to dropout of boys.

In addition, some boys may view schooling as a feminine venture. Salem (2011) showed that male students who felt less connected with and involved in school activities and could view other elements of their lives as more important than school related tasks. This leads to the boys devoting less time to their studies and becoming more involved in other activities outside school. Crivello and Gaag (2016) point out that male teachers are often complicit in constructing cultures that support hegemonic masculinities in school and feel compelled to legitimize the cultures that devalues learning as feminine. Admassie (2013) explain that, stereotypes are reinforced at school and schools continue to play a key role in supporting and perpetuating gender role labelling and chauvinist concepts in the

textbooks and learning materials. Gender insensitive text books and curriculum play a critical role in underscoring gender stereotypes and transmitting discrimination among learners. These stereotypes depict boys as superior and the boys may feel inadequate and frustrated when they fail to measure up to the stated expectations which may lead to their dropout.

In Malaysia, Goolamally and Ahmad (2010) conducted a study on why boys do poorly in school and found out that one of the main reasons for the low retention of boys was that they do not like school and viewed schooling as a feminine activity. It has been revealed that when girls perform better than boys in mixed classrooms, the boys feel that their masculinity is challenged and this may frustrate them into dropping out. Proponents of single-sex classrooms posit that boys and girls could benefit from separate academic instruction. A report by Anderson (2015) in America revealed that single sex schools were beginning to gain popularity, it showed that in 2004, there were 34 single sex schools and by 2014 the number had increased twenty-five-fold to 850 nationwide. The study explained that same-sex classroom relieved pressure on low performing students particularly boys of colour and learners from low-income families. On the other hand, proponents of co-educational schools' advocate for mixed classrooms.

A study on co-educational versus single schools in Melbourne Australia, Ribeiro (2019) revealed that mixed schools helped to tone down the macho cultures within boys' schools. The study showed that when boys are left on their own unchecked, they can incubate hyper-masculine or misogynistic cultures. Nora (2016) further established that the interaction among learners in co-educational

school activities coupled with favourable school practices and close interpersonal relationships were linked to school persistence for male learners. The current study sought to establish whether the mixed schools or the single sex school sufficed in enhancing boys' retention in West Pokot county amidst the socio-cultural practices.

A study carried out by Ouma (2016) looked into fifty years of boy child education in Kenya and explored the challenges facing the retention of boys in school. The study found out that poor supervision and indiscipline in schools had pushed many boys to engage in frustrating activities, such as smoking, drinking of illicit brews, chewing of *miraa* among others. Ouma opined that when boys performed dismally in school, the parents became demoralized and see education as a waste of time that does not fetch much returns as an investment. They withdrew their children from school leading to low retention. Some of the factors contributing to boys' dropout could be emanating from the institutional practices such as lack of supervision by the teachers. Njuguna and Muchanje (2019) agree that among the factors that lead to boys drop out are substance abuse, indiscipline and poor performance in school.

The function of a school is to educate and equip the learners with the right knowledge, attitude and skills to enable them live productive lives. It is worth noting that some of the problems encountered in the school emanate from the home environment. Itegi (2019) opines that some of the youth problems that schools have to deal with stem from home and may be deeply rooted in the society served by the school. However, the schools as a place for shaping

behaviour and character formation should provide a conducive environment for boys' retention. School systems, therefore, need to address ways to support parents in nurturing effective behaviors of learning and to recognize the school as an important site of intervention for effective retention of boys in school.

The importance of the school environment as a site of intervention for school retention was further reiterated by Megan and Greg (2008) as they examined the links between ethnic background and the learning characteristics which shaped successful retention in school in Sydney Australia. The study focused on year three students of various ethnic backgrounds including Chinese, Pasifika and Anglo Australian. Besides the students, parents for the year three students and staff in a number of primary schools in Sydney were interviewed. The study focused on how common expectations about the cultural characteristics of different ethnic groups, ethnic stereotyping and home behaviours contributed to students' dispositions to learning. The study found out that classroom practices had noticeable effects on the development of educational behaviors. The study showed that school practices encouraged the forms of discipline required for educational persistence.

School rules and regulations are employed in the management of classrooms to enhance discipline in school. Rules also define ways of self-evaluation against the set standards not only in school but in the wider world. Itegi (2019) observes that rules are used to enhance moral values in schools by discerning actions in terms of good and bad, or right and wrong. Disciplined students are known to obey school rules and perform well in school which can reduce school dropout

while the contrary may be true for indiscipline students. In Indonesia, Suryadarma and Rogers (2014) carried out a survey on the determinants of pupils' drop out in public primary schools. The survey was carried out in eight Indonesian provinces using a representative sample of 110 public schools. The study found out that student dropout was strongly influenced by school variables. Among the significant variables were clear school policies and school rules.

Similarly, a study by Muvawala (2012) examined the determinants of school retention in primary schools in Uganda using a Generalized Method of Moments (GMM) estimation technique. The results of the study showed that clear school rules yielded the expected positive influence on school retention. Boys are known to be more aggressive in behaviour than the girls and their chances of breaking schools' rules are high. Mill (2011) agree that the connection between masculinity and violent disruptive behaviour in school is high. The current study sought to ascertain whether strict enforcement of school rules among other institutional practices influence retention of boys in school.

The availability of role models plays an important part in influencing the stay of the pupils in school. Role models are usually derived from people of the same gender. A study by Farland-Smith (2014) showed that pupils felt comfortable when taught by teachers of similar gender. Several studies (Chege 2005; Koech 2015; UNICEF 2009) have shown that the male teachers are relatively few in primary schools in comparison to their female counterparts. A study by Chege (2005) showed that not only are the male teachers few in primary schools but they are also apparently laid back and disinterested in addressing boys' issues.

The study further revealed that boys lacked male role models who could provide them with guidance and direction just like the girls in their schools. The boys become frustrated and develop indifference when the girls out-do them in class work which could lead to their drop out. This implies that the increased feminisation of the teaching profession at the lower levels of education could be affecting boys' retention. Changach (2012) opines that the boy child in a pastoralist set up has been brought up to undermine the female gender and cannot withstand being instructed or punished by female teachers.

Recent media reports (Njiru, 2017 July, 19<sup>th</sup>) highlighted the plight of female teachers assaulted by class six male pupils in Kirimoni primary school in Samburu County leading to temporary closure of the school. According to the Standard newspaper report, the case was blamed on gender stereotypes and lack of community support for the school. West (2016) analyses the problem of gender disparity of teachers in school and presumes that imbalance potentially disadvantages boys by giving the wrong notion that teaching and learning is a female affair. To make the situation more dire, Changach (2012) acknowledges that there is decreasing number of men taking up teaching as a career while those who are already teachers keep changing their careers as they look for greener pastures. Consequently, boys especially in primary schools lack mentors a situation that could culminate in their low retention in school.

According to Kailembo (2011) gender of the teacher affects boys' participation and retention because it is easier for a boy child to associate with a male than a female teacher. This means that they can approach them when they have

academic problems and personal challenges. The presence of role models would help them boost their academic performance and willingness to remain in school. Moreover, female teachers may not necessarily be trained to handle gender issues in regard to boys as gender perspectives are often focused on the girl child. However, Dean (2016) argues that the hidden curriculum is not just about the presence of male or female teachers but the characterization of male and female teachers with traditional gender stereotypic traits.

Azzam (2010) posits that schools should respect and be sensitive to the cultural diversities and gender dispositions of the populations they serve. This implies that the gender of the teacher could influence boys' retention in school, a concern that this study sought to establish. In particular, this current study sought to determine the influence of school practices such as class settings, school organisation, rigid enforcement of school rules, availability of learning materials and availability of male role models on boys' retention in school with a view of recommending measures for improving boys' retention in school.

## **2.5 Parental Support and Retention of Boys in Schools**

Parents play an important role in nurturing the children and guiding them on day-to-day basis in all aspects of their life including schooling. According to Kailembo (2011) the literacy levels of parents or guardians may affect boys' school retention. This is because literate parents and guardians act as an inspiration to their children, they are more concerned with their boys' education and can comfortably supervise their homework. A study by Odaga and Heneveld (2010) on tracing primary school pupils in Kenya found out that once the children

of literate parents' accessed education, they are able to progress and complete school compared to children of illiterate parents. Holmes (2003) adds that the education of the parents affects boys and girls differently in that the mother's education level impacts both boys and girls while the level of education of the father increases retention of boys in school. UNICEF (2010) agree that pupils whose mothers are illiterate are most likely to drop out of school because they may not be in a position to guide the pupils in their educational journey.

A study by Changach (2012) on why the boy child is endangered showed that education of the parents mainly of mothers has been found to have some correlation with their children school learning ability. Educated parents are able to relate to the school learning processes of their children and assist them where they can as well as instil discipline. Further, Changach emphasizes that the children who learn to obey parental authority at home are very likely to obey school rules and authority as well. Illiterate parents on the other hand lack the capacity to assist and supervise school work for their children. To equip the parents with ability to supervise the children, Kratli and Dyer (2009) suggest that family learning approach should be adopted which combines basic education with adult learning because pastoralists already have an intergenerational informal learning in place which is functional. They posit that the integrated learning approach of the entire family could enhance retention of the learners in school.

Torres (2011) on a study of boys' dropout in the Philippines found that when boys from poor families were unresponsive in school, they were withdrawn to

undertake child labour due to diverse work opportunities available to boys compared to girls. In Liberia, UNICEF (2012) conducted a study on out-of-school children to determine the causes of student dropout. The study showed that high cost of education in conjunction with high poverty levels and inadequate parental support were the main reasons for school dropout. In addition, some parents in Liberia were themselves illiterate, so they did not appreciate the value of educating their children and encouraged child labour leading to school drop out.

In Rwanda, a study on boys' dropout by UNICEF (2015) showed that child labour contributed to drop out of boys in school. Although Rwanda offered free education for basic education, there were hidden costs that the majority of the poor households could not afford such as uniforms, books and transportation. Therefore, many boys dropped out of school to engage in child labour activities to provide not only for their families but also to earn enough to pay for school requirements. Similarly, a study by International Labour Organization (ILO, 2015) has shown that globally many children engage in child labour to the detriment of their schooling. A study in India by Rena (2007) examined the factors affecting the enrolment and the retention of boys in primary education in Andhra Pradesh. The study showed that children dropped out of school so as to engage in housework and farming activities. Tunesvik (2010) agrees that children education is affected by child labour as a result of gender specific assignment of household activities. For the boys and girls in a pastoralist set up, gender specific chores are clearly spelled out.

A report by UNICEF (2012) showed that hazardous work done by children among the pastoralists in Botswana included collecting water and firewood over long distances, livestock herding, working in *shebeens* (beer dens) and agriculture. The report noted that just like in many countries, Botswana has protective laws to guard the children against child labour but the hindrance was the implementation of these laws. Child labour robs the boys the opportunity to attend and participate in school while intermittent attendance due to child labour activities leads to poor performance which can eventually culminate in dropout. Russel (2011) demonstrates that communities can influence dropout rates by encouraging child labour occasioned by readily available job opportunities for school drop outs. It is a common belief that education sometimes comes into conflict with what the society expects from the boys.

A study by Kirimi and Muteti (2016) on parental involvement in learner retention in public primary schools in Malindi subcounty reported that high levels of poverty, illiteracy, early marriage, grade repetition and tourism activities contributed to low levels of learner retention. Parental involvement has been positively associated with children's retention in school. Nyarko and Vorgelegt (2011) explain that as the first prime educators, parents have a great influence on their children's learning outcomes throughout their schooling period and beyond.

Simpkins and Dearing (2012) add that parents who support and encourage their children through rewards and praises provide the children with a sense of creativity and self-confidence necessary for learning and persistence in school. Willems and Holbein (2015) concur that children whose parents actively

participate in their education have registered high retention rates and positive attitude towards school. On the other hand, Rogers (2012) reiterates that parents who constantly criticize, command, punish and coerce their children may make them develop a negative attitude toward education leading to negative academic outcomes and school dropout.

A study by Kweyu, (2019) on how to develop parent and family involvement in school programmes, showed that there is a positive relationship between shared activities between parents and their children and improved school retention. In West Pokot County, Kurgat (2017) observed that majority of households are headed by illiterate parents who had no access to formal education due to political and cultural marginalization. The parental participation in the formal education of the children is minimal only to the extent of sending them to school.

A study by Njunguna and Muchaje (2019) in Mathioya on socio-economic factors affecting retention of the boy child in secondary schools found out that despite the provision of Free Secondary Education by the government, the boys continued to drop out of school due to poverty, orphaned by HIV/AIDS, child labour and family break ups among other. This points out the that lack of parental involvement in the education of boys may led to school dropout of the boys.

Other studies (McBride, Rane & Bae, 2015; Flouri, Buchanan & Bream, 2016; Henderson & Mapp, 2016) have focused on maternal involvement. They postulate that the level of involvement of the mother has greater influence on school retention of the learners than that of the father. Greif and Greif (2014) concur that mothers' educational participation has been linked to increased levels

of academic attainment, increased positive attitudes towards school and enhanced teacher-child relationships. The current study sought to determine the influence of the support of both parents on retention of boys in primary school in West Pokot county.

The joint effort of all stakeholders is important in keeping the boys in school. Laura (2010) opines that when the schools, the family and the community collectively support learning, children tend to perform well in school, like school more and high retention is achieved. Peters (2017) research on parental involvement shows that regardless of the economic status and family background of the child, pupils with involved parents are more likely to perform well in school, avoid absenteeism, have better interaction skills, be disciplined and have high chance of graduating and advancing their education. Other studies, (Admassie 2013; Rumberger 2016) have shown that family settings which are less involved in their children's education, there is a high probability of the children having negative attitudes toward school, less resilience levels and higher probability of dropping out of school as soon as they sense less backing from their family and community.

In a study conducted in India on parental attitude towards schooling, Samal (2012) reiterated the effect of parental attitude towards education on school dropout and noted that parental attitudes determine the present and future academic exploits of the learners. Similarly, parental attitude stood out as a factor in boys' dropout in a study carried out by Mwangi (2016) in Mukurweini Sub-County on the determinants of boys' dropout in primary schools. The study

found out that retention of boys was declining because of negative attitude of parents towards boys' education, inadequate male role models at home and in schools, students' indiscipline and drug and substance abuse. The current study looked at the influence of parental support in terms of provision of learning materials, attending school activities, academic follow-up, involving boys in child labour as well as negative parental attitude towards boys' education on retention of boys in school.

## **2.6 Teachers and Pupils' Cultural Perceptions and Boys Retention**

According to Parkinson (2011) perception refers to the implied dispositions that affect a fairly large population. According to Patrey (2017) perceptions are supported by beliefs and usually result in particular forms of behavior. Fobih (2011) explains that culturally, perceptions wield considerable influence on the members of a given community by determining the attitude, moral values and dictates the ethics that the members should conform to. Any deviation from the expected pattern of behavior leads to a negative perception and is considered as an affront on one's cultural practices. In societies with strong cultural inclinations, education can be perceived negatively as being antagonistic to culture. Kratli and Dyer (2009) opine that pastoralist lifestyle and culture has been misconceived by mainstream communities as backward and anti-education. A stand point which pits education against culture.

Chelimo (2005) proposes that education and culture can co-exist if policies are crafted in conformity with the pastoralist culture instead of being at loggerheads. Azzam (2010) concur that learners who receive support from school and views

education as being less confrontational with their cultural heritage are likely to develop positive attitude towards school. According to Fobih (2011) success of pupils in school depends on their attitudes, the assistance they receive from the school and the extent to which they perceive a harmonious interaction between education and cultural practices.

The perceived conflict between culture and education may create an illusion that it is 'either or' instead of co-existence between the two. When pupils view education to be opposed to their culture chances of attending and remaining in school are minimal. Chimombo (2010) explain that sometimes parents may oppose their children from attending school because of the perception that what is taught at school contradicts home cultural values and alienates children from their culture. Several studies have shown that the extent to which learners are attached to their cultural practices influences school retention and completion rates. For instance, according to UNESCO (2014) the school dropout rate in Latin America was high, and the dropout rate was greater in rural areas where many people were still strongly tied to their cultural practices. Similarly, a study by Megan and Greg (2008) on cultural practices and learning, showed that boys in Australian schools who were deeply enmeshed in their cultural practices had difficulty in embracing formal education.

In Chile, Espinoza-Diaz (2014) carried out a study on the school factors that have a reasonably greater influence on the primary school retention in Cerro Navia. Interviews were used to obtain qualitative data from two samples of 25 respondents each: one consisted of pupils who had dropped out while the other

consisted of pupils of the same profile who were still in school. The data was analysed in line with the grounded theory and involved the perceptions of the pupils and their parents on the intra-school factors that influence retention in public schools in Cerro Navia. The results showed important differences in perception between the school dropouts and non-dropouts. The dropouts had a different perception of school which was negative compared to the positive perception of the non-dropouts. This provided some understanding into what types of strategies the schools should put in place to avert students' dropout.

The perceived benefits of education may determine the priority that parents accord the education of their children. This may go to the extent of determining whether boys or girl are allowed to attend schooling in a given household. In Tanzania, a study by Chimombo (2010) on school dropouts provided sex-disaggregated data on the reasons for dropout. What stood out clearly as factors that led to dropout were high levels of poverty and high cost of schooling. Many low-income families could not manage to pay for the high costs of education, including school uniforms, textbooks and other hidden costs. The parents were forced to decide on who among their children could attend school and who could drop out to undertake child labour activities to provide for their families. Such predispositions forced some boys to drop out of school. Therefore, the perception that education did not fetch sufficient returns to meet the immediate needs of the family led to engagement of boys in child labour.

Another study by UNESCO (2011) in Tanzania showed that many students especially in rural areas enrolled in primary school late. The study found out that

more than fifty percent of all dropouts in Tanzania were over age, and most students in rural areas were teenagers by the time they completed primary school. The pupils felt uncomfortable sharing classes with much younger children. Emuria (2016) observed that late enrolment cases were rampant in arid and semiarid areas due to scarcity of schools and children had to cover long distance to and from school. The delay to start school exposes the learners to vulgarities of culture which demand that they settle down and start families of their own as soon as they reach teenage. The perception that boys should settle down and start families early interfered with school retention of the late enrolled boys.

Other studies have shown that the negative attitude of the learners toward education influences the value they attach to education. For instance, a study by Namukwaya and Kibirige (2014) on factors affecting enrolment and retention of pupils in primary school in Kotido District, Uganda reported the multifaceted nature of issues influencing enrolment and retention. Results of that study showed that majority of factors were perceptions related to culture such as; learners' negative attitude toward education, herding in favour of education, cultural expectations on betrothal and marriage.

Similarly, Perera (2012) carried out a study to examine the problem of school dropout in Sri Lanka by examining socio-cultural factors. The study showed that boys' dropout rate was higher than girls. The study argued that socio-cultural factors associated with the family context such as number of children, sex of the child, poverty and the attitude of learners particularly the boys towards schooling were the key determinants of dropout. The boys perceived schooling as a girls'

activity. This current study attempted to establish how the attitude of boys could influence their school retention.

Parental attitude towards education of their children determines the decisions to enrol children in school. If parents perceive that school inculcates in child values which are contrary to their traditions, resistance to school will ensue. Borhdan (2014) explains that positive parental attitude towards child's education is important in determining access to school, attendance and retention of the child. When parents have a negative attitude towards school, they may fail to provide for their children school requirements, may not follow up on their school progress and question their sons disinterest in school. The children may develop low self-confidence and lethargy to attend school. In a study in India on parental attitude towards learning, Samal (2012) observed that when parents had a positive attitude toward the education of the children, the boys perceived school as important leading to improved school attendance.

The peer group plays a key role in adolescents' decision making and how they perceive the world around them. The influence of the parents, teachers and peer group is perceived to mould and shape adolescent's behaviour by providing feedback on what they should think and how they should behave in social setups. Reddock (2014) in a study on boys' masculinities in the Caribbean reveals that for many teenage boys the influence of the peers competes and frequently surpasses the authority of any of the adults in the boy's lives including parents and teachers. Bailey (2012) adds that as boys approach adolescence, the influence of the peers is perceived to have a greater magnetic pull and eventually replaces

the parents as the center of control. In this regard therefore, where the majority of the youth are school dropouts, the pull for those in school is likely to be away from school. The perception of the boys that they need to conform to the standards set by their peers could lead to withdrawal from school.

Memusi (2017) carried out a study to ascertain the reasons for dropping out of school by primary school boys in Kajiado County. The study was based on a descriptive survey design and the findings revealed that lack of parental interest, high levels of illiteracy and strong inclination to the nomadic culture accounted for low level of school completion especially among boys. The study further showed that the negative attitude of boys towards school was a key contributor to their drop out. They did not see its immediate returns on education due to the high rate of unemployment. In the ASAL regions, where the pastoralists may be nomadic, the availability of sedentary schools may fail serve the needs of pupils in these areas.

Theuri (2014) note that many learners in the ASAL regions have failed to appreciate the importance of prolonged stay in school due to the frequent movement occasioned by the nomadic lifestyle of their parents. Justino (2012) underscores that nomadism compels parents to withdraw the boys from school to assist in looking for pasture for their animals as they migrate from place to place.

The important role of teachers and their influence on the teaching learning process cannot be overlooked. Teachers have a lot of influence on the learners' behaviour through their interaction both in the regular curriculum as well as in the hidden curriculum. Their attitude and cultural perception affect their

treatment of the learners. Nangithia (2014) investigated the influence of students and teachers' cultural perceptions on academic achievement in Meru County. Rodger's Pearson centred and Erickson's psycho-social theories informed the study. The study was based on a descriptive survey design and secondary school teachers and students from Meru county were targeted. The self-esteem levels of students were determined using Rosenberg self-esteem scale. This study established that teacher's negative attitude towards students impacted on their self-esteem and led to drop out of some students. Although the study attempted to establish learner's perceptions towards culture and its influence on education, the findings did not link socio-cultural factors to learner retention and thus makes it different from this current study.

Generally, the studies reviewed attempted to examine the potential impact of the perceptions of learners towards education. However, they did not present empirical evidence directly linking teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions to retention of boys in primary schools. The current study delved into the influence of teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions on boys' retention.

## **2.7 Summary of Literature Review and Isolation of Knowledge Gaps**

This chapter reviewed literature on the various factors that influenced the retention of boys in primary school. The literature showed that the concern on boys' retention in school is becoming a growing concern in many countries and researchers are beginning to pay attention. For a long time, many studies on gender outside and within Kenya have focused on girls and women when

addressing gender inequalities in education. This study shifted the focus to the retention of boys in primary school.

The studies that focused on boys' education looked at gender issues influencing declining boys' performance in education, access to education, participation and underachievement but not the socio-cultural practices influencing retention of boys in schools. Although some studies focused on boys' dropout such as that by Njuguna and Muchanje (2019) in Mathioya; Memusi (2016) in Kajiado; Nyaboke, Mwebi and Onderi (2016) in Nyamira; Mwangi (2016) in Mukurweini; Emuria (2016) in Turkana South and Nangithia (2014) in Meru, all these studies were conducted outside the cultural setup of the Pokot community and because culture is specific to a group of people their findings could not be generalized to the current locale of the study. That therefore warranted the current study.

In addition, some of the reviewed studies were conducted in countries outside Kenya for example studies done in Malaysia by Goolamally and Ahmad (2010); India by Samal (2012); Botswana by UNICEF (2012), UNICEF (2015) and Mungoo (2017); Nigeria by Okoli and Okpaleke (2014), Olaniyan & Yahaya (2016); Lesotho by Pitikoe (2018) and Uganda by Mbekenga (2013) among others. These studies were conducted under a different environment from the current study in terms of not only the culture but also government policies influencing retention.

There exists a gap in methodology as well. A few studies used qualitative research design for example a study by Pitikoe (2018) in Lesotho and Espinoza-Diaz (2014) in Chile. Most of the other studies reviewed used descriptive survey

design, this research used Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods approach in data collection and analysis. This approach enabled the researcher to incorporate both qualitative and quantitative techniques in one study thus benefitting from the advantages of both methods. This allowed for corroboration and triangulation of the findings for a better understanding of boys' retention in relation to socio-cultural practices.

Additionally, none of the literature reviewed brought out the interplay between the socio-cultural practices within the community such as male gender roles and parental support and the social practices within the institutional setup such as the institutional practices and the perceptions of teachers and pupils influence on retention of boys in primary school within the same study. Most of the studies had examined the variables individually yet there is a lot of interconnectedness among them which would give a better understanding when looked at in totality. This study therefore sought to fill these gaps in knowledge by examining the socio-cultural practices influencing retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County, Kenya.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

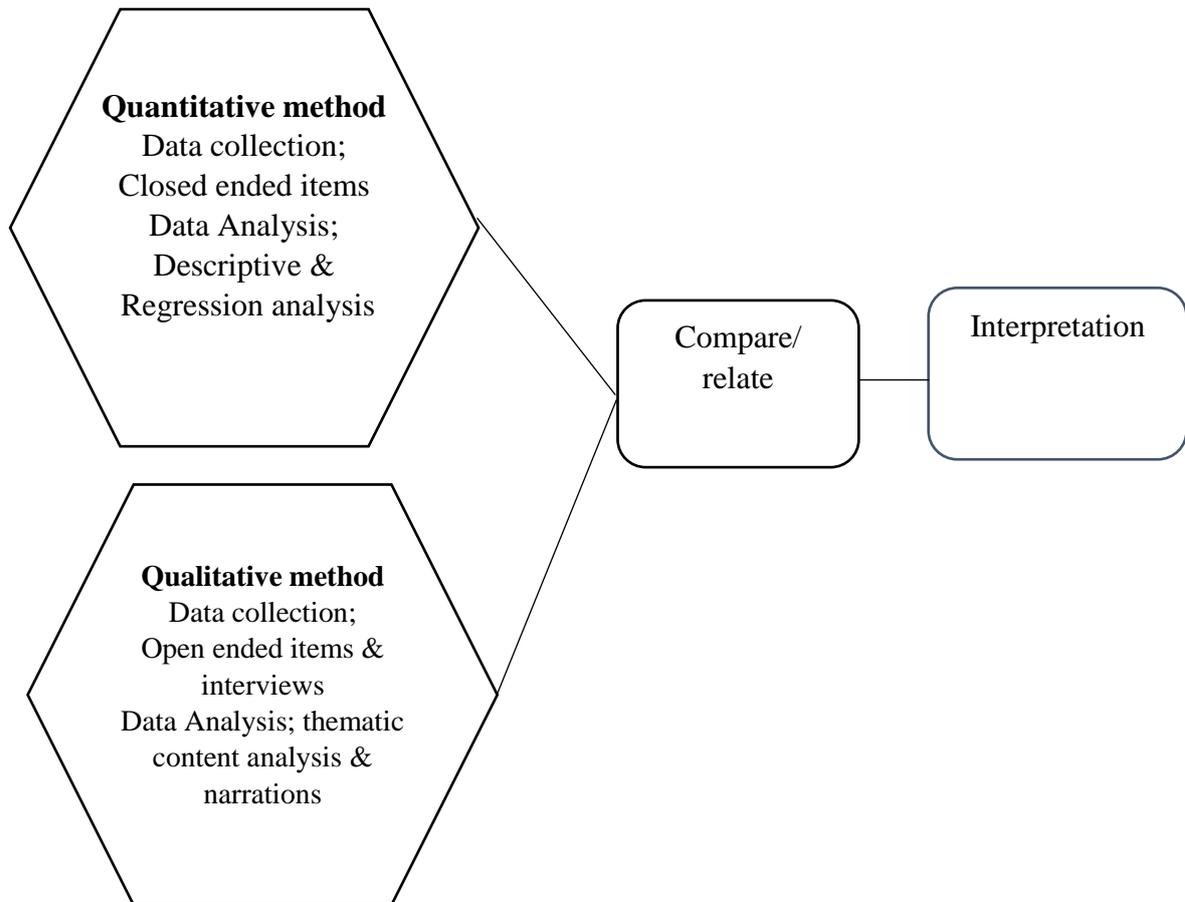
#### **3.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of socio-cultural practices on retention of boys in primary school in West Pokot County, Kenya. This chapter outlines the overall methodological framework of the study. It covers the research design; location of the study; target population; sampling procedures; sample size; research instruments; piloting; validity and reliability of instruments; data collection procedures; data analysis and ethical and logistical considerations.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The study adopted Mixed Methods research approach in conducting the study. In particular the study used Convergent Parallel Mixed methods strand in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently then analyzed separately and convergence occurred at the interpretation phase (Creswell 2014). The Quantitative data which was derived from the closed ended questionnaires items was analysed using descriptive and regression analysis. The qualitative data obtained from the open-ended items of the questionnaires and interviews were analysed using thematic content analysis. The Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods approach was chosen because it allowed for corroboration, cross-validation and triangulation of findings within the study. According to Creswell (2014) the strengths of one method can be used to complement the weakness of

the other. In this case, the strengths of using qualitative data complemented the weaknesses of quantitative data and vice versa.



**Figure 3.1: Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Steps**

### 3.3 Study Variables

The independent variables in this study were the socio-cultural practices whose indicators were the male gender roles, institutional practices, parental support and teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions. The dependent variable was retention which was measured by determining the interclass drop out and completion rates. The intervening variables included government policies aimed at promoting retention such as school feeding programme, gender equity, 100% transition and mobile school initiative.

### **3.4 Location of the Study**

The study was carried out in West Pokot County. The County is situated in the North Western part of Kenya. It borders Uganda to the West, Turkana County to the North and North East, Trans-Nzoia County to the South, Baringo County and Elgeyo-Marakwet County to the East and South East respectively. The county is divided into five sub-counties namely: Pokot Central, Pokot South, Pokot North, West Pokot and Kipkomo (See the Map: Appendix IX). The County covers an area of approximately 9,169.4 km<sup>2</sup> stretching a distance of 132 Km from North to South. It has a population of 621,241 people, 307,013 males and 314,213 females and 15 intersex people according to 2019 population census. The county is situated within Longitudes 34<sup>0</sup>47' and 35<sup>0</sup> 49 East and latitude 1<sup>0</sup> and 2<sup>0</sup> North. West Pokot County is one of the ASAL areas where a large section of the population practice pastoralism. West Pokot County was chosen as the study location due to widespread socio-cultural practices and strong adherence to traditional culture some of which undermined education attainment. The county has low enrolment and retention rates generally but experience high dropout rates of boys between class seven and eight.

### **3.5 Target Population**

The targeted population for the study was 8319 consisting of 663 head teachers, 790 class eight class-teachers and 6861 class eight boys in all the 663 public primary schools in West Pokot county who had presented candidates for KCPE. The five sub-county Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) formed part of the population. The distribution of the target population is shown in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Target Population**

<b>Sub-county</b>	<b>Primary schools</b>	<b>QASOs</b>	<b>Head-teachers</b>	<b>Class teachers</b>	<b>Class Eight boys</b>	<b>Total</b>
Pokot North	131	1	131	146	986	1264
Pokot Central	138	1	138	161	1532	1832
Pokot South	94	1	94	112	1026	1233
West Pokot	179	1	179	219	2431	2830
Kipkomo	121	1	121	152	886	1160
<b>Total</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>6861</b>	<b>8319</b>

Source: West Pokot County Director of Education, 2019

### **3.6 Sampling Technique and Sample Size**

This section explains the procedure used to derive the sample size from the target population and the selection of the study participants. The sample size has also been discussed.

#### **3.6.1 Sampling Technique**

The study used purposive sampling to select West Pokot County from the forty-seven counties in Kenya due to widespread socio-cultural practices and strong adherence to traditional culture some of which are thought to undermine school retention. Cluster sampling technique was employed in categorizing the county into five sub-counties of Pokot North, Pokot South, Pokot Central, West Pokot and Kipkomo to ensure that the sample was a representation of all the whole county. Purposive sampling was employed in selecting all the five sub-county QASOs as key informants as a result of the role they play in ensuring quality education and regular supervision of schools. QASOs are field officers well

informed on the socio-cultural practices of the community and their plausible influence on retention. They are also conversant with data on enrolment as they represent Ministry of Education on the ground. The head teachers, class teachers and pupils were selected by use of simple random sampling.

All the head teachers in the sampled schools were included in the sample due to their key role as liaison persons between the school and the community. The class teachers were included in the sample because they frequently interact with the class eight pupils, keep the class attendance registers, progress reports and therefore were able to understand the potential influence of socio-cultural practices on boys' retention in school.

The class eight boys were selected for the study because they had stayed longest in the school and had knowledge of the reasons why boys dropped out. Coupled with that, they had withstood the pressure of dropping out as their peers yielded to the same. Statistics from the West Pokot county education office had shown that the highest drop out of boys occurred between class seven and eight hence they were better placed to comment on retention of boys in school compared to the other boys in the lower classes in the schools.

### **3.6.2 Sample Size**

Since the population was finite and population size known, Yamane's (1973) formula was used to obtain the total number of schools, head teachers, class teachers and pupils who took part in the study, (Singh and Masuku 2014).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where,

**n**- Sample size

**N**- The population, (663 schools, hence head teachers, 790 class teachers and 6861 pupils)

**e**- The acceptable sampling error taken at 95% confidence level allowing a sampling error of 5%

Substituting these values in the equation for the head teachers:

$$n = \frac{663}{1 + 663(0.05)^2} = 249$$

The estimate sample size for class teachers was:

$$n = \frac{790}{1 + 790(0.05)^2} = 265$$

Estimate sample size for class eight boys was 378 pupils:

$$n = \frac{6861}{1 + 6861(0.05)^2} = 378$$

The total sample size was 897. The number of respondents in the five sub-counties was proportionately allocated according to the target population as shown in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2: Proportionate allocation of the Sample Size**

<b>Sub-county</b>	<b>Sub-county QASO</b>	<b>Head-teachers</b>	<b>Class-teachers</b>	<b>Class Eight pupils</b>	<b>Total</b>
Pokot North	1	50	53	79	183
Pokot Central	1	52	56	76	185
Pokot South	1	35	37	53	126
West Pokot	1	67	71	102	241
Kipkomo	1	45	48	68	162
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>897</b>

Source: Researcher, (2019)

### **3.7 Research Instruments**

The data was collected using two sets of data collection tools namely; a questionnaire and an interview schedule. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the head teachers, class teachers and pupils. Interview schedules were administered to the sub-county quality assurance officers (QASOs). The questionnaires were used for this study because they collect large amounts of information within a short time (Orodho 2009; Creswell 2014). Given the expansive county and the big number of respondents, questionnaires were deemed ideal.

The interview schedule on the other hand allowed for an in-depth investigation of socio-cultural practices influence on boys' retention in primary schools. Orodho (2009) observes that interviews enable the researcher to probe the research participants for more clarification on the information they provide. The interview schedule also presented a true conversation in which the researcher and the QASOs developed a better understanding of the area under study. The QASOs were few in number which made it possible to engage them at length.

#### **3.7.1 Interview Schedule for Sub-County QASO Officers**

The interview schedule for the Sub County QASOs contained open ended items that allowed probing to further understand the concepts of socio-cultural practices in relation to boys' retention. The items in the schedule sought information on the influence of socio-cultural practices on retention of boys in primary schools in the sub-county as guided by the research objectives. The interviews sought to establish the strategies they have put in place as sub-county education managers

in enhancing retention of boys in primary school. In part, the schedule sought their opinion on how retention of boys in schools could be achieved in the county.

### **3.7.2 Self-administered Questionnaire for Teachers**

One questionnaire was used to collect data from the head teachers and class teachers. The first part of the questionnaire comprised of bio-data of the head teachers and class teachers such as gender, age, level of training and length of service in West Pokot County. The second section comprised of items seeking their views on socio-cultural practices and their influence on retention of boys in primary schools. Section two contained five sub-sections; one section sought information on retention which was the dependent variable while the other four sought information on each of the four independent variables namely; male gender roles, institutional practices, parental support and teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions. In addition, open ended items were included to seek the teachers' opinion on ways to improve retention of boys in primary school.

### **3.7.3 Self-administered Questionnaire for the Pupils**

Data from the class eight boys was collected using another questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first part sought background information from the pupils such as such age and home background characteristics. The second part comprised of five subsections. One sub-section sought information on the dependent variable (retention) while the other four each addressed the four independent variables namely; male gender roles, institutional practices, parental support and teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions.

### **3.8 Piloting**

A pilot study was carried out before the main research to ensure that all the research instruments generated the information required. First, the researcher consulted the supervisors who played an important role in shaping the instruments to verify that the items covered the entire domain of the variables. The actual piloting of the research instruments was then done and the data collected were used to better the instruments. Five schools were involved in piloting. According to Gay and Hall (2010) piloting should be carried out using a population with similar features to the target population. Each of the pilot schools was drawn from each of the five sub-counties of West Pokot County to represent a balanced view of the target population. That also ensured that the subjects had similar characteristics as those of the main study.

The pilot schools were excluded from the final study. Comments from the pilot study were used to make judgement on the suitability of the items and approximate time that was needed to fill the questionnaires. From the pilot study it was noted that the language used in some items was above the level of the learners and some questions on the background information proved to be ambiguous. These anomalies were corrected and corrections factored in to improve the instruments for the main study.

### **3.9 Validity of the Instruments**

Content validity of the instruments was ascertained through expert judgement. The instruments were given to a panel of three experts in social research and gender issues at Kenyatta University. A validity questionnaire with a four-point

Likert scale rating was attached to each instrument; the experts stated the level of relevance of each item in the questionnaire. 1- Denoted no relevance, 2- low relevance, 3- relevant and 4-strong relevance. The responses were used to compute scale level content validity index based on the universal agreement method (Yossuf, 2019).

$$S-CVI/UA = \frac{\text{Number of Items rated relevant}}{\text{Total number of items}}$$

$$S - CVI/UA = \frac{45}{52} = 0.865$$

Content validity of the instruments was further enhanced through respondent validation. After administering the instruments, the researcher asked the respondents whether the questions in the instrument were relevant to the topic under study and all confirmed that the items were relevant.

### **3.10 Reliability of the Instruments**

The researcher used Cronbach's alpha to establish the internal consistency of the research items in the questionnaire. Internal consistency refers to the extent to which all the items in a tool are interrelated and measure the same construct or concept within the test (Gay and Hall, 2010). It is expressed as a number between 0 and 1. A coefficient of more than 0.7 was considered acceptable for a study of this nature as recommended by Gay and Hall (2010). Cronbach alpha is normally used when there are many Likert items in a questionnaire that constitute a scale and the researcher intends to find out if the scale is reliable. The researcher devised items in a questionnaire which were intended to generate information on socio-cultural practices influence on retention of boys in school. Each item had a

five-point Likert scale ranging from 1-strongly disagrees, 2 disagree, 3 not sure, 4 agree and 5 strongly agree. A reliability coefficient of 0.826 was obtained from the questionnaires for this study as indicated in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3: Reliability statistics**

<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items</b>	<b>N of Items</b>
.814	.826	52

This coefficient (0.826) was above the recommended range of above 0.7 (Gay and Hall, 2010). Hence the questionnaires were considered reliable.

### **3.11 Data Collection Procedures**

A letter was obtained from Kenyatta University to verify that consent had been given for data collection. Research authorization to collect data was sought from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The researcher then visited the County Director of Education and County Commissioner's offices at the West Pokot County headquarters to obtain authorization to access and conduct research in the schools in the county. Data collection was carried out in three logistical phases of pre-field, field-work and post-field as spelled out by Orodho (2009).

During the pre-field phase, the researcher and research assistants checked through the instruments to ensure that they were complete and that the instruction were clear. The researcher then came up with a work plan displaying in details the action plan to guide the data collection process. The research assistants were then trained to enable then collect quality data. Kothari (2004) asserts that the ability

to collect quality data is dependent on the research assistant accuracy in data collection. The researcher then drew a budget for the field expenses.

During the field-work stage, the researcher visited West Pokot County to familiarise with the area of study and ascertain the availability of research respondents. The researcher endeavoured to establish rapport with the respondents for easy administration of the research instruments. The researcher then briefed the research assistants after which the questionnaires were administered and collected after the respondents had filled them. The interviews were conducted by the researcher after seeking appointments with the respective sub-county Quality assurance officers.

During the post-field logistics phase, the researcher collected all the questionnaires, debriefed the research assistant and sorted out the collected instruments in readiness for data analysis. Secondary data was also vital in this study in laying the foundation for the research. Secondary data was collected through review of the existing literature and the existing enrolment and drop-out records at the county education office. This information was used to supplement primary data collected and thus gave credible findings for the study.

### **3.12 Data Analysis**

The analysis of data was guided by the study objectives. The quantitative data obtained using questionnaires was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, percentages and standard deviations. Quantitative data was also subjected to inferential statistics in particular regression analysis to show the relationship between the variables and the magnitude of the influence of

independent variables on the dependent variable. The qualitative data obtained from interview schedules and open-ended questionnaires items were checked for completeness and analysed using thematic content analysis. The interviews with sub-county QASOs were recorded using a tape recorder and later transcribed. Some of the verbatim expressions obtained were retained and reported exactly as were said. The analysis was aided by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The analysis was based on the research objectives as shown in Table 3.4.

**Table 3.4: Data Analysis Plan**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Independent variable</b>	<b>Nature of data</b>	<b>Mode Presentation</b>	<b>Test statistic</b>
To establish the Influence of male gender roles on retention of boys	Male gender roles	Quantitative	Tables, Means frequency, Figures	F- value (Regression analysis)
		Qualitative	Thematic content analysis	Narrative
To establish the influence of institutional practices and retention of boys	Institutional Practices	Quantitative	Tables, Means frequency, Figures	F- value (Regression analysis)
		Qualitative	Thematic content analysis	Narrative
To determine the influence of parental support and retention of boys	Parental Support	Quantitative	Tables, Means frequency, Figures	F- value (Regression analysis)
		Qualitative	Thematic content analysis	Narrative
To determine the influence of teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions on retention of boys	Cultural perception	Quantitative	Tables, Means frequency, Figures	F- value (Regression analysis)
		Qualitative	Thematic content analysis	Narrative

### **3.13 Ethical and Logistical Considerations**

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2012) research ethics refers to moral values or codes of conduct that demand that the rights of research participants are respected. The researcher was cautious in protecting the rights and the welfare of the respondents. Before data collection, the researcher took time to explain to the participants the purpose of the study and the significance of the research findings. In the schools, informed consent was sought through sharing of the research objectives with the head teachers, class teachers and pupils. The researcher assured the respondents that utmost confidentiality would be upheld when handling the information provided. Thus, the respondents were asked not to write their names on the questionnaires.

In conformity with the principle of voluntary participation, the researcher informed the respondents that they were not compelled to take part in the study but could do so willingly. In the case of the class eight boys who were minors, consent was sought from the head teachers who are their custodians while in school. The researchers ensured that the data was authentic and where information was sourced from other authors, proper acknowledgement was done. The entire thesis was subjected to Turnitin a recognized anti plagiarism test tool to ensure its similarity index levels were acceptable.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This study aimed at determining the influence of socio-cultural practices on retention of boys in public primary school in West Pokot County, Kenya. This chapter covers the presentation, interpretation and discussions of findings according to the objectives of the study. The study intended to achieve the following objectives:

1. To establish the influence of the male gender roles on retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County;
2. To establish the influence of institutional practices on retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County;
3. To determine the influence of parental support on retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County and
4. To determine the influence of teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions on retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County, Kenya.

More specifically, the chapter was divided into the following sub-sections: the instrument return rate; demographic data of the respondents; data presentation; descriptive and inferential data analysis; interpretation and discussion of the findings based on the study objectives.

## 4.2 Instruments Return Rate

Two data collection tools were used to collect data. Firstly, self-administered questionnaire (Appendix I) was used to collect data from the teachers (head teachers and class teachers) and self-administered questionnaire (Appendix II) was used to collect data from the pupils. Secondly, an interview schedule (Appendix III) was used to collect data from the sub-county officers (QASOs). The instruments response return rate results were presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Instrument Return Rate**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Sampled</b>	<b>Returned</b>	<b>Return rate</b>
Head Teachers	249	211	84.7%
Class Teachers	265	223	84.1%
Pupils	378	339	89.7%
QASOs	5	4	80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>897</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>86.6 %</b>

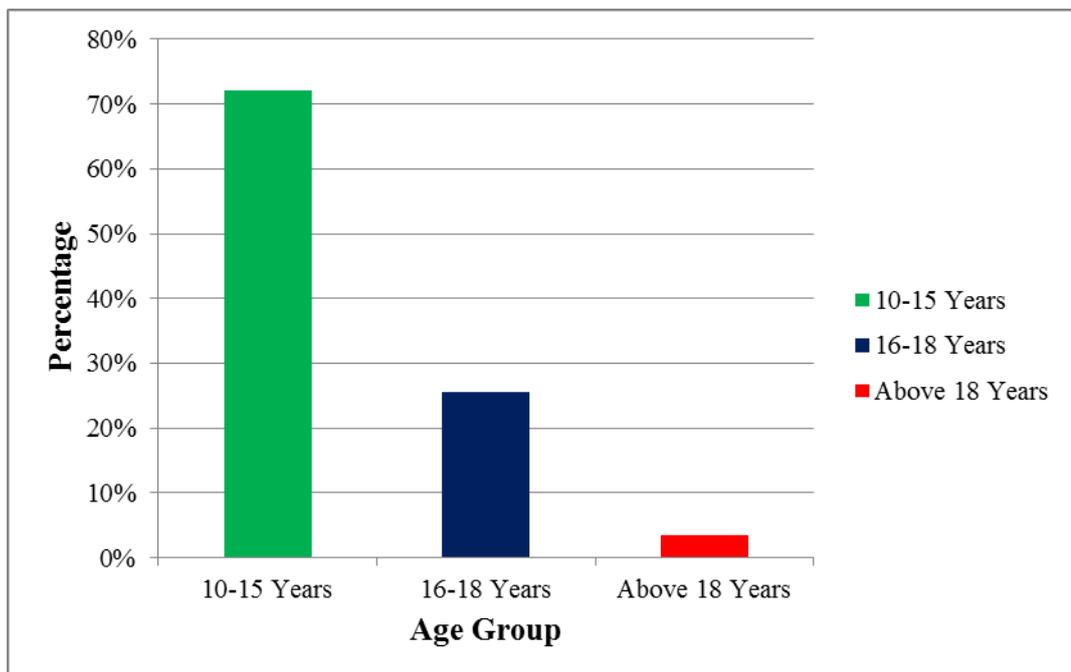
Table 4.1, indicate that the overall instruments return rate was 86.6% which was considered satisfactory. Creswell (2014) opines that a questionnaire return rate of above 75% is sufficient for generalization of the findings to the target population. Moreover, Hair (2015) states that a response rate of 80% of the entire sample is sufficient to represent the views of the target population. The response rate for this study was therefore sufficient for generalization of findings as it was above the threshold prescribed by Creswell and Hair.

### 4.3 Demographic Information

The head teachers, class-teachers, pupils and QASOs provided demographic information about themselves or on the school. The demographic characteristics investigated were with regard to their gender, age, academic qualification and years of experience in the institutions. The results were discussed as follows:

#### 4.3.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Pupils

Analysis of the relationship between socio-cultural practices and retention of boys required the description of the age of the respondents so as to understand the phenomenon of dropout. Therefore, it was found very important to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The distribution of the age of the pupils was presented in Figure 4.1.



**Figure 4.1: Distribution of the Age of the Pupil in the Sample**

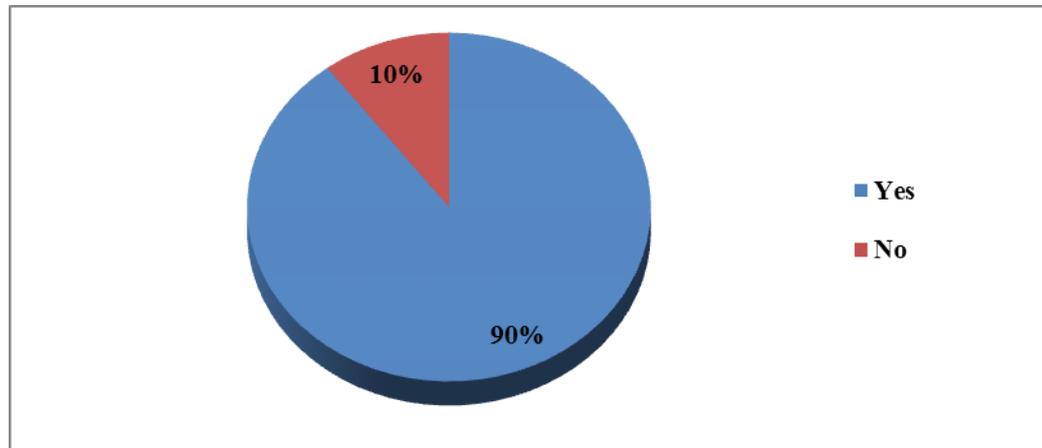
Figure 4.1 indicate that the most dominant age group amongst the pupils was between 10 and 15 years which represented 72% of the pupil respondents. This was within the recommended age bracket for class eight pupils as recommended by the Ministry of Education (MOE 2015). The findings also indicate that there were pupils above 15 years of age in the primary schools, (24.5%) between 16-18years, and (3.5%) above 18years. The Ministry of Education recommended age for class 8 is 13years (MOE 2015). The presence of pupils who were over age could probably be because of re-admission of boys who could have dropped out of school due to socio-cultural practices such as child labour and rite of passage. Other causes could include factors such as late enrolment caused by long distance to school, intermittent attendance of school and early marriage. Some boys drop out of school to marry and are sometimes rescued by local administration and returned back to school. The issue of marriage was supported by the response of a QASO who stated:

*Some boys drop out of school in upper primary to go and marry. They feel that they are too old to be in school. Some of these boys are later rescued by local administration. By that time some are already parents laden with responsibility and most of them drop out soon after.*

The study through the interview with the QASO established that there were few rescue centers a good example was Morpus boarding primary school that admitted and catered for boys either escaping from harmful cultural practices or displaced due to conflicts. Appendix IV shows the number of boys rescued from the various sub-counties between 2015 and 2019 at Morpus rescue center alone.

The study also sought to establish the number of siblings the boys had in school in order to determine the willingness of parents to take their children to school.

Figure 4.2 Shows the responses on the number of siblings in school.



**Figure 4.2: Boys with Siblings in School**

Figure 4.2 shows that 90% of the boys who responded to this study had siblings in school and only 10% of the respondents who reported no siblings in school. This means that most families had more than one child in formal education. Probably a response to free primary education by the government.

The study also sought to establish the level of education during which the boys underwent rite of passage in order to determine at what level it influenced the retention of boys the most. The findings were recorded in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: The level of education during rite of passage**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Lower Primary Level	27	7.9
Upper Primary Level	303	89.4
After Primary level	9	2.7
Total	339	100

Table 4.2 reveals that majority (89.4%) of the pupils indicated that most boys underwent the rite of passage when they were in upper primary level in contrast to 7.9% of the pupils who reported that some boys underwent the rite of passage in lower primary. The lowest score was 2.7% which showed that a small number of boys underwent the rite of passage after primary level of education in the county. These findings imply that majority of the boys underwent rite of passage while in upper primary school. That could explain why there was a high rate of boys drop out at that level.

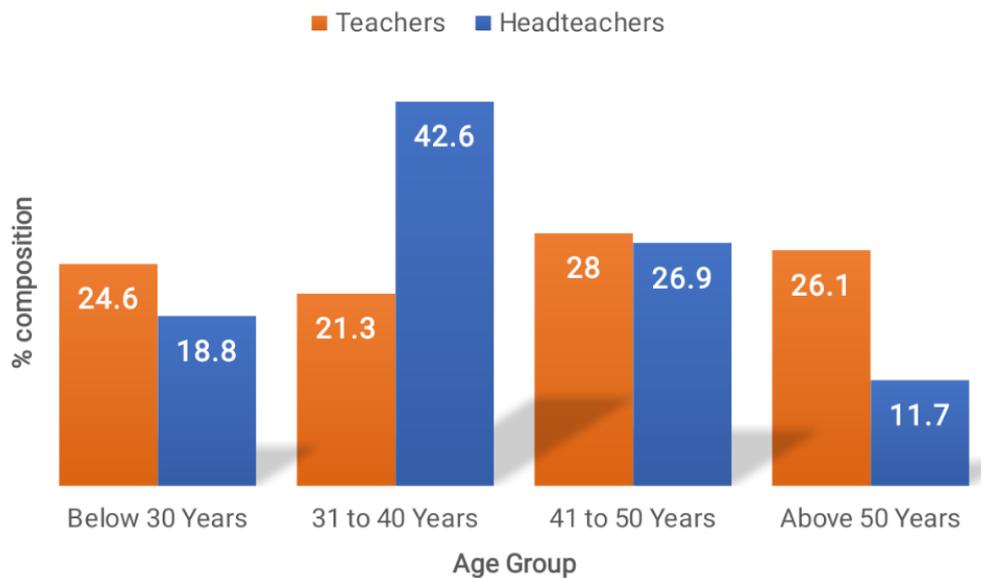
The low number of boys who indicated that they underwent rite of passage in lower primary could be boys who enrolled late in school as a result primary schools being far from their home. Those who underwent rite of passage after primary school could be the few boys left behind by their own age group for one reason or another. So, they had to wait for the next age set to join them in order to undergo the rite of passage. The results showed that rite of passage was carried out at a time when the boys were still cognitively immature and were likely to be swayed away from academic activities by the adulthood aura surrounding rite of passage ceremonies. One QASO observed that:

*We lose many boys after going for circumcision, sometimes they take too long in seclusion and whatever it is that they are taught during that time is shrouded in secrecy and usually sways their minds away from school. The community elders consider the teachings boys receive while in seclusion to be adequate for their future survival.*

During rite of passage the teachings are serious prescriptions by the elders whereby the boys are indoctrinated. That directly influenced their attitudes towards school and had far reaching consequences on their school retention. As observed by Zyngier (2012) after rite of passage boys become preoccupied with how to ensure that their behavior conforms to the prevailing community masculinity standards. Besides the teachings by the elders, the peer group at this stage begins to have more influence and eventually replaces the parents as the center of control. In a study on interrogating Caribbean masculinities Reddock (2014) established that for many teenage boys the influence of the peer group competed and frequently exceeded the authority of the adults in the boy's lives such as parents and teachers. That influence had far reaching effects on school retention if the peers were school dropouts.

#### **4.3.2 Background Information of Head teachers and Class teachers**

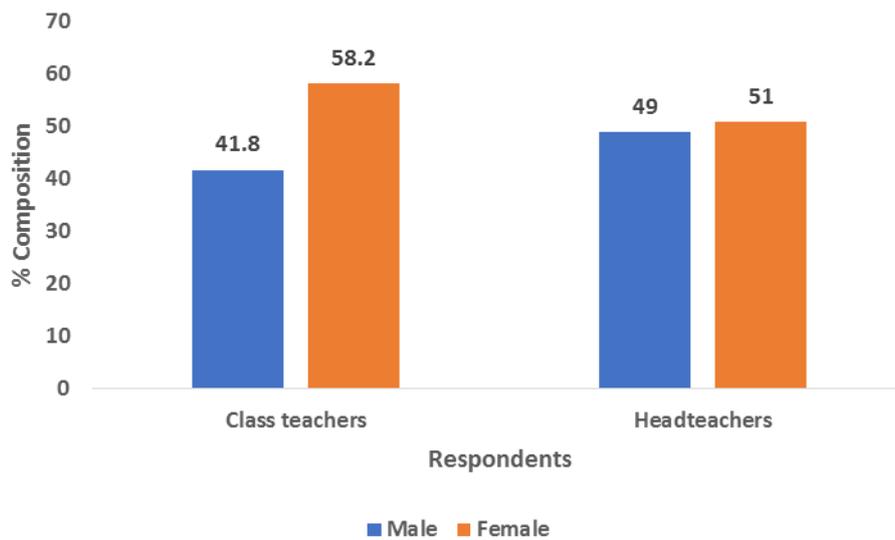
The background information examined included age, gender, level of education and period of service in West Pokot County. Figure 4.3 displays the age of the head teachers and class teachers who participated in the study.



**Figure 4.3: Distribution by Age of Teachers and head teachers**

From Figure 4.3, it is apparent that majority (42.6%) of head-teachers were found in the age category of 31-40years and majority (28.0%) of the class teachers were in the category of 41 to 50years. This age brackets implied that the teachers were mature individuals, experienced and well established in their careers to make sound judgement on the items of the study instruments. Mathis and Jackson (2011) explain that ages, 30 to 45 years fall under the established and maintenance stages of one's career development which is assumed to give the highest productivity.

The study further sought to establish the distribution of head teachers and class teachers by gender so as to establish the gender parity of teachers in schools. The findings were captured in Figure 4.4.



**Figure 4.4: Gender Distribution of Head teachers and Class teachers**

From Figure 4.4 it can be observed that there were more female class teachers of those who responded to this study as compared to their male counter-parts. There were (58.3%) female and males (41.8%) class teachers. Similarly, for the head teachers who participated in the study (51%) were female and (49%) were male. For both head teachers and class teachers, females were slightly higher in number than the males. This scenario could be attributed to the possibility that the male teachers leave the teaching profession for greener pastures. The high number of female head teachers could be attributed to acceptance of leadership positions by women. These findings concur with Muzvidziwa (2014) who observed that more women were gradually accepting leadership positions in institutions of learning in Africa.

The gender disparity showing presence of fewer male head teachers and class teachers could be denying the boys the role models in schools. Changach (2012) had earlier observed that there was a decreasing number of men taking up

teaching as a career while those men who were already teachers kept changing their careers. That had denied the boys the opportunity for role modelling and mentorship required to enhance retention. However, this finding contradicts with Koech (2015) who noticed that although there were more female primary school teachers, the majority of the primary school head teachers were male.

The study also sought to analyze the distribution of head teachers and class teachers by academic qualification. Table 4.3 shows the distribution of head teachers and class teachers according to their academic qualifications.

**Table 4.3: Distribution of Head teachers and Class-teachers by Academic Qualification**

Education Level	Head teachers		Class-teachers	
	f	%	f	%
P1	116	54.9	129	57.8
Diploma	56	26.5	73	32.7
B.Ed.	24	11.4	21	9.4
Others	15	7.1	-	-
Total	211	100.0	223	100.0

From Table 4.3, majority (54.9%) of the head teachers and class teachers (57.8%) had P1 Certification as the highest qualification, those with diploma were few (26.5%) head teachers and (32.7%) class teachers while those with a bachelor's degree were the least (11.4%) head teachers and (9.4%) class teachers respectively. According to TSC policy on appointment and deployment of administrators TSC (2017) the minimum qualification to teach in primary school is a Primary Teacher Education (PTE) certificate. This implies that the head teachers and class teachers were qualified to teach in primary school and to

provide reliable information regarding influence of socio-cultural practices on retention of boys.

The study sought to establish the length of time the head teachers and class teachers had served in West Pokot County to determine how acquainted they were with the socio-cultural practices. The results were presented in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4: Period of Service in West Pokot for Head teachers and Class teachers**

Experience	Head teachers		Class-teachers	
	f	%	f	%
5 Years or less	45	21.3	52	23.3
6-10 Years	60	28.4	79	35.4
11-15 Years	7	3.3	36	16.1
16-20 Years	26	12.3	18	8.1
Over 20 Years	73	34.6	38	17.0
Total	211	100.0	223	100.0

From Table 4.4, the findings indicate that majority (34.6%) of the head teachers had served in West Pokot County for over 20years while the majority (35.4%) of the class teachers had served between 6-10years. This indicates majority of the head teachers and class-teachers had served for a long time in the county thereby accumulating requisite knowledge and familiarity with socio-cultural practices in the study area.

#### **4.4 Boys Retention in Primary School in West Pokot County**

In order to determine the retention of boys in primary schools, the QASOs were interviewed while the teachers (head teachers and class teachers) and pupils were asked to provide information by rating their level of agreement with a range of

statements relating to boys' retention in schools. 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). Means, standard deviations and percentages were computed and presented in Table 4.5 (a) and (b). According to Bademo and Tafera (2016) any mean below 2.00 should be construed as low extent, mean between 2 to 3.5 should be moderate, while a mean of 3.5 to 5 should imply high extent in explaining relationship between variables.

**Table 4.5 (a): Teachers Responses on Boys Retention**

Statements on Boys Retention	SD		D		NS		A		SA		Mean	SD
	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Many boys leave school before class 8	50	11.5	65	14.9	24	5.6	123	28.3	172	39.7	3.8	1.3
Frequent absenteeism leads to drop out	81	18.7	50	11.5	22	5.1	157	36.1	124	28.6	3.7	1.0
After rite of passage many boys drop out	91	21.0	46	10.6	21	4.8	118	27.2	158	36.4	3.8	1.3
Dropout is highest between class 7 & 8	21	4.8	58	13.4	21	4.8	143	33.0	191	44.0	4.2	1.2
Many school boys engage in herding	37	8.5	42	9.7	24	5.5	127	29.3	204	47.0	4.5	1.1
Parents negative attitude to education lead to boys drop out	26	6.0	67	15.5	21	4.9	105	24.3	213	49.3	3.8	1.3
Decision on schooling is left to the boys	34	7.8	39	9.0	21	4.8	138	31.8	202	46.5	4.1	1.2
Many boys engage in child labour	47	10.8	59	13.6	39	9.0	178	41.0	111	25.6	4.2	1.1
Nomadism withdraws boys from school	50	11.5	46	10.6	36	8.3	112	25.8	190	43.8	3.9	1.2
<b>Overall mean response</b>											<b>4.0</b>	<b>1.2</b>

**Table 4.5 (b): Pupils Responses on Boys Retention**

<b>Statements on Boys Retention</b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>D</b>		<b>NS</b>		<b>A</b>		<b>SA</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>		
Many boys leave school before class 8	49	14.5	51	15.0	15	4.4	82	24.2	142	41.9	3.9	1.2
Frequent absenteeism leads to drop out	63	18.6	39	11.6	17	5.0	123	36.3	97	28.5	3.4	1.1
After rite of passage many boys drop out	71	20.9	36	10.6	16	4.7	123	36.2	93	27.6	3.6	1.2
Dropout is highest between class 7 & 8	41	9.4	46	10.6	16	3.7	119	27.4	212	48.9	4.1	1.0
Many school boys engage in herding	28	8.4	32	9.4	19	5.6	100	29.4	160	47.2	4.0	1.2
Parents have negative attitude to education lead to boys' dropout	20	6.0	53	15.5	17	4.9	116	34.3	133	39.3	3.7	1.3
Decision on schooling is left to the boys	26	7.7	31	9.1	16	4.8	125	36.8	141	41.6	3.8	1.3
Many boys engage in child labour	36	10.6	44	13.0	31	9.1	139	41.0	89	26.3	3.5	1.4
Nomadism withdraws boys from school	39	11.5	36	10.6	29	8.6	86	25.4	149	43.9	3.8	1.3
<b>Overall mean response</b>											<b>3.9</b>	<b>1.2</b>

Table 4.5 (a) and 4.5 (b) show that in West Pokot County the teachers and the pupils' responses indicated that there was low retention of boys in primary school with an overall mean of 3.95 and SD 1.25 (Mean 4.0 and SD 1.2) for the teachers and (Mean 3.9 and SD 1.3) for the pupils. This was brought about by various factors such as high dropout before reaching class eight as suggested by majority of the teachers 68% and pupils (66.1%). The findings showed that the highest rate of dropout occurred between class seven and eight with majority (77%) of the teachers and (76.3%) of the pupils agreeing on this.

In addition, majority of the teachers (76.3%) and pupils (76.6%) agreed that many boys dropped out of school due to herding. On the drop out due to rite of passage (63.6%) of teachers and 63.8% of pupils agreed while on frequent absenteeism 64.7% of teachers and 64.8% of pupils agreed that it contributed to boys' low retention. On negative parental attitude towards boys' schooling majority (73.6%) of both the teachers and pupils agreed that this led to low retention of boys in school. It also emerged that some parents leave the decision to attend school in the hands of the boys leading to boys' dropout as indicated by the majority (78.4%) of the respondents combined.

Additionally, nomadism as practiced by many pastoralists dislodged the boys from school, majority of the teachers (69.4%) and pupils (69.3%) agreed that boys drop out of school to assist their parents in search of pasture for their animals in seasons of drought. These findings implied that the retention of boys in West Pokot county was low. The findings concurred with Munene and Ruto (2015) who opined that the rate of boys' retention in ASAL regions in Kenya was

low. These findings are in tandem with the statistics from the West Pokot county education office (2019) which showed a sharp drop in the number of boys between class seven and eight.

#### **4.5 Male Gender Roles and their influence on Boys Retention**

The first objective of the study was to establish the influence of male gender roles on retention of boys in schools. To achieve this objective, the QASOs were interviewed while the teachers (head teachers and class 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 extent to which they agreed 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). The results were presented on Table 4.6(a) and 4.6(b).

**Table 4.6 (a): Teachers Responses on Male Gender Roles Influence on Boys Retention**

<b>GENDER ROLES</b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>D</b>		<b>NS</b>		<b>A</b>		<b>SA</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>		
Engagement in rite of passage	50	11.6	55	12.8	0	0.0	203	46.7	126	28.9	4.2	1.2
Undertake leadership role	87	20.0	150	34.6	29	6.7	80	18.4	88	20.3	3.0	1.5
Engagement in Herding	31	7.1	67	15.4	27	6.2	175	40.3	134	30.9	3.9	1.1
Inheritance of family wealth	41	9.4	48	11.0	11	2.5	196	45.3	138	31.8	3.9	1.2
Regarded grownups after circumcision	25	5.8	64	14.7	6	1.4	135	31.1	204	47.0	4.3	1.1
Participate in cattle rustling	119	27.4	107	24.7	29	6.7	128	29.5	51	11.8	3.0	1.5
Act as community security	82	18.8	111	25.7	26	6.0	85	19.6	130	29.9	3.4	1.4
<b>Overall mean response</b>											<b>3.77</b>	<b>1.27</b>

**Table 4.6 (b): Pupils Responses on Male Gender Roles Influence on Boys Retention.**

<b>GENDER ROLES</b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>D</b>		<b>NS</b>		<b>A</b>		<b>SA</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>		
Engagement in rite of passage	16	4.7	49	14.5	30	8.8	175	51.6	69	20.4	4.2	1.1
Undertake leadership roles	75	22.1	100	29.5	19	5.6	63	18.6	82	24.2	3.3	1.4
Engagement in herding	36	10.6	40	11.8	30	8.8	150	44.3	83	24.5	4.1	1.2
Inheritance of family wealth	56	16.5	67	19.7	20	5.9	106	31.3	90	26.6	4.0	1.1
Regarded grownups after circumcision	31	9.1	46	13.6	9	2.7	158	46.5	95	28.0	3.9	1.2
Participate in cattle rustling	120	35.4	113	33.3	32	9.4	41	12.1	33	9.7	3.1	1.5
Act as community security	110	32.4	136	40.1	14	4.1	46	13.6	33	9.7	3.0	1.4
<b>Overall mean response</b>											3.65	1.25

The findings in Table 4.6 (a) and (b) showed that male gender roles moderately influenced retention of boys in school with an overall Mean of 3.71 and SD 1.26, (Mean 3.77, SD 1.27 by the teachers and Mean 3.56, SD 1.25 by the pupils). This means that both the teachers and the pupils were in agreement that engagement of boys in gender roles assigned by the community such as herding, undergoing rite of passage, wealth inheritance, child labour as well as leadership roles moderately kept boys away from school.

Rite of passage as a phase which every boy must pass through in the Pokot community seemed to change the mind set of boys towards school as majority of the respondents (75.6%, n=434) of the teachers and (72.0%, n=339) of the pupils agreed that undergoing rite of passage influenced boys' retention in school. This could be attributed to the change of attitude occasioned by the teachings during rite of passage as well as the school time consumed during seclusion. Some QASOs explained that once boys undergo rite of passage, they emerged feeling that they were adults and that attitude made them assume that school was meant for children and not adults like them. If they went back to school and teachers continued treating them like children they would probably drop out of school.

In general, these findings imply that once boys undergo rite of passage, they had the notion that it was a passage from childhood to adulthood. As such, they would look for ways to acquire wealth, marry and make life decisions as expected of adult men by the community.

In agreement with those sentiments, a QASO interviewed reiterated that:

*Boys stay away from school because they are given a lot of responsibility and circumcised boys take the role of parents; at age of 13, the community view them as old enough and are supposed to look for wealth in form of cattle and to take full responsibility of an adult male including looking for cows in readiness for marriage.*

That is aggravated by the semi-literate support staff within the school who keep watch on the boys to see whether they flout the community teachings. This may in turn create conflict between schooling and culture leading to the boys dropping out of school. One QASO in support of the above view 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 boys against being treated as children by the teachers. This conflict often leads to indiscipline of the boys in school which may encourage them to eventually drop out.*

This means that most of the time the boys are under scrutiny from members of the community to ensure that they adhere to teachings associated with rite of passage.

In a school environment, teachers treat all pupils equally and it is not possible to treat the boys in a special way after acquiring their adulthood status. These findings agree with the findings of a study done in Botswana by Mungoo (2017) which revealed that due to hegemonic masculinities instilled during rite of passage, boys acquired some sense of entitlement which led to indiscipline and subsequent drop out of school. Koringura (2004) in a study on factors influencing enrolment, participation and transition in West Pokot agree that those boys who

undergo circumcision often develop attitudinal changes, perceive themselves as adults and feel that school is meant for children.

It is not only the teachings during rite of passage that influence boys' retention. The duration of the seclusion period also interferes with their school attendance. One QASO Observed that 'Pokot boys are circumcised in the bushes away from home after which they stay secluded for up to three months or more depending on directions given by the elders. This implies that the elaborate rite of passage ceremonies consumes a lot of school time, the boys lag behind in their studies compromising their attendance and retention in school. A feature on Nation Media (2016, January, 24<sup>th</sup>) christened 'The Pokot Creed' reported that formal classes had remained almost empty in Baringo East as boys remained hidden in the bushes as they took part in circumcision rituals which took up to three months. The community values this stage in life so much that the boys who fail to participate in them are considered outcasts. The value attached to rite of passage emerged during the interviews with the QASOs. For instance, one QASO stated:

*Circumcision ceremonies are very important among the Pokots. 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, they are expected to behave like adult males to be treated as such. Some are even encouraged to drink traditional brew just like older men yet this is against school rules and the Children Act of 2001.*

This implies that the boys are torn in between obeying the school rules and obeying the community elders. Kibogy (2012) on a study on phenomenon of male dropout in Keiyo district underscores that when boys are faced with a choice between obeying school rules or the elders, the boys are more inclined to obey the elders in order to fit into the community. Kurgat (2017) explain that the

circumcised boys are considered adults who are not allowed to associate and socialize with the uncircumcised school children. This therefore makes the school environment uncondusive to them since most of pupils in primary schools uncircumcised.

Other researchers have alluded to the significance of this stage in life, for example, Eagly (2014) and Undarya and Enkhjargal (2011) stressed that rite of passage is an integral part of the community structure which prepares boys to become useful members of the society. In the process of participating in these rituals some boys completely drop out of school. A QASO pointed out that:

*The initiation ceremonies are highly regarded so much so that those boys who are not circumcised at the right time are taunted by others. So, they would rather run away from school or even home to join those undergoing initiations in far off villages.*

These findings portray that the rite of passage is held on high regard by the boys compared to their education and they would not hesitate to drop out of school to undergo these rites. Koriang (2014) agree that among the Pokot circumcision is a rite of passage that is held periodically as predicted by community astrologers based on alignments of celestial bodies. This means that it could fall on a school term. The loss of school time may discourage the boys from returning to school after the long stay in seclusion.

Herding is another common activity among the pastoralist communities. On the influence of herding on boys' retention, the study found out that the majority (71.2%, n=434) of teachers and (68.8%, n=339) of pupils agreed that herding takes boys away from school contributing to their drop out. Keeping of cattle,

goats and camels show economic and social prowess of a man in the Pokot community. Herding is a masculine activity undertaken by the boys and men in the community and some boys may remain at home to undertake this activity instead of going to school. A study conducted by UNICEF (2015) in Botswana showed that boys were often taken out of school or denied entry altogether to become cattle herders a task that fell on them by virtue of masculinity, stereotype and culture. Ruto (2014) also agree that nomadic way of life and herding were among the barriers to boys' access and retention in schools. Elsewhere in Nigeria, a study done by Olaniyan and Yahaya (2016) among the pastoralists in the north had a similar trend where boys were withdrawn from school to herd animals which sometimes involved moving from one place to another.

The role of inheritance of family wealth by boys ranked high among the practices that influenced boys' retention. Majority (77.1%, n=434) of teachers and (57.9%, n=339) pupils concurred that when a family has many herds of cattle, camel and goats, they were regarded as wealthy by the community and boys from such families saw their future as secured. This created the believe in the boys that school was not important leading to their drop out. The notable gap on the level of agreement between the teachers and pupils could be due to the notion by the boys that as a show of economic prowess, they need to accumulate their own wealth without depending on parents or inheritance. Cheromoi (2019) states that boys take pride and engage in cattle rustling to acquire their own cattle which are used during *sapana* ceremony to initiate them into leadership.

According to Kurgat (2017) the Pokot community believe that boys are 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 finding concurred with a Standard Newspaper feature, (Njiru, 2017, Oct 4<sup>th</sup>) which reported that the education sector had suffered a major blow as cases of dropouts had increased in parts of Baringo county despite free education. One of the head teachers was reported to have indicated that some boys dropped due their notion that they would inherit wealth from their parents. The inheritance of family wealth seemed to be more appealing to the boys as it is more tangible than the unforeseen returns on education. Likewise, Koriang's (2014) study on the Pokot cultural world view revealed that male children were highly valued since they give societal status to the parents and inherit their father's property. On that, a QASO observed that:

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

It would be expected that the preferential treatment accorded to the boys over girls would be advantageous to them in all aspect including education, but to the contrary this entitlement works negatively to lure them out of school.

Another barrier to boys' retention in school is cattle rustling and raiding which is an old practice used by the pastoralist communities to restock their livestock. It is a masculine activity undertaken by the men and boys in the community. In this study the respondents agreed that the influence of cattle rustling on retention was

minimal as indicated by a minority (41.3%, n=434) of teachers and (21.8%, n=339) of pupils who agreed with this statement. There was however a difference in the level of agreement between the teachers and pupils. The vehement denial of the influence of cattle rustling on retention by the school boys in comparison to the teachers could be partly due to the attempt of the pupils to defend their culture when depicted in negative light.

The low influence of cattle rustling on boys' retention could be credited to the attempt by the government to eliminate cattle rustling by criminalizing it and applying hefty penalties on the perpetrators. Emuria (2016) observed that both the county and national governments have used disarmament incentives and programmes on warring communities in an attempt to curb cattle rustling. This finding however, contradicts with Koriang (2014) and Cheromoi (2019) who found out that boys were still actively involved in cattle rustling and upon successful raiding escapades boys became highly motivated, they saw themselves as grown-up men ready to accumulate wealth with the end result being dropping out of school.

The reduction in cattle rustling could also be due to urbanization and gradual cultural shift as a result of modernization. Moru (2010) explains that although the Pokot pastoralist community has engaged the male members in cattle rustling from time immemorial, western education has significantly penetrated the community and this cultural practice is gradually being discarded. In the interview conducted a QASO noted that:

*Many people believe that cattle rustling is the main activity in Pokot culture, but many Pokot people are slowly abandoning this culture because of*

*government policies, christianity and education. It is only in few areas in central and north Pokot where the activity is still prevalent. Consequently, boys from those areas rarely attend school.*

This 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 commercialization of the activity and proliferation of modern fire arms. Media reports too seem to depict continued rampancy of cattle rustling. For instance, a report on the Star Newspaper (Etyang, 2019, July, 9<sup>th</sup>) 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 influence on retention cannot be down played especially in the sub-counties where the practice is still prevalent and requires to be relooked into deeper by use of different approaches in order to have boys attending school.

With reduction in cattle rustling, cross border raids have reduced significantly and as such the need to recruit young boys to defend community against external aggression has also reduced significantly. The findings from both teachers and pupils indicated that community defence role by the boys minimally influenced boys' retention. About half (49.5%, n=434) of the teachers and a minority (23.3%, n=339) of the pupils agreed that boys' community defence role influenced their retention. The wide gap in levels of agreement between the teachers and the pupils could be due to the vast knowledge the teachers possess

as a result of exposure as opposed to the pupils in relation to the entire county. 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. That has relieved the men and by extension the boys from playing this role thus according them an opportunity to attend school.

However, in the few areas where raids are still rampant, 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. A QASO observed;

*Insecurity is still a main concern due to cross boarder conflicts especially with Baringo county, Turkana county 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 and leading to school closures. In addition, some boys are recruited to take part in these raids.*

Cross border conflicts are common among pastoralists. Firuli (2013) gives conflict over pasture and water as one of the factors that lead to fights and displacement of families dislodging pupils from school. Tunesvik (2010) adds that, generally, there is very high expectation on the boys with respect to protective roles and that boys schooling suffer more as they participate in cross-border conflicts with their neighbours.

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 was still high and boys were still engaged in it so as to emancipate the boys affected. In addition, the opinion of the majority of the

teachers and QASOs was that the government should increase boys' boarding primary schools as well as boys' rescue centres to keep the boys away from harmful cultural practices and enhance their retention. Likewise, Njuguna and Muchanje (2019) on their study on socio-economic factors influencing boys' retention in Mathioya proposed establishment of more boys boarding schools in order to improve their participation in school.

The study sought to test the first null hypothesis ( $\alpha=0.05$  level of significance) which stated:

**H<sub>01</sub>: There is no statistically significant relationship between male gender roles and retention of boys in public primary schools in West Pokot County**

Linear regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between male gender roles and retention of boys. The results are summarized in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7: Regression Test Results for Influence of gender on Boys' Retention**

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.359 <sup>a</sup>	0.129	0.128	0.439

Predictors: (Constant), Male Gender Roles

Table 4.7 shows coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) which indicated the extent to which variation on the dependent variable was attributed to the independent variable. In this case, an adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.128 was obtained which showed that approximately 13% of the variance on retention was accounted for by its linear relationship with male gender roles including rite of passage, herding, child

labour, leadership, cattle rustling and community protection roles. The rest 87% was accounted by other variables besides gender roles.

**Table 4.8: Beta Coefficient Results for Influence of Male Gender Roles on Boys' Retention**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	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 4.8 shows that gender roles contributed significantly to the model. The beta coefficient of 0.212 obtained meant that a unit increase in the gender roles resulted in 0.212 influence on retention of boys in school.

**Table 4.9: Regression Results for Influence of Male Gender Roles on Boys' Retention**

Model	Sum of				
	Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1.830	1	1.830	8.356	.004
Residual	168.856	771	.134		
Total	170.686	772			

. Dependent Variable: Retention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Male Gender Roles

Table 4.9: shows 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 which was below the  $\alpha=0.05$  level of significance. That implied that the null hypothesis stated was rejected and the alternative hypothesis which

stated; There is a statistically significant relationship between male gender roles and retention of boys in primary schools adopted.

These findings can be interpreted to mean that male gender roles significantly influenced boys' retention. That means that when boys are engaged in male gender roles assigned by the community their educational pursuits suffer leading them to drop out of school. These findings concur with those of a study by Emuria (2016), who found out that there was a strong relationship between cattle rustling and boys' participation in school in Turkana South sub-county. Heyder and Kessels (2013) partially agrees that although negative masculine behaviours like disconnectedness, violence and devaluing the feminine influence boys' education negatively, positive masculine behaviours such as exhibiting leadership, competitiveness and rationality positively correlated with boys' academic success and retention in school. These findings also differ with those of Somers (2013) who pointed out boys' endorsement of traditional masculine norms were positively associated with perceived boys' academic success and retention in school. The findings of this study imply that failure to address the negative male gender roles that boys are engaged in will continue to undermine their retention in school.

#### **4.6 Influence of Institutional Practices on Retention of Boys**

The second objective of this study was to establish the influence of institutional practices on retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County. To achieve this objective, the QASOs were interviewed while the teachers (head teachers and class teachers) and pupils were asked to rate the information on the

influence of institutional practices on boys' retention in schools based on their level of agreement with statements provided in the questionnaire. 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). The findings from teachers and pupils' responses on the influence of institutional practices on boys' retention were presented in Table 4.10 (a) and 4.10 (b).

**Table 4.10 (a): Teachers' Responses on Institutional Practices Influence of on Boys Retention**

INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES	SD		D		NS		A		SA		Mean	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
More girls than boys in class	48	11.1	152	35.0	24	5.5	122	28.1	88	20.3	3.1	1.3
Incompatible Instructional methods	32	7.4	71	16.4	30	6.9	179	41.2	122	28.1	3.9	1.3
Mixed class room	112	25.8	121	28.0	29	6.7	83	19.1	89	20.4	2.8	1.5
Scarcity of male role models	97	22.4	62	14.3	15	3.5	121	27.9	139	32.0	4.5	1.2
Girls performing better than boys	72	16.6	46	10.6	9	2.1	202	46.5	105	24.2	3.7	1.1
Boys are punished more than girls	90	20.8	67	15.4	17	3.9	109	25.3	150	34.6	3.1	1.3
Inadequate learning materials	65	15.0	148	34.1	19	4.4	123	28.3	79	18.2	3.1	1.3
Rigid enforcement of rules	36	8.3	39	9.0	20	4.6	152	35.0	187	43.1	4.2	1.0
<b>Overall mean response</b>											3.55	1.08

**Table 4.10(b): Pupils Responses on Institutional Practices influence on Boys Retention**

INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES	SD		D		NS		A		SA		Mean	SD
	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%		
More girls than boys in class	40	11.8	65	19.2	22	6.5	131	38.6	81	23.9	2.9	1.3
Incompatible instructional methods	45	13.3	52	15.3	7	2.1	106	31.2	129	38.1	3.0	1.2
Mixed class room	67	19.7	93	27.4	25	7.4	108	31.8	46	13.7	3.2	1.5
Scarcity of Male role models	52	15.3	68	20	24	7.1	93	27.4	102	30.0	4.0	1.1
Girls perform better than boys	82	24.2	31	9.1	14	4.1	72	21.2	140	41.3	3.5	1.1
Boys are punished more than girls	46	13.6	25	7.4	11	3.2	68	20.1	189	55.8	3.6	1.3
Inadequate learning materials	79	23.3	74	21.8	26	7.7	71	20.9	88	26.3	3.8	1.0
Rigid enforcement of rules	27	8	42	12.4	23	6.8	139	41.0	108	31.9	3.9	1.1
<b>Overall mean response</b>											3.48	1.18

The findings on Table 4.10(a) and (b) indicate that institutional practices moderately influenced retention of boys in school with an overall Mean of 3.51 and SD 1.13 (Teachers' Mean 3.56 SD 1.08 and pupils' Mean 3.48 SD 1.18). This means that some of the practices singled out within the school could have knowingly or unknowingly impeded boys' retention in school. These practices included, rigid enforcement of school rules, mixed boys' and girls' classrooms, absence of male role models in school, differential treatment of boys and girls as well as incompatible instructional methods.

On the rigid enforcement of school rules, majority of the respondents (78.1%, n=434) of teachers and (72.9%, n=339) of pupils agreed that it influenced retention of boys in school. The explanation for this could be that the rigid enforcement of school rules which in most cases entail the use of punishment may challenge the social status of the boys who by that time have been socialised to behave as adults by cultural practices. According to Koringura (2004) disciplining of boys and young men is usually a preserve of the older males in the Pokot community, yet the majority of primary school teachers are female. Plummer (2015) opines that the mentality that boys' discipline is a preserve of men is perpetuated in schools and boys may find it difficult to adhere to school rules particularly when enforced by female teachers.

Figueroa (2010) informs that failure to instill discipline particularly by female teachers may make boys believe it is a domain of the male figures in the society leading to disobedience in schools. To reinforce that fact, a QASO interviewed observed that;

*Due to socialization, some boys may want to test the limits by breaking school rules and asserting their maleness by disobeying the female teachers. The female teachers should not cede ground by calling upon their male colleagues to assist in disciplining the boys because this would make boys undermine their authority further. This leads to indiscipline of the concerned boys which makes school uncomfortable for them.*

There is need for the boys to recognize the authority of teachers without profiling them according to their gender. That way, they would be able to obey school rules regardless of whether it is a male or female teacher enforcing them. The rules should also be fair and clearly stipulated. Muvawala (2012) posits that some of the institutional activities that actually yield the expected positive influence on retention included clear school rules. The same QASO had this to say concerning school rules:

*School boards of management are sometimes called upon to solve discipline cases where the pupils turn violent against the female teachers who may seem to disregard their new status as men, more so, the female teachers from outside the community. The boys may hold grudges against these teachers and sometimes lay ambush on them outside school compound. In some instances, the parents of such children take part in castigating the teachers.*

when such incidences happen, it could make the teachers to develop negative attitude towards the boys and the community creating conflict which in turn could lead to boys being uncomfortable in school and that could make them dropout of school.

This study further found that there was differential treatment between girls and boys when it came to meting out punishment. Boys tended to be punished more harshly than the girls. Slightly over half (59.9%, n=434) of the teachers and majority (75.9%, n=339) of the pupils agreed that difference in treatment between boys and girls contributed to boys' drop out. The difference in response between

teachers and the pupils could be attributed to the fact that boys were the recipients of the punishment. The finding implies that unfair administration of punishment on the boys creates resentment and may lead to school dropout. This study finding agrees with the findings of a study conducted by Simic and Krstic (2017) which reported that rigid administration of punishment for students with disciplinary issues or absenteeism contributed significantly to learners' drop out. The study further opined that to improve retention, schools should have reasonable disciplinary measures, observant teachers who focus on students' strengths and who frequently carry out student guidance programmes as opposed to punishment.

Naturally boys tend to be more active and more aggressive in behaviour a fact reinforced by Espelage and Swearer (2014) who found out that boys are more inclined to rely on physical violence when they are frustrated than girls. These inclinations are inconsistent with the demands of classroom expectations and most likely makes the school an intimidating environment for boys. Gleditsch (2013) study on deconstructing the boys in education showed that in elementary school the same behavioural problems in both boys and girls were penalised a lot more in boys than girls. As a result, the boys felt that they were unfairly treated which could lead to their drop out. Chege (2009) also agree that boys and girls are treated differently in school. While girls are more frequently praised than boys, boys are often punished more harshly than girls.

Similarly, a study by Laura (2010) on dropout rates in the United States reported that due to the emphasis in school on stereotypically feminine characteristics such

as attentiveness, compliance and being less aggressive, girls were inclined to like school and perform better than boys in the early years. Laura further reiterates that even in kindergarten, boys received more reproach from teachers who regularly respond to children in gender-stereotypic ways. This implies that boys may perceive school as gender-inappropriate environment which does not favour them. That at times lowers enthusiasm and interest in school leading to higher rate of school drop out for the boys.

This study finding further showed that the instructional methods employed in delivery of content in classrooms influenced retention. Majority of the respondents (69.3%, n=434) of teachers and (69.5%, n=339) of pupils agreed that the methods used for instruction in school such as long periods of sitting, rote learning and taking notes were not favourable for boys. Many lessons in school require long periods of sitting and listening which makes the boys to be restless in class naturally. Dunne (2015) is of the same opinion that boys tend to be more active and more physical in their learning compared to girls and may become agitated if the instructional method used in class involves a lot of sitting. Zyngier (2012) results also concurred that when the school has more physical activities, it stirs more interest and positive attitude of boys towards education. Besides, Goolamally and Ahmad (2010) also observed that being studious and hardworking in class is considered feminine by boys.

Some QASOs expressed concern that the school environment needed to be attractive and conducive for boys by being sensitive to the cultural pressures the boys' encounter in the community. They suggested that the schools' guidance

and counselling departments should assist boys to navigate an already precarious balance between culture and education. One of the QASOs reported that there should be culture friendly institutional practices such as cultural days in schools where pupils are given an opportunity to showcase their culture. This may help to positively change the attitude of boys and their parents towards school. In fact, one of them said;

*The boys are under a lot of pressure to conform to the community expectations. If the school environment is not made conducive for them, chances are that they are likely to succumb to the strong pull away from school. The schools must do everything within their means to encourage boys in school.*

The boys are at crossroads between culture and education and the schools should be made attractive to enhance boys' retention. Simic and Krstic (2017) agree that unsatisfactory relations with teachers and poor classroom climate are contributors of school drop out by boys.

On the availability of role models in school, the findings showed that there were more female teachers in primary schools than male teachers. The absence of male role models moderately influenced retention of boys in school as depicted by a slight majority of the respondents, (59.9%, n=434) of the teachers and (57.4%, n=339) of the pupils. Mentors play important roles in setting examples for boys to emulate. The shortage of male role models in school disadvantaged the boys. Itegi (2019) has shown that mentors play a critical role in shaping the character and attitude of boys in school especially during transition into adulthood. The study explicates the importance of role models in developing moral values among learners and explains that the behaviour exhibited by learners in school show that

they lack sufficient role models. Hunte (2017) agree that it is important to have male teachers for the boys and emphasizes that when boys lack proper role models to look up to, they may end up with negative role models to fill the vacuum either at home or in school.

A study by National Middle School Association NMSA (2010) on mentoring of middle school students reported that students struggled with emotional and social changes during transition to adulthood and mentoring had been found to equip them with skills and dispositions such as resilience, perseverance and determination to help them cope with school. This means that the need for mentoring children during transition can help increase retention through developing positive attitude towards school. Chege (2005) also found out that male teachers were relatively few in primary schools and portrayed themselves as laid-back and uninterested in connecting with the boys. Concerning role modelling, one of the QASOs interviewed observed that:

*Most of our primary schools have more female than male teachers. Some of the female teachers find it hard to give instructions to boys after circumcision as boys openly defy them leading to conflict with teachers. When female teachers feel their authority is challenged by the boys, they in turn, become harsh, dictatorial and self-centered and only end up scaring boys away from school.*

UNICEF (2009) report also indicated that the dominance of female teachers at lower grades denies boys the role models required in their initial years of schooling. Koech (2015) had noted earlier that qualified male teachers left the education sector to pursue better paying jobs. This implies that the boys are left with few male role models to emulate and may view education as a female

venture. Kelleher (2012) and Farland-Smith (2014) agree that boys look up to male figures as role models as they are thought to have a greater influence than role models of opposite gender. Majority of the QASOs interviewed also agreed that inadequate role models demotivated boys translating to low school retention. The feminization of the school environments could emasculate the boys leading to resistance to school rules which could lead to their drop out.

On whether having mixed classroom for boys and girls influenced boys' retention, this study established that the influence was minimal as portrayed by minority of the respondents (39.5%, n=434) of the teachers and (45.5%, n=339) of the pupils who agreed. Both the teachers and the pupils were in agreement that having mixed classes did not impede boys' retention. This was probably because mixed classroom reflected the home set up and how boys and girls live and interact in the real world.

In favour of mixed classrooms, Nora (2016) explains that mixed gender schools prepare the students for the real world, enhances equality and socialization which in turn may help in overcoming negative cultural biases. Ribeiro (2019) also asserted that mixed schools help to tone down the macho cultures within boys' schools. When boys are left unchecked, they are likely to incubate hyper-masculine or misogynistic cultures. Nora (2016) further agrees that the interaction among learners in co-educational school activities coupled with favourable school practices and close interpersonal relationships were linked to low drop out of male learners. This however was in contrast to observation of

majority of the QASOs who felt that the county should invest in more boys' boarding primary schools to enhance boys' retention. One of them explained that:

*In the few boys boarding primary schools available the rate of boys leaving school is lower compared to mixed day schools. That is why the government should invest in building more boys boarding schools which can also act as rescue centers for those boys who are interested in education and are escaping from harmful cultural practices like cattle rustling.*

The finding therefore revealed that practice of having male and female pupils in the same class impacted boys' retention minimally. There was concern by the QASOs that there was need for the school and community to work hand in hand to encourage boys to remain in school at all levels of learning.

The study sought to test a second null hypothesis ( $\alpha=0.05$  level of significance) which stated:

**H<sub>02</sub>: There is no statistically significant relationship between institutional practices and retention of boys in public primary schools in West Pokot County**

Linear regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between institutional practices and retention of boys. The results were summarized in Table 4.11

**Table 4.11: Coefficient of Determination for Influence of Institutional Practices on Boys' Retention**

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.69	0.05	0.04	0.469

a Predictors: (Constant) Institutional Practices

b Dependent variable

Table 4.11 shows the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) obtained which indicated the extent to which the variation on the dependent variable was attributed to the independent variable. In this case, an adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.04 was obtained which implied that approximately 4% of the variance on retention was accounted for by its linear relationship with institutional practices including strict enforcement of school rules, scarcity of male role models, differential treatment of boys and girls, mixed classrooms and incompatible instructional methods. The rest, 96% was accounted for by other variables other than institution practices.

**Table 4.12: Beta Coefficient results for Institutional Practices Influence and Boys' Retention**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.577	0.087		41.084	0.000
Institutional Practices	0.053	0.027	0.069	1.928	0.054

a Dependent Variable: Retention

Table 4.12 shows that institutional practices contributed significantly to the model. A beta coefficient of 0.053 showed that one unit increase in the institutional practices would result in 0.053 increase on retention of boys in school.

**Table 4.13: Regression Results for Institutional Practices influence on Boys' Retention**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	0.819	1	0.819	3.715	.054 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	169.867	771	0.220		
Total	170.686	772			

a Dependent Variable: Retention

b Predictors: (Constant) Institutional Practices

Table 4.13 indicated the statistical significance of the regression model that was applied. The (p) value obtained was 0.054 which was above the level of significance of  $\alpha=0.05$ , that meant that on overall, the model applied was not statistically significant to predict the boys' retention in school. This implied that the null hypothesis which stated: There is no statistically significant relationship between institutional practices and retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County was accepted.

These findings show that institutional practices were not significant predictors of retention of boys in primary school in West Pokot County. The findings of this study contradict those of Zyngier (2012) who showed that the drop out phenomenon was influenced by the learning environment. In contrast is another study by Dean (2016) which found that school infrastructure and learning materials were quite crucial for promoting school retention. As much as on overall the institutional practices investigated showed minimal influence on retention of boys, shortage of male role models in school, the rigid enforcement of school rules and the differential treatment of boys and girls in meting out punishment were aspects of school practices that this study found to influence retention.

#### **4.7 Parental Support Influence on Boys Retention**

The third objective of the study was to determine the influence of parental support on retention of boys in public primary schools in West Pokot County. To achieve this objective, the QASOs were interviewed while the pupils and teachers (head teachers and class teachers) were asked to rate the information on parental

support and its influence on retention of boys in primary 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). The responses by the teachers and pupils on parental support influence on boys' retention in primary schools were presented in Table 4.14. (a) and (b).

**Table 4.14 (a): Teachers Responses on of Parental Support Influence on Boys Retention**

	SD		D		NS		A		SA		Mean	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
<b>PARENTAL SUPPORT</b>												
Inadequate provision School provision	20	4.6	58	13.4	8	1.8	133	30.6	205	47.2	4.1	1.2
Lack of homework supervision	44	10.2	55	12.7	14	3.2	168	38.7	153	35.2	3.9	1.2
Encourage child labour	28	6.5	18	4.1	35	8.1	215	49.5	138	31.8	4.2	1.0
Negative parental attitude	46	10.6	50	11.5	5	1.2	171	39.4	162	37.3	3.8	1.1
Lack of academic follow up	52	12.0	19	4.4	13	3.0	173	39.9	177	40.8	4.2	1.0
Culture vs education conflict	29	6.7	42	9.7	32	7.4	164	37.8	167	38.5	4.3	1.1
Lack of participation in school activity	17	3.9	31	7.1	26	6.0	176	40.6	184	42.4	4.2	1.1
Lack of parental commitment	12	2.8	11	2.5	18	4.1	150	34.6	243	56.0	4.5	1.2
<b>Overall mean response</b>											4.12	1.11

**Table 4.14(b): Pupils Responses on of Parental Support Influence on Boys Retention**

	SD		D		NS		A		SA		Mean	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
<b>PARENTAL SUPPORT</b>												
Inadequate provision of learning materials	59	17.4	23	6.8	23	6.8	80	23.6	154	45.4	3.4	1.1
Lack of homework supervision	50	14.2	35	10.3	3	0.9	58	17.1	193	56.9	4.3	1.2
Encourage child labour	18	5.3	35	10.3	17	5.0	181	53.4	88	26.0	4.2	1.0
Negative Parental attitude	52	15.3	29	8.6	22	6.5	87	25.6	149	44.0	3.9	1.2
Lack of Academic follow up	47	13.9	30	8.8	5	1.5	69	20.4	188	55.5	4.2	1.2
Culture vs education conflict	39	11.5	34	10.0	5	1.5	65	19.2	196	57.8	4.1	1.2
Lack of participation in school activities	58	17.1	46	13.6	28	8.3	72	21.2	135	39.8	4.5	1.3
Lack of Parental commitment	32	9.4	15	4.4	9	2.7	90	26.5	193	56.9	4.2	1.1
<b>Overall mean response</b>											4.10	1.16

Table 4.14 (a) and (b) show the responses of the teachers and pupils on parental support and its influence on boys' retention of in schools. The findings show that parental support highly influenced retention of boys in school with an overall Mean 4.11 and SD 1.13. (teachers Mean 4.12, SD 1.11 and pupils Mean 4.10, SD 1.16). The aspects of parental support studied were, lack of parental commitment to boys schooling, inadequate provision of learning materials, lack of academic follow-up, lack of participation in school activities and negative parental attitude towards boys' education.

On lack of parental commitment, majority of the respondents (90.6%, n=434) of teachers and (83.4%, n=339) of pupils were on agreement that it led to boys dropping out of school. This meant that some parents did not really care whether the boys went to school or not. This lacklustre approach made the boys have a negative attitude towards education leading to drop out. Researches done in this area had similar findings. For instance, Kimu (2012) found out that, when parents are consistently involved in supporting their children, the children felt obligated to remain in school and they were unlikely to drop out irrespective of prevailing cultural influences. This could be attributed to the illiteracy of most parents as one QASO indicated:

*Most parents here are illiterate and have poor knowledge on the value of education. If they were knowledgeable enough, it would be easy for them to ensure the boys attended school. Some have no interest whether their children attend school or not. In some rare cases some children escape from home to attend school in rescue facilities against their parents' wish.*

When parents are committed to the schooling of their children, they follow up on school matters and ensure that the children attend school regularly. However,

owing to their own lack of education the parents may not fully appreciate education. These findings agree with Haveman and Wolfe (2005), Kimu (2012) and Kailembo (2011) who opined that involvement in children's learning vary according to parents own academic attainment. Educated parents inspire the academic growth of children leading to pupils' persistence in school and thirst for further education. These findings agree with MOEST (2014) report which stated that the key reason for low retention in ASALs in Kenya is lack of commitment on the part of parents due to their own lack of formal education. Educated parents would ensure that the boys go to school as expected and would reign on the boys against dropping out.

The findings further show that some parents encourage their children to engage in child labour. The majority (81.3%, n=434) of teachers and (79.4%, n=339) of pupils agreed that child labour highly influenced retention of boys in school. It emerged that many boys were engaged in activities that generate income for themselves and their families. This implied that the boys were usually withdrawn from school to do casual labour to provide for their families leading to school dropout. A study on child dropout by Bahago (2011) revealed that some boys were just enrolled in school for the sake of it as they were later withdrawn when it was convenient to the parents to engage them in various activities that contribute to the household economies. Confirming that, 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 boda business in order to provide for their families. Some however do it out of their own accord. These are forms of child labour which keep young boys out of school.*

For some boys, the engagement in these activities may be due to poverty in their homes hence they do it to provide for their families. In Ethiopia, Boyden, et al. (2016) opined that sometimes boys from disadvantaged backgrounds were forced to engage in child labour activities by the parents in order to provide for their families. However, Koriang (2014) observes that sometimes the boys may engage in child labour activities such as herding and mining against the wish of their parents as a way of exerting their masculinity as young men trying to acquire their individual wealth. 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.*

This implies that both the parents and the boys share the blame of child labour that keeps the boys out of school in this county. The parents allow child labour as a contribution to household economies while the boys undertake child labour activities to exert their masculinity. The community expects the boys to behave as adults and this restricts the parental control on activities that boys engage in. Koirala and Acharya (2015) pointed out that 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 to take up adult roles.

Child labour is not unique to the Pokot situation, many governments have struggled to keep children in school by coming up with labour laws to that effect.

According to Abagi (2013) it is the implementation of these labour laws that many countries continue to grapple with. A report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) showed that 152million children were engaged in child labour globally (ILO 2017). In Kenya the government effort to provide food in schools through the school feeding programme in order to curb child has not borne much fruit. A study by Rotich (2015) on school feeding programme influence on pupils schooling in West Pokot indicated that despite the school feeding programme in some schools, children aged 10 to 19 years still sacrificed their education in favour of economic activities in order to meet their basic needs and those of their families. In reinforcing that, one QASO explained that:

*The school feeding programme do not supply food regularly and furthermore they feed children in school. The parents and young siblings have nothing to eat at home therefore the boys drop to fend for their families.*

This implies some of the strategies put in place by the government may not be effective. Amma (2010) in a study on combating child labour revealed that during drought search for food is the most important activity and children are drawn into child labour to provide food for their households. Since pupils cannot attend school while hungry, they are involved in the search for food. This affects their retention in schools as some are forced to drop out of school altogether.

Lack of follow-up on the academics' progress of the children by parents was found to highly influence boys' retention in school with majority (80.7%, n=434) of teachers and (81.3%, n=339) of the pupils agreeing. This implies that when parents check on academic progress of learner, reprimand them on their achievement as well as remind them to attend school regularly, it keeps the boys

on their toes and are likely to persist and complete school. This is important as Muvawala (2012) study findings point to the fact that to the nomadic community education may not be a priority. According to the study few parents from nomadic communities' follow-up on their children academic progress because parents and the community at large feel that education alienates children from their culture. Simpkins and Dearing (2012) reiterate the significance of parental follow up on the academic progress of pupils and note that parents need to support and encourage their children through rewards and praises which motivates the children and give them confidence necessary for learning and persistence in school. That lack of parental follow-up has worked against the retention of Pokot boys who have to delicately balance between education and culture.

There are nevertheless studies that found mothers to have a greater contribution towards their children's educational achievement than fathers (Greif and Greif, 2014). The study found out that the fathers had no significant influence on their children's academic accomplishments. The realization that mothers are more impactful on the education of the children works to further disadvantage the boys in West Pokot due to the cultural socialization barring women from guiding the boys. Bordhan (2014) agrees that there is a positive relationship between poor parental monitoring and children involvement in delinquency, absenteeism and school dropout.

The conflict between culture and education emerged as a determinant in the retention of boys in school. Majority (76.3%, n=434) of teachers and (77.0%,

n=339) pupils agreed to that. As earlier indicated, some parents consider education to be distancing the boys from their culture. As traditions still abound in the community, when a dilemma presents itself and a choice has to be made between education and cultural activities, education usually suffers. Kurgat (2017) on providing an insight into strong cultural practices of the Pokot notes that the Pokot are headed by elders who vehemently resisted formal education when colonialists first introduced it in the region. One QASO noted that cultural practices were still very strong among the Pokot;

*The community is regimented into age groups. Each age group has a specific role to play within the community. Immediately boys come out of circumcision, community responsibilities await them and this continues as they move from one age group to another throughout their lives. Those who fail to adhere to these are termed as outcasts. So, the boys find themselves trying to balance between obedience to culture and school.*

Culture in totality is not harmful except some aspects that go against education. Chelimo (2012) studied access to education by pastoralists in Karamojong Uganda and upheld that the tenacity with which the pastoralist community clings to culture and social institutions is caused by the fear of losing their cultural practices and traditions. These practices are considered valuable and necessary for holding the community together. The QASOs interviewed advised that that it is important to come up with strategies that could establish a middle ground so that the boys can embrace both education and culture and by so doing the community would not find a reason to fight education.

As far as parental participation in school activities is concerned, majority of teachers (83.0%, n=434) and pupils (61.0%, n=339) agreed that when parents do not attend school activities it discourages the boys from active participation in

school leading to disinterest in school. That is detrimental to retention as research has shown that parental participation in school functions and activities motivate learners to do well in school. For instance, Susan (2010) found out the less drop out was experienced when parents monitored and regulated student activities, provided emotional support and encouraged independent decision making. An observation from one QASO interviewed on this factor shed light on the extent of parental negligence on the education of the boys and had this to say:

*You will be surprised by the few parents who turn up for school meetings. sometimes the head teachers find it difficult to appoint parent's association (PA) representatives during annual general meetings because of the few parents who turn up when called upon. They feel that school activities are the work of teachers not parents.*

In as much as the failure to attend school activities may not solely apply to boys' retention, it nonetheless sends the wrong signal to the boys that school functions and activities are not important. Lemmer (2007) pointed out that the frequent interaction between teachers and parents improved retention in school by encouraging participation of students in learning which is not the case in the researched county. Similarly, Simiyu (2012) agrees that children whose parents take part in school activities have higher probability of completing primary school compared to those students whose parents were absent for school activities. This means that parents who are constantly interacting with the teachers and are actively involved in school activities demonstrate how important the education of their children is to them. Parental involvement is even more critical to boys from Pokot community who are at a high risk of dropping out of school owing to the influence of culture.

The study found failure of parents to provide adequate learning materials required for the boys' education to have highly influenced retention of boys in school with (77.9%, n= 434) of teachers and (69.0%, n=339) of pupils agreeing. There was a slight difference in opinion between the respondents which could be attributed to the fact that teachers understood what the learners needed in school and therefore were in a better position to know what was lacking unlike the pupils. The lack of parental support come in provision of learning requirements such as uniform, soap, food, books and writing materials that affected school attendance.

Ouma (2016) reiterates that the role of the parent does not end with sending the child to school but includes support of the child while in school by providing the materials needed. Besides the government pledge for free education, the parents are expected to provide uniform, writing materials and food for the pupils. Some boys who lack or have tattered uniforms could feel embarrassed to attend school.

One QASO pointed out that:

*Many parents have this notion that the government has provided free primary education and therefore assume that everything is free. They therefore fail to meet their obligation of providing basic requirements for their children. Some boys may feel embarrassed to attend school in tattered uniform.*

The boys felt discouraged to attend school if they lacked basic requirements meant to make them functional in school. This could encourage absenteeism and eventually school dropout. Kweyu (2019) observes that good parental support would include meeting their timely financial obligations at school, attendance of school organized meetings as well as checking on academic progress of the children.

Further this study found out that parental negative attitude towards education was a factor in determining boys' retention in school. Both the teachers and the pupils (76.6%, n=434 of teachers and 69.5%, n=339 of pupils) agreed to that. This means that the negative attitude of parents towards education may have contributed to a negative attitude of boys towards school and their eventual drop out. When parents have a negative attitude towards school, they can neither follow on their school progress nor question their sons' disinterest in school. The children develop apathy towards school leading to their dropout. Borhdan (2014) found out that positive parental attitude towards boys' education was important in determining their access, attendance and retention in school.

The findings agree with those of a study done in India by Samal (2012) on parental attitude towards learning, showing that when parents had a positive attitude toward the education of the children, school attendance improved. The attention accorded by either parent on boys' education differ on their effect on boys' retention. Among the Pokot, it has been noted that mothers have a laid-back approach when instructing boys due to their cultural restrictions as their close monitoring would be interpreted to mean emasculation of the boys. A study by Kelleher (2012) shows that the societal perception of treating men and boys as superior may deter the mothers from administering discipline to the boys as this is seen as a preserve of the male members of the community. One QASO expressed dismay:

*The boys are left to their own fate, they are seen as mature individuals who can make decision on their own and some parents do not care whether they go to school or not. Many boys roam aimlessly in the villages without*

*parents questioning them and unfortunately when they go home in the evening the parents are ready to provide them with food.*

The attitude that boys are old enough and free to make independent decisions after circumcision leaves the responsibility of decision making in the hands of adolescents who are mentally immature to make informed decisions on schooling.

On the parental support of supervising boys' homework, this study showed that failure of parents to supervise homework had a high influence on boys' retention. Majority of teachers (73.9%, n=434) and pupils (74.0%, n=339) agreed to that statement. This means that when children are supervised when doing homework, they feel encouraged in their school work and this can contribute to their like for school. Bordhan (2014) concurs that supervising children's homework nurtures positive attitude towards schooling, fosters good behaviours, supplements class material and sends a signal to the pupils that their education matters. As cited earlier, most of the parents are illiterate and hence may not be in a position to supervise their children when doing homework. Yet studies have indicated that when parents take keen interest in the homework of pupils their interest in school is rekindled and are unlikely to drop out.

Nyarko and Vorgelet (2011) point out that parental involvement has been positively associated with children persistence in school. On the same note, Willems and Holbein (2015) agree that children whose parents actively follow up on their school work at home registered high academic achievement and positive attitude toward school which contributed to their retention in school. In addition,

Admassie (2013) noted that family settings which are less active in their children education are characterized by negative attitudes towards school, less tolerance levels and higher likelihood of dropping out of school.

The findings from QASOs interviews in general showed that high levels of illiteracy of most parents coupled with the fact that most parents are enmeshed in their cultural activities had made education of the boys secondary. Some QASOs pointed out that the boys' contribution to the household economies through herding and other child labour activities had disadvantaged their school retention further.

The study sought to test a third null hypothesis ( $\alpha=0.05$  level of significance) which stated:

**H<sub>03</sub>: There is no statistically significant relationship between parental support and retention of boys in primary schools.**

Linear regression analysis was used to test the relationship between parental support and retention. The results were summarized in Table 4.15.

**Table 4.15: Coefficient of Determination for Influence of Parental Support on Boys' Retention**

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.421 <sup>a</sup>	0.177	0.176	0.427

a Predictors: (Constant) Parental Support

b Dependent variable

Table 4.15 shows the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) obtained which indicated the extent to which the variation on the dependent variable was attributed to the

independent variable. In this case, an adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.176 was obtained which signified that approximately 18% of the variance on retention was accounted for by its linear relationship with parental support in terms of inadequate provision of learning materials, lack of academic follow up on school work, lack of parental commitment to boys' education, nonattendance of school activities, negative parental attitude towards boys' education and lack of supervision of homework. The rest 82% was as a result of other variables besides parental support.

**Table 4.16: Beta Coefficient for Parental Support Influence on Boys' Retention Coefficients**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.372	0.108		22.056	0.000
Parental Support	0.386	0.030	0.421	12.870	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Retention

Table 4.16 shows that parental support contributed significantly to the model. A Beta coefficient of 0.386 meant that a unit increase in the parental support resulted in 0.386 influence on retention of boys in school.

**Table 4.17: Regression Test Results for Influence of Parental Support on Boys' Retention**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	30.183	1	30.183	165.626	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	140.503	771	.182		
Total	170.686	772			

a Dependent Variable: Retention

b Predictors: (Constant) Parental Support

Table 4.17 indicated that the model applied was statistically significant in predicting the influence of parental support on boys' retention. This was supported by a probability (p) value of 0.000 that is below  $\alpha = 0.05$  level of significance. That implied that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis which stated: There is a statistically significant relationship between parental support and retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County was adopted.

These findings showed that parental support was a good predictor of boys' retention in primary schools. The findings of this study concurred with those of Nyarko and Vorgelet (2011) in their study on understanding of education in an African village who found a positive relationship between parental involvement in education of the boys and persistence in school. Nyabokeye, Mwebi and Onderi (2016) on a study on boys drop out in Nyamira county reinforces this study finding as they reported that boys whose parents supervised and controlled their activities, provided emotional support and allowed independent decision making were found to persevere in school.

Other researchers have opined that educated parents always encourage their children and give guidance in school related matters compared to illiterate economically deprived parents who sometimes turn violent on the slightest provocation upsetting the child. Similarly, Willems and Holbein (2015) agree that children whose parents actively follow up on their school work at home registered high academic achievement and positive attitude toward school.

Many other studies zeroed-in on the influence of mothers and fathers support on education of the students separately and showed that mothers' involvement in the education of the children had been associated with increased positive school attitudes, enhanced teacher-child relationships and improved school retention (Greif and Greif, 2014; McBride, Rane and Bae, 2015; Flouri, Buchanan and Bream, 2016; Henderson and Mapp, 2016). In West Pokot the scenario is unique in that the mothers influence on boys is minimal as it is dictated by customs and culture.

#### **4.8 Teachers and Pupils Cultural Perceptions Influence on Boys Retention**

The fourth objective of the study was to determine the influence of teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions on retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County, Kenya. To achieve this objective, the QASOs were interviewed while the pupils and teachers (head teachers and class teachers) were asked to rate the statements on the influence of teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions on retention of boys in primary schools based on their level of agreement with items 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). The responses were presented in Table 4.18 (a) and (b).

**Table 4.18(a): Responses on Influence of Teachers cultural Perceptions on Retention**

<b>TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS</b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>D</b>		<b>NS</b>		<b>A</b>		<b>SA</b>		Mean	SD
	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>		
Education is for girls	36	8.3	91	21.0	33	7.6	100	23.0	174	40.1	3.4	1.5
Culture is more valuable than education	85	19.6	119	27.4	36	8.3	91	21.0	103	23.7	3.9	1.1
Boys develop negative attitude after circumcision	20	4.6	59	13.6	31	7.1	186	42.9	138	31.8	4.5	1.0
Boys prefer male teachers	26	6.0	79	18.2	22	5.1	222	51.2	85	19.6	4.1	1.2
Parents have negative attitude toward education	32	7.4	37	8.5	36	8.3	192	44.2	137	31.6	3.9	1.1
Education has no immediate benefits	57	13.1	58	13.4	32	7.4	181	41.7	106	24.4	4.0	1.1
Negative Peer influence	33	7.7	51	11.7	16	3.7	198	45.6	136	31.3	4.3	1.0
<b>Overall mean response</b>											4.00	1.18

**Table 4.18(b): Responses on Influence of Pupils Cultural Perceptions on Retention**

PUPILS PERCEPTIONS	SD		D		NS		A		SA		Mean	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Education is for girls	94	27.7	85	25.0	9	2.7	86	25.4	65	19.2	2.9	1.4
Culture is more valuable than education	89	26.2	73	21.5	17	5.0	72	21.3	88	26.0	3.9	1.0
Boys develop negative attitude after circumcision	19	5.6	76	22.4	22	6.5	117	34.5	105	31.0	4.2	1.0
Boys prefer male teachers	26	7.6	55	16.2	20	5.9	136	40.1	102	30.1	4.1	1.1
Parents have negative attitude towards education	50	13.5	56	16.6	26	7.7	131	38.3	76	22.4	3.9	1.1
Education has no immediate benefits	30	8.8	47	13.9	17	5.0	157	46.3	88	26.0	3.8	1.2
Negative peer influence	21	6.2	54	15.9	31	9.1	143	42.2	90	26.5	3.8	1.1
<b>Overall mean response</b>											3.81	1.16

Table 4.18(a) and (b) shows responses of teachers and pupils on influence of their perceptions on retention of boys in school. The findings showed that teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions highly influenced retention of boys in school with an overall Mean of 3.9 and SD 1.17, (teachers Mean 4.00, SD 1.118 and pupils Mean 3.81, SD 1.16). The perceptions that were investigated included: perception that education does not yield immediate returns; culture is more important than education; boys develop negative attitude after rite of passage, perception that education is for girls as well as perception that strong peer influence pulls boys away from school.

The findings of this study showed that the perception that returns on education were not forthcoming influenced retention of boys in school. Majority of the teachers (66.1%, n=434) and pupils (72.3%, n=339) agreed that the unforeseen benefits of education deterred boys from pursuing formal education. There was a difference in the level of agreement between the pupils and teachers. That could have been due to the understanding by the teachers of the benefits of education and on the other hand the short-sightedness of the pupils on educational returns. This suggests that when the benefits of education are not forthcoming or take long to be realised, boys may seek alternative avenues for quick gratification and immediate benefits such as child labour activities. This may be because the few boys who have managed to go through schooling have not found gainful employment due to the prevailing high levels of unemployment in the country. One QASO pointed out that:

*Some boys are lured into cattle rustling because the results are immediate. If they survive the raids, within a day or two they become instantly rich with their own cattle. In comparison to education, one has to be patient to reap the benefits. It is disheartening to see those who have completed form four and university with no jobs. They come back to the village to engage in the same manual jobs as the primary school dropouts. This discourages those who are in school and feel that education creates no difference at all.*

The unemployment situation in the county is making schooling less attractive to the boys. However, the benefits of formal learning should not be limited to employment. UNICEF (2012) notes that lifelong learning that combines formal, informal and non-formal education is what is needed for survival in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because of access to information, technological changes, global interactions industry shift and skill requirements. Another QASO also observed that:

*Some parents feel very discouraged about the unemployment of those who have completed school. They use this as a measuring yard and feel strongly that the boys would be more productive economically by assisting them with cattle herding and other economic activities instead of attending school.*

The prevailing unemployment situation in the country misguides the community to shun education. A leaf can be borrowed from Madagascan example where a randomised study showed that increasing awareness among families and children on the benefit of education helped in curbing school drop out of adolescents and increased school attendance by 3.6%, (Hunt 2008).

The findings of this study further showed that the negative attitude of boys toward school after circumcision was perceived to play a major role in their retention. Majority (74.7%, n=434) of teachers and pupils (65.5%, n=339) agreed that perceived negative attitude of boys towards education highly influenced their

retention in school. The difference in the level of agreement between boys and teachers could be credited to the boys not been able to accurately assess their own attitude compared to the teachers. This indicate that as boys enter prepubescent years and undergoes the rite of passage, their attitude towards school changes. The practices and teachings therein reinforce their boys-to-men attitude. It is also evident that the teachers observed that the attitude of boys towards education changed after rite of passage lending credence to the strong attachment to the socio-cultural practices. However, one QASO noted that the development of a negative attitude towards education by some boys was more of indiscipline than culture. The QASO reported that:

*Some boys have negative attitude towards schooling which is caused by rudeness and when parents prevail upon them, they become truant and sometimes run away from home to urban centers. Some boys use culture as an excuse to execute their own mischief and drop out of school.*

The boys' attitude towards school determines their commitment towards achieving their educational goals. Fobih (2011) agrees that staying in school would largely depend on learners' overall attitudes, the support they receive from the school community and the extent to which they perceive a harmonious interaction between education and cultural practices. This goes hand in hand with Tinto's theory of student retention which was the basis of this study which explains that the institutional and societal factors work in tandem to enhance commitment in school (Tinto 1993).

This finding is further supported by the observations made by the QASOs interviewed who reported that the cultural perceptions were an impediment to boys' formal education because boys generally have negative attitude towards

activities that contravene their cultural values such as schooling. One of the QASO noted that:

*In many parts of central and North Pokot pupils start schooling late because of distance to school and insecurity. In this region you find pupils above 17years in primary school. Some are already married with families and are still in school. Such pupils are weighed down by family responsibilities and are unlikely to complete primary school.*

West Pokot being somewhat an indigenous community, there is a strong cultural system that has been difficult to neutralize through education. Koech (2015) reinforces the notion that cultural practices among the pastoralists in Kenya contribute to high rate of drop out in schools. As the area of study is inhabited by a pastoralist community, the same would hold true.

Further, on the perception that boys prefer to be taught by male teachers, majority of the teachers (70.8%, n=434) and pupils (70.2%, n=339) agreed with this statement. This result could be because of the cultural indoctrination of boys towards hegemonic masculinities which look down upon women. The cultural disposition of the pastoralists particularly the Pokot is such that women are not highly regarded. Chelimo (2012) agrees that women are regarded only as important as the dowry paid for them and they have no say in the day-to-day decision making in the community. In such situations boys may not withstand being punished or instructed by female teachers especially in the presence of girls. The boys find themselves conflicted between community's expectation on their attitude towards women and school expectation on respect for all teachers. These sentiments concurred with Figueroa (2010) who reiterated that in Jamaica women failed to instil discipline on the boys because they believed it is a

preserve of the male figures in society and this disadvantaged the boys because it permitted them to explore negative masculine identities. To support those views one QASO had this to say:

*Some teachers especially those from outside the community are sometimes intimidated by the boys because of the long-standing history of aggressiveness of Pokot. Sometimes, they call upon their male colleagues to discipline boys on their behalf. That makes the boys to look down upon them. Thus, they need to assert their authority so that the boys will respect them.*

The negative attitude of boys towards the female teachers can sometimes lead to physical aggression. The Standard newspaper, (Njiru, 2017 July, 19<sup>th</sup>) highlighted the plight of female teachers assaulted by class six male pupils in Kirimoni primary school in Samburu County leading to the school being closed for some time. That case was blamed on gender stereotypes and lack of community support for the school.

Peer influence was also perceived to have an influence on retention of boys. The peers in this case refers to the age group of the boys whether in school or out of school. Majority of the respondents (76.9%, n=434) of teachers and (68.7%, n=339) of pupils agreed that peer pressure influenced boys' retention. The slight variation on level of agreement between the teachers and the learners could be because the boys could not perceive their friendships with peers as a threat to their education. The teachers on the other hand had the bigger picture of the extent to which the peers distracted the boys from school.

The peer pressure is brought about by the age groups/sets within which the boys are categorised into after rite of passage. Unlike peer pressure in other circumstances, in this community the groups have traditionally assigned leaders

who dictate to a large extent what happens within that age group. If the influence is positive toward school, then it enhances retention but if it is negative which in most cases is, then it leads to dropout. Bailey (2012) concurs that as boys approach prepubescent years the peer pressure to conform to group norms begin to be strong eventually replacing the parents and the teachers as the centre of control. One QASO also agreed that:

*The circumcision ceremonies place boys in various age sets, governed by strong bonds which sometimes seem to be stronger than for blood brothers. The boys obey the leaders of these groups without questioning because the consequences for disobedience are dire. Some members of these groups are school drop outs who can easily lure the school boys out of school.*

The results are in agreement with earlier researchers who found out that peer influence had a compelling pull away from parental control. Omollo and Yambo (2017) explain that the parents, teachers and peers all provide the adolescents with feedback and suggestions on how they should behave in social situations which can either be positive or negative. Many of the QASOs interviewed suggested that the endless cycle of dropout and more dropouts need to be halted by ensuring the pull towards school is made stronger than the pull away from school.

The study sought to test a fourth null hypothesis ( $\alpha=0.05$  level of significance) which stated:

**H<sub>04</sub>: There is no statistically significant relationship between teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions and retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County**

Linear regression analysis was used to test the relationship between teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions and retention. The results were summarized in Table 4.19.

**Table 4.19: Coefficient of Determination Results for Influence of Teachers and Pupils Perceptions on Boys' Retention**

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.423	0.179	0.178	0.426

a Predictors: (Constant) Perception

b Dependent variable

Table 4.19 shows the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) obtained which indicated the extent to which the variation on the dependent variable was attributed to the independent variable. In this case an adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.178 obtained indicated that approximately 18% of the variance on retention was accounted for by its linear relationship with teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions including unforeseen benefits of education, peer influence, pupils' negative attitude to education, parents' negative attitude to education, perception that school is for girls, conflict between culture and education change of attitude after rite of passage. The rest 82% was accounted by other variables.

**Table 4.20: Beta Coefficient on Influence of Teachers and Pupils' Cultural Perceptions on Boys' Retention**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.73	0.080		34.266	0.000
Perception	0.324	0.025	0.423	12.946	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Retention

Table 4.20 shows that teachers and pupils cultural perceptions contributed significantly to the model. A beta coefficient of 0.324 meant that a unit increase in the perceptions resulted in 0.324 influenced on retention of boys in school.

**Table 4.21: Regression Results for Influence of Teachers and Pupils' Cultural Perceptions on Boys' Retention**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	30.481	1	30.481	167.618	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	140.205	771	.182		
Total	170.686	772			

a Dependent Variable: Retention, b Predictors: (Constant) Perception

Table 4.21. shows that the regression model used was statistically significant in determining the influence of teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions on retention. It was supported by a probability (p) value of 0.000 which was below  $\alpha = 0.05$  level of significance. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis and adoption of the alternative hypothesis which stated; there is a statistically significant relationship between teachers and pupils' perceptions and retention of boys in primary schools in West.

These findings show that perceptions of teachers and pupils were a good predictor of retention of boys in primary school. The perception that there were no immediate returns on education in particular stood out to be the key determinant on the decision to enrol and keep boys in school or not. Attitudes of both the parents and pupils towards school also played a major role in the retention. These findings are in accord with those of Fobih (2011) who opined that achievement of pupils in school depends on their attitudes towards education,

the inspiration they receive from the school and the extent to which they perceive a harmonious interaction between education and cultural practices.

Klein (2012) also observed that boys in some schools in New Zealand were deeply enmeshed in their cultural practices making it difficult to embrace formal education. The perception that formal education is anti-culture could be indirectly passed to the boys by the Pokot elders who according to Cheromoi (2019) were at the fore front in rejecting formal education when it was first brought to the region. They allegedly ‘buried the pen’ to signify their resistance to formal education which according to them had come to destroy their culture. This shows that negative perceptions towards formal education interferes with boys’ retention.

#### **4.9 Multiple Regression of all the Independent Variables**

In order to determine the magnitude of influence of all the independent variables collectively on retention, a linear multiple regression was applied. The findings were as shown on Table 4.22.

**Table 4.22: Coefficient of Determination for all Independent Variables against Retention of Boys**

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.515 <sup>a</sup>	0.265	0.261	0.404

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender Roles, Institutional Practices, Parental Support, Perception  
 b. Dependent Variable: Retention

A multiple regression analysis was used to determine whether the retention of boys in school could be predicted based on gender roles, institution practices, parental support and cultural perception. The independent variables were able to

explain 26.1% of the variability on boys' retention in school. That implied that about 73.9% of the variation on retention was caused by other factors not included in this model. This could be accredited to the fact that data collected was based on existing participants' behaviour and not the drop outs. Table 4.23 shows regression model summary.

**Table 4.23: Multiple Regression test for influence of all Independent Variables on Retention of Boys**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	45.243	4	11.311	69.248	.000
Residual	125.443	768	0.163		
Total	170.686	772			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender Roles, Institutional Practices, Parental Support, Perception

b. Dependent Variable: Retention

The results in Table 4.23 shows that the independent variables were collectively significant in predicting boys' retention in school with a p value of 0.000 which was below the level of significance ( $\alpha=0.05$ ).

Table 4.24 further explained how each of the independent variable contributed to the regression model.

**Table 4.24: Beta Coefficient Results for Independent Variables Influence on Retention of boys**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.813	0.138		13.128	0.000
Gender Roles	0.032	0.018	0.055	1.761	0.079
Institutional Practices	0.035	0.024	0.046	1.487	0.137
Parental Support	0.280	0.031	0.305	9.158	0.000
Perception	0.232	0.026	0.303	9.052	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Retention

The regression equation for predicting retention of boys is:

$$Y = C + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + e$$

Y = Prediction relationship of types of variables towards boy's retention in school

C = Constant value

$\beta$  = Unstandardized coefficient

X = Independent variables (Gender roles, Institutional practices, Parental support and Cultural perception)

Based on Table 4.20, the following equation was derived.

$$Y = 1.813 + 0.032 (X1) + 0.035 (X2) + 0.280 (X3) + 0.232 (X4)$$

Where:

Y = Boys' retention

X1 = Gender roles

X2 = Institution practice

X3 = Parental support

X4 = Cultural perception

The interpretation of this relationship is that an increase of 1 unit of gender roles (X1) may incur the raise of 0.032 units in retention (Y). Similarly, one unit increase of institutional practices (X2) could increase retention by .035, an increase of 1 unit of parental support (X3) could raise retention by .280 while unit increase in cultural perception (X4) raises boy's retention by and .232. This meant that parental support and cultural perceptions had a higher magnitude in influencing boys' retention compared to male gender roles and institutional practices. However, parental support had higher influence than cultural perception when the standardized coefficients are compared (beta = .305 verses

beta = .303 respectively). This meant that for example an increase in the parental support would increase its influence on boy's retention by 0.305 while an increase in cultural perceptions would increase its influence on retention by 0.303.

The implication of these findings was that parental support and cultural perceptions were better predictors of boys' retention in school compared to male gender roles and institutional practices. When the school administration and other stakeholders understand and mitigate the influence of parental support and perceived cultural practices in school as a priority, boys could be attached to and remain in school until completion.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of socio-cultural practices on retention of boys in public primary schools in West Pokot County. This chapter focused on the summary of the key findings of the study, conclusion reached on the study, recommendations from the study and suggestions for further research.

#### **5.2 Summary of the Findings**

The study sought to achieve four objectives namely to; establish the influence of the male gender roles on retention of boys in primary schools; establish the influence of institutional practices on retention of boys in primary schools; determine the influence of parental support on retention of boys in primary schools and to determine the influence of teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions on boys' retention in primary schools in West Pokot county.

The study adopted Mixed Methods research approach in conducting the research. In particular, Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods strand was employed in data collection and analysis. Data was collected from sub-county QASOs using interview schedules and from the teachers and pupils using self-administered questionnaires. Quantitative data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages and regression analysis while qualitative data were analysed using thematic content analysis. The hypotheses stated were tested to determine the relationships between the socio-cultural practices and retention of boys so as to

deduce the magnitude of influence of each of the independent variables on retention. The summary of the key findings per objectives were stated as follows.

### **5.2.1 Male Gender Roles and Retention of Boys in Primary School**

The first objective of the study sought to establish the influence of male gender roles on retention of boys in public primary schools. Male gender roles were found to moderately influence retention of boys in school. The male gender roles that were found to influence retention of boys included: the rite of passage in terms of the school time consumed during seclusion and the teachings which swayed boys away from school, herding which kept the boys away from school as they assisted their families to undertake this masculine activity and for some boys, the inheritance of family wealth which gave them the notion that school was not important because their future was seemingly secured. All these contributed to dropout among the boys.

The regression model applied revealed that the influence of male gender roles on retention of boys in primary schools was statistically significant which led to the rejection of the null hypothesis which stated: there is no statistically significant relationship between male gender roles and retention of boys in public primary schools in West Pokot County. That implied that the male gender roles need to be addressed by the stakeholders in order to improve retention of boys.

### **5.2.2 Institutional Practices and Retention of Boys in Primary School**

The second objective sought to establish the influence of institutional practices on retention of boys in primary schools. The study found out that institutional practices moderately influenced retention of boys in school. Among the practices

that had moderate influence on boy's retention were: rigid enforcement of school rules particularly by female teachers, lack of male role models in schools due to the dominance of female teachers in primary schools and incompatible instructional methods which required sitting in class for long periods of time.

The regression model applied indicated that the influence of institutional practices on retention of boys was not statistically significant. This led to the acceptance of the null hypothesis which stated: there is no statistically significant relationship between institutional practices and retention of boys in public primary schools. This meant that although on overall the institutional practices investigated were not significant predictors of retention, the components that influenced retention needed to be addressed.

### **5.2.3 Parental Support and Retention of Boys in Primary School**

The third objective sought to determine the influence of parental support on boys' retention. The results of this study indicated that lack of parental support highly influenced retention of boys in school. The aspects of parental support which had high influence on school retention of boys were: lack of parental commitment to boys schooling, parents encouraging child labour, failure of parents to follow up on academic progress of the boys, failure to attend school activities and the inability of parents to provide learning materials for boys in school.

The regression model applied revealed that parental support was statistically significant in influencing boys' retention in primary schools. In that regard, the null hypothesis which stated: there is no statistically significant relationship between parental support and retention of boys in primary schools was rejected.

This implies that the parents need to step up their support in boys schooling to improve their retention.

#### **5.2.4 Teachers and Pupils Cultural Perception and Boys Retention in Primary School**

The fourth objective sought to determine the influence of teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions on retention of boys in primary schools. The findings of this study established that cultural perceptions of both the teachers and the pupils highly influenced boys' retention in school. In particular, perceived lack of returns on education due to the prevailing high rate of unemployment, boys' negative attitude towards schooling after rite of passage, the perception that peer pressure pulls the boys away from school and the perception that culture and education are antagonistic highly influenced boys' retention in school.

The regression model applied indicated that the influence of teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions on boys' retention in primary schools was statistically significant. In that case, the null hypothesis which stated: there is no statistically significant relationship between teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions and retention of boys in public primary schools was rejected. That implied the sensitization of teachers and pupils needs to be undertaken by the schools and the county government of West Pokot so as to change their perception towards boys schooling.

### **5.3 Conclusions of the Study**

In view of the objectives and research hypotheses tested, the study concludes that socio-cultural practices influenced boys' retention in public primary schools in West Pokot. The magnitude of influence on retention of boys of parental support and cultural perceptions surpassed that of male gender roles and institutional practices. Priority in coming up with interventions to address the influence of these practices on boys' retention could consider that order. If these practices are not addressed, low retention of boys could persist hampering the future progress of the boys and their contribution towards the development of the region and the country.

In relation to male gender roles, this study concludes that the gender roles that boys are assigned as members of the Pokot community moderately influenced their retention in school. On the influence of Institutional practices on boys' retention, this study concludes that the influence was not statistically significant. However, some components of school practices such as unavailability of male role models and rigid enforcement of school rules influenced retention of boys in school and they should be addressed to enhance retention.

In relation to parental support, this study concludes that parental support had the highest influence on boys' retention compared to all the other variables investigated. That means to improve retention of boys in primary school in West Pokot County, strategies to improve parental support should be given priority by both the national and county governments. As concerns the influence of teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions on retention of boys in school, this study

concluded that cultural perceptions of the teachers and pupils highly influenced boys' retention in school. That means they need to be addressed as a matter of priority so as to enhance retention of boys in school.

#### **5.4 Recommendations of this Study**

This section makes recommendations in line with the findings established after data analysis.

- i) To counter child labour, the study suggests that the county government of West Pokot could come up with strategies to cushion and economically empower pastoralist communities so that they could release the burden of supporting families from the children. This can be done through provision of markets for their livestock and value addition of their livestock products to boost them economically.
- ii) The study showed that there was a negative attitude towards education by both the parents and the pupils, the study suggests that the county government of West Pokot could come up with sensitization initiatives through the local administration and civil education bodies to advocate for retention of boys in school. This can be done through a special task force that can organize motivational talks in schools involving alumni who have succeeded through education in the county.
- iii) The findings indicated that there was inadequacy of male role models in school for the boys. This study suggests that the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) should consider intentional and targeted gender balancing when posting teachers to West Pokot County so as to provide the boy child with role models. In addition, they should ensure that

schools have both male and female guidance and counselling teachers who are cognisant of Pokot culture to address the concerns of all the children in school.

- iv) At the school level, this study suggests that the school administration could initiate boy clubs with recognised mentors drawn from the community who could guide the boys as they navigate through adolescents into adulthood. Possibly alumni from schools in West Pokot who subscribe to the Pokot culture.
- v) The national government through the Ministry of Education could replicate the models that have been used effectively to enhance retention of girls in school in pastoralist regions. This could include rescue centres for boys, boys boarding schools, re-integration of drop out boys back to school and affirmative action among others.

### **5.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

This study recommends further research to be carried out in the following areas:

- i. A study could be done to examine the extent of influence of community opinion leaders on boys' retention in primary schools in West Pokot County.
- ii. A study could be carried out to explore the effectiveness of strategies adopted by the Ministry of Education to enhance school retention among the pastoralists, for example the school feeding programme, mobile school initiative or the 100% transition policy.
- iii. A similar study could be replicated targeting school drop outs and community opinion leaders as the respondents.

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## Male Gender Roles and their Influence Retention of Boys in School

### Section B:

To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements on the relationship between culturally assigned male gender roles and boys' retention in your school. Respond by ticking (√) (1-Strongly Disagree) (2-Disagree) (3-Not sure) (4-Agree) (5-Strongly Agree) against the corresponding responses.

No.	Male Gender Roles	1	2	3	4	5
1	During rite of passage boys stay out of school for a long period of time					
2	Boys' schooling is interfered with by family leadership role expected by Pokot culture					
3	Boys' cultural role as community herdsmen keep them out of school					
4	Inadequate educated male role models make some boys see no reason to stay in school					
5	Boys inherit family property in terms of cattle, this may discourage them from school because they think their future is already secured					
6	Boys see themselves as grown-ups after rites of passage yet teachers consider them as children and this makes them drop out of school					
7	The boy-child often engages in child labour activities instead of attending school to provide for their families					
8	The boy child is expected by culture to participate in cattle rustling which keep some boys out of school					
9	During insecurity boys are seen as community defenders hence some may stay away from school defending their community					

**SECTION C: Influence of Institutional Practices on Retention of Boys in school**

To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements about the relationship between institutional practices and retention of boy in your school. Respond by ticking (√) (1-Strongly Disagree) (2-Disagree) (3-Not sure) (4-Agree) (5-Strongly Agree) against the responses.

No.	Institutional Practices	1	2	3	4	5
1	when girls perform better than boys in class often the boys feel their masculinity is challenged hence may drop out of school					
2	The main instructional methods used in schools do not favour the way of life of pastoralists					
3	Mixing boys and girls in classroom setting often frustrate boys making them drop out of school					
4	boys often undermine the authority of female class teachers leading to conflict and drop out					
5	Boys do not have adequate male mentors in school because there are more female than male teachers					
6	Some boys tend to drop out of school when they are punished more harshly than girls for the same mistake					
7	Boys tend to drop out of school after circumcision because they feel they are adults yet teachers treat them as children					
8	Pupils have adequate physical facilities and instructional materials in school					
9	Boys tend to get discouraged from schools when there is strict implementation of school rules.					

### Section D: Influence of Parental Support on Retention

To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the relationship between parental support and boys' retention in your school. Respond by ticking (✓) (1-Strongly Disagree) (2-Disagree) (3-Not sure) (4-Agree) (5-Strongly Agree) against the corresponding responses

No.	Parental support	1	2	3	4	5
1	Most parents fail to provide school requirements for their boys stay in school					
2	Boys feel supported to stay in school when parents assist them with homework					
3	Some parents encourage boys to seek employment to support the family through child labour instead of going to school					
4	Conflicts between formal education and what parents expect their boys to do leads to low school retention					
5	Boys whose parents follow up on their academic progress persist in school					
6	Boys are unlikely to attend school if parents consider education to be distancing them from their culture					
7	Boys stay in school longer when parents actively participate in school activities					
8	Lack of commitment by parents in boys' education discourage boys from staying in school					
9	Parents who act as role models for their son's academic achievement encourages boys to continue staying in school					

**SECTION E: Teachers Cultural Perceptions on how Socio-Cultural Practices Influence Retention of Boys in School**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your perception on how socio-cultural practices influence retention of boys in school. Respond by ticking (√) (1-Strongly Disagree) (2-Disagree) (3-Not sure) (4-Agree) (5-Strongly Agree) on the corresponding response.

<b>No.</b>	<b>Cultural Perceptions</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1	Community expectation on boys to adhere to culture keeps some boys out of school					
2	Boys drop out of school because they may feel that education criticize their cultural beliefs					
3	The attitude of parents towards school affects the way boys view school and this can discourage them from school					
4	Boys develop a negative attitude towards education after rite of passage because they want to behave like adults					
5	Some boys may view education as a feminine activity for the girls					
6	Some boys drop out because they are left on their own to make independent decisions on schooling because they are viewed by parents as mature enough					
7	Boys' value their culture more important than education because there are more immediate benefits from cultural activities than education					
8	Boys tend to sacrifice their education in favour of economic activities so as to meet family basic needs					
9	Peer influence from school dropouts contributes to many boys leaving school before completion					

**SECTION F: Retention of boy-child in school**

To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements about retention of boys in your school. Respond by ticking (√) (1-Strongly Disagree) (2-Disagree) (3-Not sure) (4-Agree) (5-Strongly Agree) against the responses.

No.	Retention	1	2	3	4	5
1	In our school many boys do not complete primary education					
2	Herding contributes to boys dropping out of school					
3	There are more girls than boys in class eight					
4	High frequency of absenteeism among boys leads to school drop out					
5	Dropout rate is high in class seven when boys are going to class eight					
6	Some boys' dropout to engage in casual labour					
7	There is negative attitude of parents towards school for boys leading to their drop out					
8	Decisions on schooling is left to boys after circumcision					
9	Boys' retention is affected by nomadism when parents move in search of pasture					

What do you think needs to be done to increase boys' retention in primary schools in west Pokot County? .....

**Thank you**

## **APPENDIX II: PUPILS SELF ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information on the influence of socio-cultural practices on retention of boys in primary schools. The researcher requests you to kindly respond to the questions asked. You are assured that the responses given will for academic purposes only. You are reminded not to write your name on this paper. In each section tick (√) the responses that you find suitable in the provided boxes or spaces.

### **Section A: Background information of the respondents**

Tick where applicable

1. What is your age?  
10-15yrs ( )    16-18 years ( )    above 18 years ( )
  
2. How many children are there in your family?.....
  
3. Indicate the number of boys and the number of girls in school in your family.  
Boys ( )    Girls ( )
  
4. At what age do boys undergo rite of passage in the Pokot community:  
Lower Primary ( )    Upper Primary ( )    After primary school ( )
  
5. How long does the rite of passage take?  
Below one month ( )    1-3 months ( )    above 3 months ( )

## Section B: Male Gender Roles

Read the statements carefully and Respond by ticking (√) (1-Strongly Disagree) (2-Disagree) (3-Not sure) (4-Agree) (5-Strongly Agree) on the corresponding space according to your response.

No.	Male Gender Roles	1	2	3	4	5
1	During circumcision some boys stay out of school for long periods and most do not return to school					
2	Boys are expected to act as leaders in the community and this can make them leave school					
3	Some boys leave school to take care of animals at home					
4	Many men in the community are not educated and boys lack role models					
5	Some families have many animals, boys feel they are rich and do not need school					
6	Some boys drop out of school after circumcision because teachers consider them to be children yet they are grown ups					
7	Some boys engage in child labour to support family instead of going to school					
8	It is the duty of boys to help the family to acquire herds of cows through raiding instead of going to school					
9	Some boys drop out of school to defend their community when there are raids instead of going to school					

### Section C: Institutional Practices

Read the statements carefully and Respond by ticking (√) (1-Strongly Disagree) (2-Disagree) (3-Not sure) (4-Agree) (5-Strongly Agree) on the corresponding space according to your response.

No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	When girls perform better than boys in class boys get discouraged and are likely to drop out					
2	Some boys find work at home taking too much time leaving very little time for attending school					
3	Sitting with girls in the same class makes circumcised boys uncomfortable and may leave school					
4	The male teachers are not many in school so boys lack examples to copy leading to drop out					
5	When there are more girls than boys in class boys shy away and leave school.					
6	When boys are punished more harshly than the girls when they do the same mistake, they are likely to drop out					
7	Boys' dislike being punished by female teachers in presence of girls					
8	Our school has adequate facilities and learning materials which makes us like school more					
9	School rules are stricter on boys than girls and this makes boys run away from school					

### Section D: Parental Support

Read the statements carefully and respond by ticking (√) (1-Strongly Disagree) (2-Disagree) (3-Not sure) (4-Agree) (5-Strongly Agree) on the corresponding space according to your response.

No.	Parental Support	1	2	3	4	5
1	The children whose parents are educated rarely leave school					
2	When parents assist boys with my homework, they will not drop out					
3	Many parents expect their boys to work and support them financially instead of going to school					
4	What teachers expect boys to do and what parents expect boys today is different and boys obey their parents					
5	When parents are concerned with education of the boys and they follow up on their learning and the boys will like school and will not drop out					
6	Some parents discourage boys from school because they think education will destroy our culture					
7	Boys feel encouraged to stay in school when my parents participate in school activities					
8	Boys fail to attend school when they lack requirements like food, uniform, books or pens.					
9	Some parents do not question the boys when they do not attend school					

**SECTION E: Pupils' Perceptions on Influence of Socio-cultural practices**

Read the statements carefully and Respond by ticking (√) (1-Strongly Disagree) (2-Disagree) (3-Not sure) (4-Agree) (5-Strongly Agree) on the corresponding space according to your response.

No.	Perceptions	1	2	3	4	5
1	Boys drop out of school because they feel education is not important to them					
2	Some boys drop out of school because they feel that school is for girls					
3	Boys stay away from school because they think school taking them away from their culture					
4	For boys staying at home to undergo circumcision is more important than going to school					
5	Boys prefer their culture compared to education because cultural leaders are respected more					
6	Boys prefer to look after animals at home instead of going to school					
7	After circumcision, boys do not like to be told what to do by female teachers in school					
8	Boys prefer casual labour to earn money and support family than going to school					
9	Those boys who have left school encourage more boys to leave school and join them					

**SECTION F: Retention of boy-child in school**

Read the statements carefully and Respond by ticking (√) (1-Strongly Disagree) (2-Disagree) (3-Not sure) (4-Agree) (5-Strongly Agree) on the corresponding space according to your response.

No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	Some boys we started school with have dropped out					
2	Some boys who I was with in class seven did not join class eight					
3	Those boys who are always absent eventually leave school					
4	Some boys leave school to look after cattle and other work					
5	There are more girls than boys in my class					
6	Many boys leave school after circumcision because they think they are adults					
7	Some parents do not see the need for education and cannot advise boys to go to school					
8	Some parents cannot force boys to go to school					
9	During drought some boys leave school and move with the parents in search of pasture for animals					

**Thank you.**

### APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR QASO OFFICERS

The purpose of this interview is to gather information related to socio-cultural practices and how they influence retention boys' retention in public primary schools in West Pokot County.

S. No	Objectives	Main Question	Probing Questions
1	Male gender roles influence on retention of boys	How do male gender roles in West Pokot influence boys' retention in primary schools?	Comment on the effect of the following gender roles on boys' retention, rite of passage, herding, wealth inheritance, leadership, cattle rustling, child labour and community defence
2	Institutional practices influence on retention of boys	In what ways are institutional practices related to boys' retention of in primary schools?	What is the trend of boy's retention in primary school like? How to the following school practices affect boys' retention, mixed classrooms, gender of the teacher, availability of learning materials, performance in class, enforcement of school rules schools and availability of role models. What strategies have been adopted by the school management to ensure the boy child remains in school and completes the education cycle in West Pokot County?
3	Parental support influence on retention	Comment on the relationship between parental support and dropout of boys in primary schools.	Comment on the following aspects of parental support in relation to boys' retention in West Pokot, parental attitude towards school for boys, provision of learning materials, academic follow-up, attending school functions, child labour and assisting boys with home work How can parental participation be enhanced?
4	Teachers and pupils' cultural perceptions influence on retention	How do the cultural perceptions of teachers and pupils' influence retention of boys in primary schools?	What is the perception of teachers and boys on boy's retention? Comment on the following aspect in relation to how teachers and pupils perceive boys' retention, benefits of education, boys' attitude after circumcision, teachers' attitude toward the boys, peer pressure

*Thank you for your co-operation*

**APPENDIX IV: A BOYS' RESCUE CENTRE**

**MORPUS PRIMARY RESCUE CENTRE: 2015 TO DATE**

**RESCUED CHILDREN:**

YEAR-	WP	CENT	P.SOUTH	NORTH P.	IRAN	KIPK	To
2015	1	6	2	8	2	-	19
2016	3	7	3	7	-	-	13
2017	5	8	3	10	-	-	16
2018	4	8	4	8	2	5	21
2019	5	8	3	12	2	3	23

In 2019 - I have rescued 6 boys from North pokot who were abandoned by their parents - they have joined their sisters here. So we have 6 boys from North P. The number of rescued children keep changing day after day. We currently have 3 cases in court.

  
 James Lokuk  
 071982007



**APPENDIX V: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION LETTER FROM  
NACOSTI**

  
**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,  
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,  
2241349, 3310571, 2219420  
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249  
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke  
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke  
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabou,  
Off Wairoa Way,  
P.O. Box 30623-00100,  
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref No. **NACOSTI/P/19/70361/29485** Date: **23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2019**

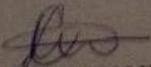
Salome Y Koskei  
Kenyatta University  
P.O. Box 43844-00100  
**NAIROBI**

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“Influence of socio-cultural practices on retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County, Kenya,”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **West Pokot County** for the period ending **23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2020**.

You are advised to report to the **County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, West Pokot County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit a **copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

  
**CHARITY MUSEMBI**  
**FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO**

Copy to:

The County Commissioner  
West Pokot County.

The County Director of Education  
West Pokot County.

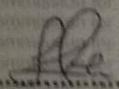
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation is ISO 9001:2008 Certified

## APPENDIX VI: RESEARCH PERMIT

**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:**  
**MS. SALOME Y KOSKEI**  
of **KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, 15376-20100**  
**Nakuru**, has been permitted to conduct  
research in **Westpokot County**

on the topic: **INFLUENCE OF**  
**SOCIO-CULTURAL PRACTICES ON**  
**RETENTION OF BOYS IN PRIMARY**  
**SCHOOLS IN WEST POKOT COUNTY,**  
**KENYA**

for the period ending:  
**23rd April, 2020**

  
Applicant's  
Signature

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/19/70361/29485  
Date Of issue : 23rd April, 2019  
Fee Recieved :Ksh 2000



  
Director General  
National Commission for Science,  
Technology & Innovation

**APPENDIX VII: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION LETTER FROM  
COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY  
STATE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION**

-Email: [elimu|cdewestpokot@education.go.ke](mailto:elimu|cdewestpokot@education.go.ke)  
-Web: [www.education.go.ke](http://www.education.go.ke)  
-[cdewestpokot@yahoo.com](mailto:cdewestpokot@yahoo.com).  
When replying please quote date & Ref.

COUNTY EDUCATION OFFICE  
WEST POKOT COUNTY  
P.O. BOX 17  
**KAPENGURIA**

20<sup>th</sup> May, 2019.

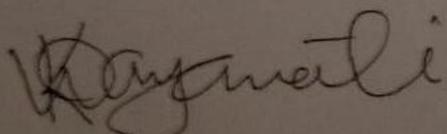
REF: WPC/EDUC/ADM/15/20/VOL.1/217

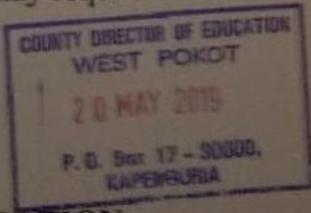
**Salome Y. Koskei  
Kenyatta University  
P.O Box 43844-00100  
NAIROBI.**

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

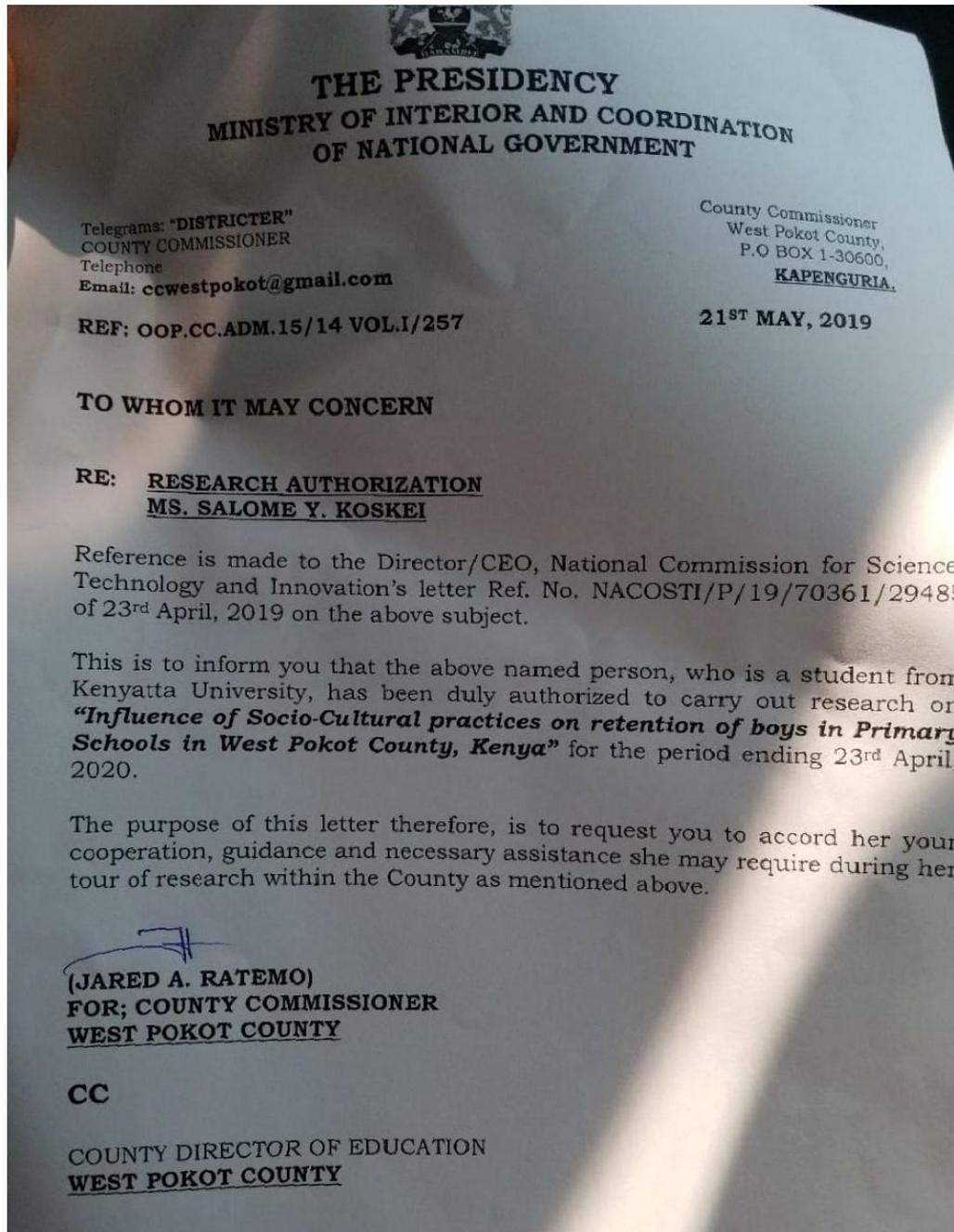
Following your authorization, you are hereby permitted to carry out research on *“Influence of socio-cultural practices on retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County, Kenya”* for a period ending 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2020.

Through this letter therefore, you are requested to accord him any necessary cooperation and assistance he may require.

  
**(EDWARD WANGAMATI)  
FOR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
WEST POKOT COUNTY.**



**APPENDIX VIII: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FROM  
COUNTY COMMISSIONER**



**APPENDIX IX: A MAP SHOWING LOCATION OF WEST POKOT  
SUB-COUNTIES**

