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

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Abstract

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

Key Words: Socio-cultural practices, School dropout, Boys

