

Parental Support and Boys' Retention in Public Primary Schools in Kenya

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Abstract

Parents are the primary educators for the children. Their involvement in the education of the children can determine the value attached to education by the children. Keeping children in school until the completion of an education cycle is important for the attainment of educational goals. It has been noted that the retention of boys in primary school among the pastoralists in Kenya is declining. This study sought to address this concern by establishing the influence of parental support on the retention of boys in public primary schools in West Pokot County. The study employed a mixed methods approach to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The study targeted 663 head teachers, 790 class-teachers and 6861 class eight boys in all the 663 public primary schools in West Pokot County and 5 sub-county quality assurance officers who were purposively selected. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis while qualitative data was analyzed using thematic content analysis and narrations. The study found out that lack of parental support in terms of parental involvement in boys' schooling, engagement in child labour, negative parental attitude, parental illiteracy and inadequate provision of learning materials was a major impediment to boys' retention. The regression model showed that the influence of parental support was statistically significant at $\alpha=0.000$ ($p<0.05$). This led to the conclusion that parental support influenced boys' retention in school. The study recommends that the government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education should formulate educational policies that aim to promote direct parental involvement in boys' education, the County government of West Pokot should encourage initiatives by the community and civil rights organizations to create awareness on the importance of education and repercussions of low retention of boys in school.

Keywords: Parental support, Pastoralists, Retention, Culture, Education, Boy

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1. Introduction

Nomadic pastoralists in the horn of Africa remains among the most marginalised communities in terms of access to education due to their way of life which is not compatible with sedentary education provided by most governments. According to Mburu (2016), many challenges faced by pastoralists result from the belief that pastoralists should conform to a more sedentary way of life. This attitude prevents many pastoralists from attending school, and as a result these communities exhibit some of the highest rates of illiteracy. In most cases, they inhabit vast arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) where the provision of school infrastructure is a challenge. The literacy levels in these areas therefore remain low in comparison to the non-pastoralist regions. Parents and the home environment provide the initial learning environment for children. According to Vygotsky (1978) Social cultural theory, there is a relationship between human beings and their physical and socio-cultural environments. Social and cultural factors influence the learning and development process of children. The family is the immediate social set up where children learn from as they interact with the larger community. Vygotsky claims that children can learn and achieve problem solving abilities on their own but a child's ability is enhanced when working under the guidance of an adult (parent) or a more able peer. There is interrelatedness and interdependence between the parents and the learning and development of the children. This theory posits that parental support is important in academic progress of the learners.

The government of Kenya has endeavoured to attain the sustainable development goal (SDG) number 4 on ensuring inclusive and quality education and lifelong learning for all. But the pastoralists and nomadic communities are far from achieving basic education and realizing this goal. According to a report by United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2015) many children who have been out of school are girls but recently however, issues have been raised concerning boys' retention in school. Hence the interest of this study to explore the influence of parental support on boys' retention in school.

Role models provide examples to be emulated by the boys. Among the pastoralists' formal education is not a priority and most parents are illiterate, (Kratli & Dyer 2009). As a result, parental support for their children's education remains limited. Dunne (2015) states that positive actions by role models create positive habits in children that cannot be learned in the classroom. Bailey (2012) agrees with this and adds that as boys approach pre-pubescent years, the peer group begins to have a stronger magnetic pull and eventually replaces the parents as the center of control. According to Figueroa (2010) in the study of boys' underachievement in Jamaica, it was

found out that boys actively asserted their maleness by resisting school, developing disruptive behaviour, and underrating certain subjects. Similarly, In Lesotho, Abagi, (2013) observed that the males are considered the head of the family and the sole decision maker. This recognition puts the boy child on a high pedestal such that education to them is seen as secondary. In another study by UNICEF (2015) in Botswana, the findings indicated that some boys are taken out of school or denied entry altogether to become cattle herders, a task that falls on them by virtue of masculinity, stereotype and culture. According to Kane (2018) cultural factors may cause families to differ in the priority they place on the schooling of the children, the boys contribute more to household economies through child labour and for this reason are more likely to be denied access to schooling.

Among the pastoralists of Northern Nigeria, the practice of nomadism and herding keeps boys away from school. Olaniyan & Yahaya (2016) explains that as the herders migrate from northern Nigeria towards the middle belt and South in search of pasture, the boys assist their parents in this venture. As they move south, their herds are plundered 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 school. 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 tough and aggressive to survive amid violent ethnic clashes. This behaviour and teachings are in contravention of school rules and policies.

Retention of children in school has been a challenge among the pastoralists in Kenya. Sakwa (2012) defines retention as staying in school until completion of a course while dropping out is leaving school prematurely. Hence, dropouts are pupils who leave school before completing a given cycle of education in which they are enrolled. Ouma (2016) views a dropout as a pupil who ceases to attend school either temporarily or permanently, before completing the given cycle of education. Investment in human capital is important for the development agenda of any government. Dropping out of school therefore, translates to wastage of human resources which in the long run will affect the development of the country. Among the pastoralist in Kenya, statistics indicate a decline in boys' enrolment and subsequent transition from one grade to another with more boys enrolled in lower compared to upper primary grades. The study tried to answer the question "why are the boys not in school?"

Low completion rate in developing countries has been a subject of interest to academicians, researchers, and policy makers for a long time. Studies have shown that there is an emerging trend around the world concerning boys' retention in school that is worrying. In Kenya, few studies have focused on boys schooling particularly among the pastoralist communities who have been generally slow in embracing formal schooling. Memusi (2017) conducted a study in Kajiado County to ascertain the reasons for school dropout among boys in primary schools and revealed that lack of parental interest, high levels of illiteracy and a strong inclination to the nomadic culture accounted for low levels of school completion among boys. Mwangi (2016) carried out a study in Mukurweini, Nyeri County on factors affecting boy's performance and captured home based factors such as lack of parental support in boys' education and child labour as key in affecting boy's participation. For a long time, championing for girls' education has been used to push for gender equity agenda in education and fruits are beginning to show. However, the focus on the boys' education has not received much attention. In West Pokot County, current statistics indicate a decline in the number of boys in upper primary school classes. If this trend continues unchecked, it will not only lead to wastage of human capital but also gender inequality. This study aimed to establish the influence of parental support on retention of boys in primary schools in West Pokot County, with a view of coming up with recommendations that can be utilized by the government and other stakeholders to inform education policies on retention of boys in school.

1. Hypothesis

H₀: There is no statistically significant relationship between parental support and retention of boys in primary schools in Kenya

2. Literature review

The education level of parents or guardians may affect boys' school retention. Kailembo (2011) explains that educated parents/guardians are more interested in boys' education, act as role models, can assist with the homework and are a source of inspiration. Odaga & Heneveld (2010) found out that once the children of literate parents' access education, they can progress and complete school compared to children of illiterate parents. Holmes (2003) concurs and adds that the effect of the education of the parents affects boys and girls differently in that the education of the mother impacts both boys and girls while the level of education of the father may not have a significant effect on school retention of their offspring. UNICEF (2010) notes that pupils whose mothers have not attained any level of education were most likely to drop out of school. Mburu (2016) found out that among the pastoralists the child's age and mother's literacy had a positive effect on child school participation, however, girls were more likely to attend school than boys probably because attending school takes boys away from activities like herding, which have greater economic value to the families than the nonmonetary household chores performed by girls. Changach (2012) notes that educated parents can relate to the school learning experiences of their children

and assist them where they can as well as instil discipline. Further, Changach emphasizes that the children who learn to accept parental authority will also accept the teacher's authority in school. Uneducated parents on the other hand cannot assist and supervise school work for their children. Kratli & Dyer (2009) emphasize that to improve retention of pupils in the school, a family learning approach should be adopted which combines basic education with adult learning because pastoralists already have intergenerational informal learning in place which is functional.

Parental involvement has been positively associated with children's performance in school (Nyarko & Vorgelegt, 2011). As the first prime educators, parents have a great influence on their children's learning outcomes throughout their schooling period and beyond. Simpkins & Dearing, (2012) explain that parents may support and encourage their children through rewards and praises provide the children with a sense of initiative and confidence necessary for learning and persistence in school. Willems & Holbein (2015) indicate that children whose parents actively participate in their education have registered high academic achievement and positive attitude towards school. On the other hand, parent who constantly criticize, command, punish and coerce their children may make them develop a negative attitude toward education leading to negative academic outcomes (Rogers, 2012). Empirical evidence positively correlates shared activities between parents and their children with improved school retention (Marsiglio, 2014). In West Pokot County majority of households are headed by illiterate parents who had no access to formal education due to marginalization and socialization (Kurgat, 2017). The parental involvement in the formal education of the children is minimal only to the extent of sending them to school. Other studies have focused on maternal involvement. Mothers' educational involvement has been linked to increased levels of academic achievement, increased positive school attitudes and enhanced teacher-child relationships (McBride, Rane & Bae, 2015; Flouri, Buchanan & Bream, 2016; Henderson & Mapp, 2016; Greif & Greif, 2014). Other studies however have contradicted this view, they have shown that that fathers have a greater impact on the boys' educational achievement than mothers (Walker, 2010). Nyaboke, Mwebi & Onderi (2016) studied boys drop out in Nyamira county and found out that boys whose parents monitored and regulated their activities, provided emotional support, encouraged independent decision making and were generally more involved in their schooling were less likely to drop out of school.

Parental attitude towards schooling determines the attitude the boys develop towards school. Samal (2012) conducted a study in Pradesh India on the effect of parental attitude towards education on school dropouts 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' academic performance in primary schools. The study was based on the Connell theory of hegemonic masculinity and targeted 65 public primary schools in Mukurweini Sub-County. Only class eight boys were considered for this study. Data was collected using questionnaires for head teachers and class teachers, interview schedules for parents and key informants, focus group discussion for students. The study established that performance of boys was declining due to economic, home related and school-based factors that influenced the academic performance of boys in the study area. The most prominent factors were negative attitude towards boys' education by parents, lack of male role models in schools and at home, lack of mentors, indiscipline, poverty and drug abuse.

Provision of learning materials and personal effects facilitate the learning process in school. Ouma (2016) reiterates that the role of the parent does not end with sending the child to school but includes support of the child in school by providing materials needed. Besides the government pledge for free basic education, the parents are expected to provide uniform, writing materials and food for the pupils. 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. Odaga, & Heneveld (2010) note that high levels of poverty may hamper the provision of learning material by parents. This may lead to withdrawal of pupils from school to contribute to household economies through child labour.

Child labour has been cited by many studies as a major impediment to access, participation and retention of pupils in school. Nyaboke, Mwebi & Onderi (2016) on their study on factors influencing boys' retention in public days schools in Nyamira county found out that child labour activities that boys are involved in particular motorcycle transport business (*bodaboda*) interfered with boys schooling. Amma (2010) observes that among the pastoralists' communities, herding is the most prominent child labour activity afflicting the boys. Obae (2010) explains that many children in Kenya experience child labour either by failing to attend school due to economic activities, leaving school prematurely or by requiring them to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work. Among the pastoralist herding is tied to inheritance of family wealth by the boys. Koringura (2004), Chelimo (2012) and Emuria (2016) have shown that some boys drop out of school to engage in herding with the supposition that their future is secured through inheritance of family wealth in form of herds. Ruto (2014), Admassie (2013) and Bailey (2012) all allude to the impact of child labour on performance and retention of pupils in school among the pastoralists. In agreement with this view, findings by UNICEF (2013) estimates that in Sub Saharan Africa 1 in 4 children aged 5-17 provide labour in homes or in productive sectors of the economy at the

expense of schooling.

3. Research Methodology

The study employed parallel convergent mixed methods approach. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently then analyzed and convergence occurred at the interpretation phase. The central premise of mixed methods approach is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone and saves on time of data collection, Creswell (2014). The use of mixed methods approach in this study helped in corroborating the findings from qualitative and quantitative methods in order to strengthen the conclusions. The study targeted 663 head teachers, 790 class eight class-teachers and 6861 class eight boys in all the 663 public primary schools in West Pokot County. Five sub-county Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) from the five sub counties were interviewed. This constituted a target population of 8319. Yamane's (1973) formula was used to obtain the sample size which composed of 5 QASOs, 249 head teachers, 265 class teachers and 378 pupils, totalling 897 respondents. The instrument return rate was 86.6%. Quantitative data derived from the closed ended items in the questionnaires was analysed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. Qualitative data derived from the open-ended items of the questionnaire and the interviews was analysed by use of narration and thematic content analysis.

4. Discussion of findings

The objective of the study was to determine the influence of parental support on retention of boys in primary schools in Kenya by focusing on parental literacy levels, provision of learning materials, child labour, parental attitude and parental involvement in boys' education. To achieve this objective the Quality Assurance Officers (QASOs) were interviewed and some of their responses reported in verbatim. The pupils and teachers were asked to rate the information on the influence of parental support on retention in schools based on their level of agreement with statements provided in the questionnaires. The ratings were based on a five-point Likert scale of 1-5; where 1 represented Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 represented Disagree (D), 3 represented Not Sure (NS), 4 represented Agree (A) and 5 represented Strongly Agree (SA). The responses were presented using percentages.

Table 1: Responses on Influence of Parental Support on Retention

SUPPORT	S D		D		N S		A		S A		Mean	SD
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Parental literacy levels	103	13.3	112	14.5	33	4.3	225	29.1	300	38.8	3.7	1.4
Encourage child labour by the boys	84	10.9	72	9.3	70	9.1	346	44.8	200	25.9	3.9	1.3
Parental attitude towards boys' education	108	14.0	78	10.1	63	8.1	211	27.3	313	40.5	3.7	1.4
Parental involvement in school activities	44	5.7	26	3.4	29	3.7	239	30.9	435	56.3	4.3	1.1
Provision of learning materials	110	14.2	81	10.5	35	4.5	189	24.5	358	46.3	3.8	1.5

Parental involvement in the education of the boys would send positive signals that parents value their education. The findings of this study showed that lack of parental involvement ranked highest as a key impediment to boys' retention. Majority of the respondents 87.2% agreed (30.9% agreed, 56.3% strongly agreed) that most parents were not involved in the boys' education and this lacklustre approach made the boys have a negative attitude towards education. When parents are consistently involved in supporting their children, the children feel encouraged to remain in school and complete educational cycle. The support would be in terms of following up academic progress, assisting with homework and attending school activities. Research has shown that parental participation in school functions and activities motivate learners to do well in school. For instance, Susan (2010) found out that students whose parents monitor and regulate their activities, provide emotional support, encourage independent decision making and are generally more involved in their schooling are less likely to drop out of school. An observation of one QASO on this factor shed light on the extent of parental neglect on the education of the boys and had this to say:

You will be surprised how many parents turn up for school meetings. Usually the head teachers find it difficult to appoint class representatives during annual general meetings because very few parents attend. They feel that school activities are the work of teachers not parents. Some parents feel that their responsibility ends with letting the children go to school.

In support of lack of follow-up on academic progress of boys, Muindi (2010) notes that few parents from nomadic communities' follow-up on their children academic progress, Abdi (2010) adds that the parents and the community at large feel that education alienates children from their culture and are less interested in checking on the academic progress. Simpkins & Dearing (2012) reiterate the significance of parental follow up on the academic progress of pupils and notes that parents need to support and encourage their children through rewards and praises

which provide the child with a sense of initiative and confidence necessary for learning and persistence in school. The lack of parental follow-up has worked against the retention of Pokot boys who have to delicately balance between education and culture. Studies have revealed that mothers have a greater impact on their children's educational achievement than fathers and that the educational achievements of fathers have no significant impact on the academic accomplishments of their offspring (Walker, 2010, Greif & Greif, 2014)). 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 having control on boys' daily activities. Research has shown that there is a relationship between poor parental monitoring and children involvement in delinquency, absenteeism and dropout, (Bordhan, 2014).

Literate parents can check on the school attendance and academic progress of the boys. On the other hand, illiteracy limits parental control and supervision of education of their children. The study findings revealed that a majority (67.9%) of the respondents agreed (29.1% agreed, 38.8% strongly agreed) that there was lack of parental support in boys schooling owing to their low levels of literacy. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Haveman and Wolfe (2005) who noted that parents with higher educational level could motivate the intellectual potential within children which may lead pupils to persist in school and in return strive for further education. Similarly, Kimu (2012) observed that parents' involvement towards their children's learning vary according to educational level. Kailembo (2011) concurs that more educated parents are more interested in their children education, they act as role models, assist with homework and are an inspiration to their children. Kurgat (2017) explains that the majority of households in West Pokot are headed by illiterate parents who had no formal education due to marginalization occasioned by their pastoral lifestyle and the geographical location in arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs). These findings are in agreement with MOEST (2014) report which stated that the most common reason for dropping out of school in ASALs in Kenya is lack of interest on the part of parents owing to their illiteracy.

Child labour consumes valuable school time and withdraws boys from school. The findings of this study show that child labour was a key determinant on the retention of boys. It emerged that many boys were engaged in activities that generate income for themselves and their families. A majority (70.7%) of all respondents (44.8% agreed, 25.9% strongly agreed) agreed that child labour was a major deterrent to retention of boys in school. This implies that the boys were usually withdrawn from school to do casual labour to support household economies leading to school dropout. Besides cattle herding, other economic activities that boys engaged in include *bodaboda* (motor cycle) transport business, gold mining and hawking. Among the pastoralist the main child labour activity that boys are involved is herding, either for other people to support their families or herding for their families and relatives as a social responsibility. One QASO interviewed had this to say;

As a pastoralist community, most Pokot people are endowed with livestock in terms of cattle, camels and goats. Their tradition demands that the boys undertake the role of herding these livestock. This creates conflict between culture and schooling which may lead to some boys being withdrawn from school to herd animals.

The contribution of boys to the household economies leads to their withdrawal from school. Child labour has been cited by many studies as a major impediment to access, participation and retention of pupils in school. Obae (2010) explains that many children in Kenya experience child labour either by failing to attend school due to economic activities, leaving school prematurely or by requiring them to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work. Ruto (2014), Admassie (2013) and Bailey (2012) all allude to the impact of child labour on performance and retention of pupils in school among the pastoralists. In agreement with these findings UNICEF (2013) estimates that in Sub Saharan Africa 1 in 4 children aged 5-17 provide labour in homes or productive sectors of the economy at the expense of schooling. The estimates by UNICEF showed that more boys than girls were involved in child labour. This is true for the boys in West Pokot County.

Provision of learning materials by parents is critical in facilitating the learning process. The findings of this study show that majority (70.8%) of the respondents agreed (24.5% agreed, 46.3% strongly agreed) that failure of parents to provide learning materials required for the boys' education led to boys drop out from school. This implies that the lack of parental support in provision of learning requirements such as uniform, soap, food, books and writing materials 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 in school by providing materials needed. Besides the government pledge for free basic education, the parents are expected to provide uniform, writing materials and food for the pupils. Some pupils who lack uniforms or have tattered uniforms may 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 will feel discouraged to attend school if they lack basic requirements meant to make them functional in school. This may 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.

Parental attitude towards education is tied to the Pokot cultural orientation. Some parents may consider education to be distancing the boys from their culture. Furthermore, the requirements of culture such as elaborate rites of passage ceremonies sometimes keep the boys out of school for long periods. The loss of school time leads to poor performance and lack of motivation which is a precursor to drop out. Where traditions still abound, when a dilemma presents itself and a choice has to be made, education usually suffers. Kurgat (2017) provides an insight into strong cultural practices of the Pokot and notes that the Pokot are headed by elders and these elders were at the forefront of resisting formal education when it was first introduced by colonialists. Not much has changed in terms of cultural practices since then. The findings of this study show that negative attitude of the parents towards schooling was a factor in determining boys' retention in school. Majority (67.8%) of the respondents agreed (27.3% agreed, 40.5% strongly agreed) that the negative attitude of parents towards education lead to a negative attitude of boys towards school and eventual drop out. Borhdan, (2014) observes that positive parental attitude towards child's education is important in determining access to school, attendance and academic achievement of the child. When parents have a negative attitude towards school, they may not provide for their children school requirement, they may not follow on their school progress and may not question their sons disinterest in school. The children may develop low self-esteem and low levels of motivation towards school. The attention accorded by either parent on the boys' education differ on their effect. Several studies, (McBride, Rane & Bae, 2015; Flouri, Buchanan & Bream, 2016; Henderson & Mapp, 2016), found out that mothers have a greater influence on their children education access and participation than fathers and that the educational achievements of the fathers have no significant impact on academic accomplishments of their offspring. Yet in a patriarchal society like the Pokot, it has been noted that mothers have a laid-back approach when instructing boys due to their cultural orientation. The mother sees this role as a preserve of the male members of the society. Other studies however have contradicted this view, they have shown that fathers have a greater impact on the boys' educational achievement than mothers (Walker, 2010). Besides, 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 boy as this is seen as a preserve of the male members of the community. One QASO expressed dismay:

The boys are left to their fate especially after circumcision, they are seen as mature individuals who can decide on their own and some parents do not care whether they go to school or not. Many boys roam 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 masculine and free to make independent decisions after circumcision leaves the responsibility of decision making in the hands of adolescents who are not mentally mature to make informed decisions on schooling.

Linear regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis on the influence of parental support on retention. The hypothesis stated:

H₀: There is no statistically significant influence of parental support on retention of boys in primary schools in Kenya

The results are summarized in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

Table 2. Regression Test Results for relationship between Parental Support and Boys' Retention

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.421 ^a	0.177	0.176	0.427

a Predictors: (Constant) Parental Support

b Dependent variable

A linear regression analysis was computed to evaluate the prediction of retention from parental support. A relationship between the two variables was reflected in an R of 0.421 and adjusted R² of 0.176. This showed a positive correlation where approximately 18% of the variance on retention was accounted for by its linear relationship with parental support including provision of learning materials, follow up on school work, parental commitment, attendance of school functions and activities, parental role models, child labour, education versus culture conflict, negative parental attitude and assisting with homework, the rest 82% by other variables.

Table 3. Coefficient results for Parental Support Influence on Boys' Retention Coefficients^a

	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 3 provides the information needed to predict boys' retention in primary school from parental support.

Parental support contributes significantly to the model, this means that a unit increase in the parental support will result in 0.386 influence on retention of boys in school. ($\beta = 0.386$, $t = 12.870$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 4. ANOVA^a 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 ^b
Residual	140.503	771	.182		
Total	170.686	772			

a Dependent Variable: Retention

b Predictors: (Constant) Parental Support

ANOVA results in Table 4 indicates the statistical significance of the regression model that was applied. On overall, the model was statistically significant in predicting the retention of boys. This was supported by a probability (p) value of 0.000 that is below $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance. This implies that the null hypothesis that states there is no statistically significant influence of parental support on retention of boys in primary schools was rejected and the alternative hypothesis adopted.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that parental support influenced retention of boys in public primary schools in West Pokot County. The low rate of parental involvement in education of the boys, involvement of the boys in child labour activities, negative parental attitude towards schooling for boys, high levels of parental illiteracy and inadequate provision of learning materials led to low retention of the boys in West Pokot County. The contribution of mothers in supporting the boys' education was limited due their cultural orientation which denies them the privilege to instruct and direct boys. To improve retention of boys' in school, parental support should be addressed in earnest and with urgency.

6. Recommendations

- i) The study therefore suggests that the government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education should formulate educational policies that aim to promote direct parental involvement in boys' education in regions where there is conflict between education and culture.
- ii) The study findings indicated that some boys drop out of school to engage in child labour to provide food for their families. This study recommends that the Ministry of Education should monitor the school feeding programme to ensure that many children from deserving households' benefit. In addition, the government should economically empower pastoral communities in order to reduce child labour burden from the boys. This can be done through provision of ready market for livestock and livestock products
- iii) The findings of this study indicated that there was a negative parental attitude towards boys' education. The study recommends that the county government of West Pokot should come up with initiatives through the local administration, civil society and school alumni to create awareness on the importance of education and repercussions of low retention of boys in school.

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