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**FACTORS INFLUENCING PUPILS RETENTION IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS:  
A CASE OF TRANS MARA EAST SUB-COUNTY– NAROK COUNTY, KENYA**

**BY**

**JOHN KIPKEMBOI (112414)**

**A RESEARCH DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO STRATHMORE BUSINESS  
SCHOOL IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT**



**Strathmore University,**

**Nairobi, Kenya.**

**September 2021**

## DECLARATION

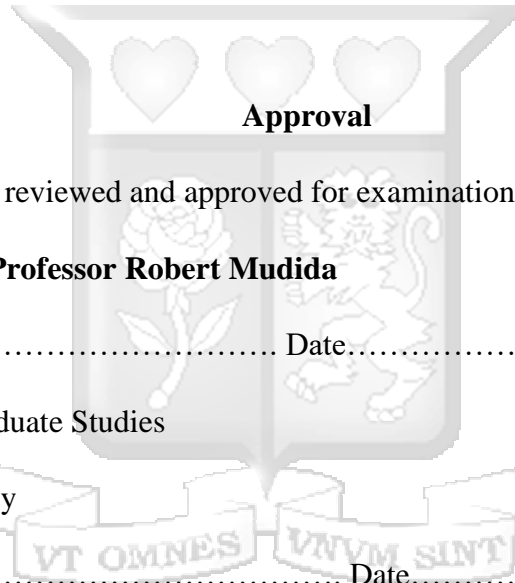
This project is my original work and has not been presented and accepted for the award of a degree by this or any other university. To the best of my knowledge and trust, the project contains no material earlier published or written by any other individual except where due reference is made in the dissertation itself.

Signature 

Date 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**John Kipkemboi**

**MPM/112414/2018**



The project has been reviewed and approved for examination by the following:

Supervisor's name: **Professor Robert Mudida**

Signature..... Date.....

Dean, School of Graduate Studies

Strathmore University

Signature..... Date.....

## ABSTRACT

Education plays a vital part in the growth and progression of any country's economy. Kenya has implemented free primary education on three separate occasions. The policy aimed to upsurge the enrolment rate in public primary schools in the nation and enhance their retention rate in these institutions. However, the policy has faced several challenges, which have resulted in a decrease in the retention rates of pupils in these schools. The study aimed to analyze the factors influencing the retention of pupils in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county of Narok County. The study's specific objectives were: to assess the influence of economic factors, geographical factors, and socio-cultural factors on the retention of pupils in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county. The researcher utilized a descriptive research design to determine the association existing amid dependent and independent variables. The target populace for the study comprised of school heads, parents, pupils, board and committee members and sub-county directors in Trans Mara Sub-county. The total target population was 2029. The investigator utilized a multistage sampling method where stratified and convenience sampling methods were utilized to select different sizes of samples for the investigation. Questionnaires were employed in collecting primary data from the sub-county. Inferential and descriptive statistics were used to present the results. The study's outcomes are expected to benefit the ministry of education, school administrators, County government of Narok and future researchers. The findings revealed that separately, economic, social, cultural, and geographical proximity positively and significantly influence learner retention. However, when all the variables are combined, only social-cultural factors had a significant predictive ability to influence learner retention. Overall, the study concluded that economic factors, social-cultural factors and geographical proximity have a positive and significant relationship influence on learner retention. Based on the findings, the study recommended that the national government in collaboration with the Narok County government, should make policies aimed at enhancing the economic activities of the people living in this region, should also advocate for family planning to ensure that parents give birth to children that they can provide quality basic life, should eliminate female genital mutilation, early marriages, and support both girl and boy education. They should build more schools, improve the infrastructure of existing schools, and ensure the availability of quality school facilities such as toilets.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this research project to my family and wife for the support they extended to me during my entire study time. My colleagues at Strathmore Business School were immeasurably supportive during such times of balancing between work and studies.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

God's grace was enough during the study and project writing process. I would also like to thank our thesis instructor Dr. Evelyne Makhanu and my able Supervisor, Prof. Robert Mudida, for their dedication, time and support to ensure my project was completed on time.



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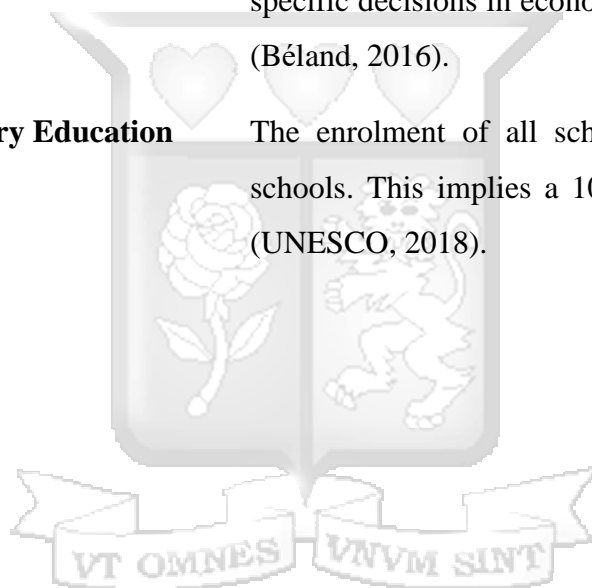


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## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

<b>Education</b>	The wealth of knowledge gained by a person after reading certain subject matters or undergoing life lessons that offer a comprehension of some phenomenon (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2016).
<b>Free Primary Education</b>	A system of education where pupils are supposed to attend primary schooling without paying any fees or any charges related to education (Onsarigo, 2012).
<b>Policy</b>	A group of ideas utilized as a basis for making specific decisions in economics, business or politics (Béland, 2016).
<b>Universal Primary Education</b>	The enrolment of all school-age kids in primary schools. This implies a 100 percent net enrolment (UNESCO, 2018).



## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS USED

<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>ECDE</b>	Early Childhood Development Education
<b>EFA</b>	Education for All
<b>ESD</b>	Education for Sustainable Development
<b>FGM</b>	Female Genital Mutilation
<b>FPE</b>	Free Primary Education
<b>GER</b>	Gross Enrolment Rate
<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
<b>KNBS</b>	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MoEST</b>	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
<b>NACOSTI</b>	National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation
<b>NARC</b>	National Rainbow Coalition
<b>NER</b>	Net Enrolment Rate
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UPE</b>	Universal Primary Education
<b>UBE</b>	Universal Basic Education

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

## 1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides background information on factors influencing pupil's retention in public schools in Transmara East Sub-County. Specifically, factors that were included are economic, socio-cultural and geographical proximity. The chapter also looks at the problem statement, objectives, significance of the study and operational definitions of terms.

## 1.1 Background Information

Education can be described as the technique used to impart knowledge, attitudes, competencies, and standards to assimilate a person into a specified society or alter the values and standards of a specific civilization (Bartlett, Clemens & Whyte, 2014). Education is the key to improving per capita income, fosters economic growth, and helps sustain democracies. Education forms the basis through which pupils learn to interact with others, their books, and grasp points that will enhance their chances of future empowerment. According to Egan (2012) and Mackey (2013), primary education is the backbone of enlightenment and instruction. There is, therefore, an urgent need to improve the eminence of primary or basic education in all countries as one way of adhering to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 that made education a human right for every individual.

Governments spend a significant part of their budgets to finance the education sector with more emphasis on primary education. According to Sibieta (2019), the United Kingdom administration spent 3.2 billion pounds and 27.7 billion pounds on educating under-5s and primary school children, respectively, in 2015/16. Sibieta (2019) also noted that despite the decline in the spending per child in English schools, the primary school funding across Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland varies from one state to another. Though education in the UK is a devolved issue, expenditure on education is not equally shared in most UK

states (Sibieta, 2019). In 2018/19, the amount spent on every primary school kid in England reached £5,000 compared to the £6,200 spent on a secondary school kid in the country.

According to an OECD (2012) report on education, France allocated six per cent of its Gross Domestic Product on education in 2011/2013. However, research indicates that this budget is unequally distributed among the country's secondary and primary education. Compared to the OECD countries average salaries for primary school teachers, France falls below the average which may explain the low morale among primary school teachers hence performance decline. In other developed countries like Japan, Mexico, Korea, the average primary school teachers' salaries are 5% lower than the recommended OECD average (OECD, 2012).

In developing countries like Asian and Latin American states, the amount of budget set aside as a percentage of GDP usually determines the rate of enrollment in primary and pre-primary levels. Brazil spent a total of 16.25 percent of its GDP on education in 2015 which marked an increase of 0.53% from the previous year's 15.72% (World Bank, 2014). However, considering the statistics on education spending in Brazil from the year 2010, it can easily be noted that there has been a mixture of changes with the expenditure increasing in some years and declining in others.

Africa being a developing continent with most countries still in the third world category, the expenditure on education might not achieve the required impact of the decline in expenditure per child compared to other states in the World. For instance, a review of selected countries in Africa indicates that only a few states set aside substantial funds for the education sector. In 2018, Nigeria's educational allocation was 7.04% of the total budget of 8.6 trillion Naira (Adedigba, 2017), while South Africa's budget allocation on basic education for the year 2018/19 was 16.7% of GDP (UNICEF, 2018). In Malawi, the public investments in pre-primary education accounted for a mere 0.2% of the country's budget in 2018. This has led to low net enrollment in most primary and secondary schools with a net enrollment rate of 16 percent in secondary and a completion rate of 21.9 percent (UNICEF, 2019). From these statistics, South Africa ranks top in terms of prioritizing

education at 16.7% but still, like all other states fall below the World Bank recommended rate of 26 percent.

Muthoni (2014) notes that the Kenyan administration spends over 5% of its national budget on education as a way of complying with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights that provided that every individual had a right to education. Apart from complying with the declaration, the government considers education as one technique of enhancing its economic, social, political, cultural and civil rights and enhancing its growth. In Kenya, like any other state, the process of educating its citizens is organized and supervised through an articulate system set up by the government. The Ministry of Education (MoE) is mandated with the duty of overseeing, managing and supervising all educational institutions in the country and is responsible for formulating policies meant to improve the delivery of instruction in all parts of the nation. A 2014 report on census of all early childhood development education (ECDE), basic and secondary education in Kenya by the then Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) noted that the mission of the ministry was to “*provide, promote and coordinate the delivery of quality education, training and research and enhance the integration of Science, Technology and Innovation into national production systems for sustainable development*” (MoEST & UNICEF, 2014, p.1). This indicates that the government of Kenya has always been keen on providing quality education to its people given the role education plays in the globalized world. Nevertheless, its allocation of Sh. 494.8 billion to the education sector in the 2019/2020 budget, representing a 5.3 percent of the 2018 GDP (The Conversation Africa, 2019), indicates that it still lags in terms of achieving the 26% rate set by the World Bank.

### **1.1.1 Kenya’s Education System**

Clark (2015) notes that it is compulsory for an individual seeking to attain education in Kenya to be registered in a learning institution. Enrollment is the process of beginning attending a school and comprises of the aggregate number of pupils suitably itemized or appearing for lessons in a specified school (Bartlett *et al.*, 2014). Kenya’s current school education system was first embraced in 1985 under the leadership of the then president Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi (Wanjohi, 2018; Wanjohi, 2013). The system encompasses two

years of early childhood education (ECDE), 8 years of primary education, 4 years of secondary and 4 years of college or university education (Ambaa, 2015). This system is famously known as the 8-4-4 system that is still functional to date. Pupils who enroll for primary education sit for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) exams after 8 years of study and are expected to transition into secondary where they study for four more years. At the end of four years, they take the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) exams at the conclusion of secondary school (Ambaa, 2015, Wanjohi, 2018). The system then requires that they successfully transition to university where they take four more years for their undergraduate studies (Njagi, 2018).

The first Free Primary Education policy (FPE 1) waived formal school fees for grades 1 to 4 but maintained the rates for grades 5-8. The rates for grades 5-8 also got abolished later in 1978 by President Jomo Kenyatta. After ascending to power following the death of Jomo Kenyatta in 1978, President Daniel Moi initiated an FPE program that saw the removal of building levies and other related costs on guardians. Instead, Moi directed schools to raise construction and maintenance funds by initiating community-based *harambee* activities. Statistics of school enrolments indicated that the levying of building and maintenance charges kept many pupils out of school. For instance, the number of enrolments in grade 1 for pupils aged eight years and above reached 274,000 in 1979 compared to 118,000 in 1978. This was an increase of around 10% in total enrolments of pupils within that age range (Dzombo, 2015).

The third significant education reform was launched in 2003 by President Mwai Kibaki who implemented Free Primary Education (FPE) as part of fulfilment of his election pledges. The program was launched in January 2003 and Kibaki who had been elected under the National Rainbow coalition (NARC) sought to quickly prioritize education as part of the implementation of campaign manifesto. The NARC administration executed the FPE program intending to offer more opportunities to the underprivileged school-age kids. The policy led to a positive result because it resulted in increased enrolments in many of the public primary schools in the republic (Ogola, 2010). Participation in ECDE improved from a net enrolment rate (NER) of fifty-six out of a hundred in 2009 to seventy-five out

of a hundred in 2016. The basic school NER in 2016 was eight-nine out of a hundred, and there was an 81 percent transition proportion to secondary, a notable improvement from fifty-five percent in 2009. Whereas NER at the secondary education level was a diffident fifty-one percent in 2016, the proportion was a reassuring improvement from thirty-three percent in 2009. A bulging problem, nevertheless, is the upsurge in the rate of those learners that could not continue learning in upper classes likened to lower classes. At ECDE, primary and secondary stages, there was diminutive general variance in school contribution amidst girls and boys.

Free Primary Education program funds helped public primary school heads to purchase learning and teaching materials by disbursing funds to the school heads to facilitate the process. At its onset, the textbook pupil ratio improved to 1:2 (Orodho, 2014). It is, therefore, apparent that despite the government's enhanced efforts to increase access to free primary education, a significant number of pupils still stay away from school, a fact that should concern authorities. The government came up with FPE to ensure that all school-going children attain primary education irrespective of their socio-cultural, economic and cultural status. However, as some education scholars argue, there has been a challenge ensuring that all school-going kids get registered in primary schools because of the cultural and socio-economic factors pitting them and their parents. Andrew and Orodho (2013) posit that the efforts by the government have been mostly undermined by cultural and economic factors.

### **1.1.2 Free Primary Education Policies**

At independence, African states inherited education systems which to some extent were not adequate in meeting the needs for their self-governance. The systems would not also enhance their needs for increased economic development and growth. However, African states made serious attempts to progress and improve their educational systems and develop their own countries. In the 1960s, the education systems in Africa witnessed a quantitative expansion in terms of enrolment of students in African institutions of learning. For example, between 1960 and 1983, there was a remarkable increase in the number of

students registering in African learning institutions. The number reached 63 million students in 1983 which meant that African institutions had developed tremendously (NCES, 2019).

Before African states became colonies, they had their informal methods of imparting knowledge, skills and competencies to their people (Mosweunyane, 2014). Africans used numerous symbols and motifs to communicate and pass information. This kind of learning did not, however, follow any wide-ranging and formal curriculum which meant that when custodians died, their knowledge got lost. When colonists came, they infiltrated African systems and installed their form of education that focused majorly on their ideologies. This is why at independence, most African states made conscious attempts to Africanize their educational systems to meet their desires and shun the interests of their colonizers.

Irigoyen (2017) studied on the effectiveness of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria. The report noted that the introduction of UBE in 1999 by the Nigerian administration that included the provision of free primary and secondary education for all citizens faced challenges from the onset. The government managed to initiate the program after several attempts to improve the education system in the nation. The April 2004 implementation of UBE after the signing into law of the UBE act led to some improvements in the enrolment in the current years though its outcomes have been limited in many ways leading to the low ranking of Nigeria's educational system. Part of the reasons for the system did not attain the required impact is because of the negative perception of the country's education infrastructure and the administration as well as other institutions responsible for running it.

### **1.1.3 Enrollment and Retention of Pupils in Primary Schools**

School enrolment, as well as attendance, are two crucial measurements of educational attainment in a country. The rate of enrolment in primary schools can be measured by administrative data and is usually regarded as the number of pupils registered in a specific primary school and fit in the age group that formally matches the primary level schooling divided by the sum of the populace of a similar age group. Attendance rate is measured by

taking a household survey of the proportion of children in the age group that formally matches primary schooling that attend primary schools (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2016).

Globally, the enrolment rates of primary schools increased tremendously in the last century. Developing countries enhanced access to primary education by increasing government expenditure on education as a way of ensuring that they increased the enrolment rates in primary schools. The report by Ortiz-Ospina & Roser (2016) indicates that despite the increase in the registration rates of kids in primary schools in most developing states, the countries still struggle with the challenges of school attendance as well as retention of pupils. Consequently, the number of pupils joining primary schools and completing primary education has been on a decline meaning the number of dropouts has increased hence slow retention by primary schools.

According to the Africa-America Institute (2015), only seven states in Sub-Saharan Africa attained the targeted gross enrollment rate of eighty percent and above in pre and primary programs. The number of children enrolled in primary schools in the African continent has been increasing and reached a landmark 149 million in 2012 from the 62 million enrolled in 1990. A total of fifteen states in Sub-Saharan Africa have eliminated school fee for primary schools making it possible for more kids to attend school (Africa-America Institute, 2015).

Nonetheless, the retention of these pupils in these schools has presented bigger challenges to the countries and schools. For instance, no African state has come close to attaining UPE which requires that all kids enrolled in a school complete the full primary schooling course. In Africa, over 38 million of school-going kids did not complete their primary schooling in 2012 (Africa-America Institute, 2015). In Kenya, by 2012, the dropout rate of kids in primary school was 2.7% as indicated by Wambugu (2013). These statistics indicate that the rate of primary school dropout is high in Africa based on the inability of the states to withstand the pressure that comes with an increased enrollment of pupils in public primary schools.

According to Njue (2014), the retention of pupils in primary schools can be measured by taking statistics on the total number of pupils enrolled in class one and comparing them against those that sit for class eight examinations. In other words, retention rates can be

calculated by taking total primary school enrollment and subtracting the number of dropouts (those that do not complete their primary education). For purposes of this study, the researcher will get the required statistics from the Ministry of Education records and KNBS data.

The gap between the rich and poor, otherwise referred to as haves and have nots, has an impact on primary school education, globally and in Kenya (Njue, 2015). While it is a very simple and straightforward enquiry, the answers are highly complex. Ensuring that children enroll in school is one thing, but whether they will complete their education is another issue wholly. It has been argued that most children in Africa are enrolled in school, but that the real problem concerns children dropping out of school (Dumas et al., 2004; Lewin, 2007). Despite the Free Primary being introduced in the 1970s, the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) demanded that the government introduces cost sharing mechanism. In 2002, the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) introduced the FPE successfully, despite earlier failed attempts. This was seen as an enabler for pupils retention but it did not achieve the anticipated results. Researchers implicate structural issues at the household, school, and societal levels for students' inability to complete basic education in poor nations.

Socio-cultural factors affect retention of pupils. In Uganda, for example, Namukwaya, et al. (2014), shows that a large portion of the features that affect pupil's retention are culture related, for example, pastoral lifestyle, solid social qualities, negative demeanor towards education and commitment in domestic work. In Somalia, Jama (2015) proves that the most important factor in the region that influences the standards for dependability of female pupils is early marriage and residential work.

The proximity to the schools has an effect on the retention of pupils. When the distance between school and home is far, the pupils may not be motivated to attend classes. This is more felt with pupils in Arid and Semi-Arid Areas (ASALs) where the main economic activity is nomadic pastoralism. Macharia (2017) notes that "Limited number of schools and highly dispersed rural population, force children to traverse difficult terrain and lack of transport makes access to schools more difficult for primary pupils."

### **1.1.4 Study Area**

Trans Mara East Sub-County is the smallest of the sub-counties in Narok County. It stretches an area of 275.4 Km<sup>2</sup> and consists of 2 divisions, 6 locations and 10 sub-locations and a total of 15098 households (KNBS, 2009) (See appendix III). The sub-county has 169 primary schools and 24 secondary schools. The performance of primary schools in the region has been below average for a majority of the schools necessitating quick action from the concerned parties. Trans Mara East sub-county is largely a pastoralist area with over 95% of the residents being pastoralists. Owing to these characteristics, the researcher gained interest to see how the economic factors, social factors and proximity affect retention of pupils in Transmara East Sub-County.

### **1.2 Statement of the Research Problem**

Statistics on the enrollment and dropout rates of primary school kids in Africa indicate that irrespective of an increase in enrollments, the rate of dropout remains high (Africa-America Institute, 2015; World Bank, 2018; UNICEF, 2019). Notwithstanding the efforts made by the Kenyan administration, the number of pupils who drop out of public primary schools has been increasing over time, especially among the poorest regions in the country. The announcement of primary education without payment of fees or any charges saw an upsurge in primary schools' enrolment during the first three years but the numbers began to decline after the fourth year as indicated by MoEST and UNICEF (2014).

Whereas the total number of public primary schools in the nation increased to 21,718 in 2014 from 18,543 in 2009, representing a 17.1% increase within the 5 years reported, the increase in school enrolment did not increase in the same margin but was rather slow at 8.3%. The MoEST and UNICEF (2014) report also indicate that the total primary school enrolment increased to 9,950,700 pupils in 2014 from the 9,183,500 pupils in 2009. Some of these difficulties include high levels of poverty, gender inequalities, inadequate supply of instructors in primary education and poor quality of teachers. These challenges influence the retention rates of learners in government primary schools in Kenya.

Narok County is one of the marginalized counties in Kenya with over half of the school-age kids not going to school and a significant number not completing primary education

(Busienei, 2014). Trans Mara East Sub-county is among the six sub-counties in Narok County as per the County Government of Narok (2013). The county has a sum of 624 primary schools. On average, the teacher to pupil ratio in the sub-county is 1:51 (County Government of Narok, 2013). The gross enrolment rate (GER) is around 89 percent while the net enrolment rate (NER) is nearly 79.5 percent (County Government of Narok, 2013). The dropout rate is a point of worry primarily due to nomadic pastoralist mode of life particularly with the Maasai community, who are predominant in the area. At 8 percent, it implies that 17,072 pupils drop out of school (County Government of Narok, 2013).

The transitional rate at this level of education stands at 59 percent though completion rate is relatively high at an average of 80 percent. This suggests that 21 percent of kids who sit for class eight exams do not transition to secondary schools. The vastness of the county and uneven density of the populace in some regions make about 70 percent of pupils to walk a distance of between 1.1-4.9 kilometres to the nearest school to seek for education (County Government of Narok, 2013).

According to the Narok County CIDP (2018), school-going children aged 6-13 years in Narok County make up a total of 257,409 out of which only 123,368 attend school. Most of the children reside in rural areas where there is a big challenge concerning the provision of education. Kids are forced to traverse long distances to reach schools which have contributed to more than 40 percent of those enrolled dropping out of school (Narok County CIDP, 2018).

This study aimed to establish the factors affecting the retention of pupils in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county of Narok County.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

This study addresses both general and specific objectives.

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The general objective of the study was to assess the factors influencing the retention of pupils in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county, Narok County.

### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

- i. To establish the influence of economic factors on pupil retention in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county.
- ii. To establish the influence of community socio-cultural factors on pupil retention in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county.
- iii. To assess the influence of geographical proximity on pupil's retention in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

- i. What is the influence of economic factors on the retention of pupils in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county?
- ii. What is the influence of community's socio-cultural factors on pupils' retention in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county?
- iii. What is the influence of geographical proximity on pupil's retention in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county?

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The investigation was conducted in Trans Mara East Sub-county of Narok County. The study was undertaken in selected government primary learning institutions in Trans Mara East sub-county and targeted schools in the pastoralist areas of the sub-county. The investigation was confined to the interrogation of the factors affecting the retention of learners in public primary schools in the sub-county. Specifically, the researcher sought to assess the effect of economic, social-cultural, and geographical proximity on the retention of learners in government primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The findings of the investigation will be beneficial to the following groups;

**Academics:** The outcomes of this study will add to the existing literature on the factors influencing pupil retention in public primary schools in Kenya. It will, therefore, contribute

to the development of academic discourse towards addressing the needs of scholars in public primary schools.

**Policy, practice and research:** the findings and recommendations of the study will also help in the formulation of educational policies meant to increase the completion rates of pupils in Kenya's primary schools. Being the key decision and policy-making agency of the government, the MoE will find the outcomes of the study helpful in formulating better policies aimed at improving the present state of FPE to guarantee its success in the future. Also, the MoE will use the findings to develop policies to increase registration and retaining of students in government primary schools in pastoralist communities. The ministry will also be able to develop personalized and group-specific tactics to address the issue of low retention rates of learners in government primary schools in Narok County. The study's findings will also help the ministry in budgeting for the needs of pupils attending public primary schools in Narok County. Researchers in the ministry will also use the findings to conduct further studies in the future.

**School Administrators:** The investigation's outcomes will help school heads, who are the administrators of primary schools in Kenya to understand the factors contributing to the decline in retention of pupils. They will also understand the reasons for the low completion rates of pupils in public primary schools in Kenya.

**Narok County Government:** The county government of Narok will also find the outcomes of the study quite helpful because in the face of devolution, the county is expected to budget on how to disburse funds meant for educational development. The county executives will also benefit from the study's findings as they will enlighten them on the issues influencing the retaining of learners in public primary schools within the county. Once they are aware of this, they will be able to devise means to improve the state of affairs in all schools around the county.

**Future Researchers:** The study will benefit future investigators who might be interested in investigating the impact of FPE in Kenya or other counties. The study will also form part of the literature that they might want to review in the future while conducting their

studies on the issues influencing the retaining rates of learners in government primary schools in Kenya.

### **1.8 Chapter Summary**

The chapter has discussed the primary background of the study revealing some important statistics on the enrolment and retention of pupils in public primary schools. The chapter also highlighted the main research gap in the statement of the problem. In the chapter, the research objectives, research questions, scope of the study and significance of the study are also included. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the expected limitations and delimitations of the study.



## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The chapter takes a comprehensive examination of relevant literature on the factors influencing the retention of learners in government primary schools in Kenya. It is organized in sub-sections encompassing the theoretical literature guiding the study; the empirical literature on the topic guided by the three research objectives; identification of the existing research gap and the conceptual framework concludes the chapter.

### **2.2 Review of Theoretical Literature**

This section reviews the relevant theoretical literature on the retention rates of pupils in primary schools. The section also discusses two relevant theories upon which the study is based. The researcher discusses both the origins, the arguments and tenets of these theories and also reviews how the theories were used in other studies. The investigator then selected two most relevant theories upon which the entire research is based on.

For a school or ministry to address the challenges facing pupils' retention in schools, there is a need to address the issues affecting the retention of pupils from various perspectives. This investigation is centered on two major theories: Robert Merton's goal means gap theory and the systems approach theory and. The two are described in the ensuing sections.

#### **2.2.1 Robert Merton's Goal Means Gap Theory**

The arguments of this theory are based on the strain theory developed by Robert Merton in the 1940s. The theory can be utilized to explain the strain the society undergoes to explain the association amid cultural goals and legitimate means available for attaining them and the niche existing in attempting to attain the goals set by a specific group. According to Thompson (2016), goal means theory describes the discrepancies amid culturally or socially-defined goals and institutionalized means that are availed in achieving these set objectives. The theory argues that there exists a tendency by individuals to defy some issues or developments as a way of pursuing their widely-embraced societal goals or values. Societies or community organizations offer both culturally-embraced goals and means of attaining the objectives. Most people in Kenya regard education as the only legit

means to attaining success but for some communities, this does not apply. There exists a gap in terms of the means of attaining a good life as conditioned by the community or society leading to what Merton called strain in the society.

Goal means gap theory has been applied in various studies some of which approve its arguments and some of which disapprove the arguments. In a study on “reflection on a revised strain theory, Agnew (2012) noted that criticism on this theory was justified because the theory was among other issues unable to explain the increase in the rates of crime during adolescence and their inability to attain monetary goals. In the article, Agnew (2012) noted that the increase in crime rates in the society was not because of the strain to attain certain desired goals but out of the inability of individuals to escape from a delinquency or painful condition. On the other hand, Van der Have & Rubalcaba (2016) utilized the goal means gap theory in their study and found out that the augments presented by the theory regarding the society’s strain to attain social goals were relevant in the modern society. The study, therefore, regarded the critics of the theory and its tenets as inaccurate and misguided. Watts & McNulty (2013) also supported the theory in their study on childhood abuse and criminal behavior. They found out that childhood sexual and physical abuse can act as a key predictor of adolescents offending in their adolescence. This was regarded as a form of strain that the society endures out of the past undesirable actions of individuals.

This theory will help appreciate the place of cultural factors on pupil retention. The strain in society has led to the government adopting various mechanisms to ensure that it reduces it. In Kenya, for instance, the introduction of free primary education was meant to increase the enrollment of pupils in schools and in a way increase the retention rates in government schools. Despite the primary education being free, a good number of Kenyans are still not able to access it because of their entrenched socio-cultural beliefs or geographical factors. According to Merton, an individual can devise ways in which to deal with the strains brought about by his or her incapability to secure pecuniary success. Some of these ways of adaptation might be deviant whereas others may not be as Merton argues. Among the ways of adapting to the strains include innovation, conformity, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion (Thompson, 2016).

### **2.2.2 Systems Approach Theory**

The theory was developed by Kurt Lewin (1930-34) and explains the inter-link amidst parts of a system and their contribution to the achievement of the entire system. According to the theory, a system describes a set of elements or sections which possess some degree of autonomy but are at the same time form an integral part of a whole (Okumbe, 2014). In this light, a school can be described as a system encompassing diverse parts or subsystems which can attain set goals and objectives when properly harmonized. The composition of a school includes pupils, teachers, parents and the community, all of which play crucial roles in influencing the operations of the school. The physical facilities like buildings, toilets, boarding facilities play the role of supplementing human resources for the school to function smoothly.

For pupils to effectively enrol in the school set up and continue with their education in formal schooling, there is an urgent need to have the parts of the school system functioning properly as Chih-Hui and Sapphire (2017) assert. Also, the political and cultural environment are integral parts of a school system that the systems theory failed to factor in in its arguments. However, the theory argues that as a system, the school is influenced by the communal perceptions towards education, socio-cultural factors and administration tactics to improve participation and retention of pupils in schools. Like any other social setup, a school setup is greatly influenced by the surrounding community's beliefs and perceptions since the community is the major source of pupils in the school.

This theory has been used in this study to appreciate how the economic factors, cultural factors and distance from the schools affect pupil's retention. All these factors are what forms a system, which is the anchor of this theory.

## **2.3 Empirical Review of Literature**

### **2.3.1 Factors Influencing the Retention of Pupils in Public Primary Schools**

The issue of pupils' retention in public primary schools has received much attention from education scholars in the contemporary period. Education scholars and experts like Walker (2016) have attempted to find out the reason for the decline in the rate of retention of pupils, especially girls in public primary schools. Other studies by Orodho *et al.* (2013), Wanjohi

(2010), Ogola (2010) and Kaburu (2014) found out the challenges facing the efforts by various administrations to improve the retention rates of students in public primary schools in Kenya. The retention rates of pupils in primary schools faced various challenges including the community's socio-cultural and traditional beliefs that were detrimental to the growth of education; the economic activities of parents and geographical proximity of schools like distance of schools from homes and quality; availability of boarding facilities and the learning environment in schools.

Makorani and Muli (2017) revealed that the learning environment in the school also had a significant influence on the retention rate of pupils in schools. In their study, they noted that pupils would be attracted or discouraged from continuing to attend school if the learning environment is not favorable to them. In another study, Gichohi (2014) noted that the attitude of teachers, teaching and learning resources and teacher and pupil ratio also influenced the retention of pupils in public primary schools in Nakuru North. In the study, the researcher noted that these challenges significantly and negatively affected the rate of retention of pupils in public primary schools in Kenya.

The economic activities of parents were also discovered to be the major challenge affecting the retention of pupils in public primary schools in the Kenyan schools. Studies conducted on various parts of the country revealed a strong association of poverty and school dropout rates. Dzombo (2015), for instance, noted that because most parents in Kilifi County were not engaged in any meaningful economic activities, they lacked finances to buy their children the basics like uniforms needed for them to go to school thereby resorting to keeping them outside. This was a dangerous trend that had seen an increase in school dropout and decline in retention rates. Some parents also did not know the importance of keeping their children in school hence encouraged them to stay outside. Another significant contributing factor in the decline in retention rates was the fact that the parents had low levels or no education thereby did not understand why their kids should go to school. Other studies indicate that in areas where parents have low levels of education or no education at all, the enrollment rates of pupils in primary schools is usually low and the rate of retention is also low. Also, the number of siblings in a family was found to be a major contributor of increased school dropout in most regions of Kenya. Communities where the number of

children is more than five find it difficult to feed and school all of them because of the lack of meaningful economic engagement (Dzombo, 2015).

Scholars also found out that the retention rate of pupils in public primary schools was directly affected by the community's socio-cultural and traditional beliefs. In some communities, girls are considered lesser important and cannot therefore be schooled. They are rather left at home to take care of the home. Also, some communities encourage female genital mutilation and early marriages meaning that the primary school-going kids are married off at an early age decreasing their chances of enrolling in a school. These practices and beliefs have led to a significant decline in retention rates especially among pastoralist communities like the Maaasai and Samburu communities.

Other studies also revealed that the increase in school dropout rates in various parts of the country was occasioned by geographical factors like distance of the schools from homes, the nature, quality and existence of boarding facilities (Kaburu, 2014, Njue, 2014, Ouda & Ndung'u, 2016). Geographical factors also included the climatic conditions of some regions where harsh weather patterns (like extreme hotness or coldness) discouraged learners from attending schools.

This section is arranged as per the three main objectives or purposes of the study. The researcher reviews existing relevant literature on the factors affecting the retention rates of pupils in primary schools. The section specifically reviews past studies in the area of economic factors influencing the retention of pupils in primary schools, socio-cultural factors and geographical proximity factors. This section aims to identify the main research gaps in the existing literature thereby highlighting the need for this study. The literature review is organized systematically whereby a review of global contexts involving studies on the topic conducted in developed countries starts followed by a look at the studies in developing countries in Asia and Latin America, and then narrows down to the African as well as Kenyan contexts.

### **2.3.2 Economic Factors and Pupils' Retention**

According to a study by Andrianov (2017), both GDP development and unemployment rates have a positive and significant impact on the enrollment of pupils in primary schools

in Canada. The researcher applied the Autoregressive distributed lag method to analyze data from statistics Canada ranging from 1992-2013. In the study, the investigator examined the impact of macroeconomic factors like exchange rate, growth in GDP and unemployment on the enrollment of students in Canadian schools. The researcher stratified samples based on gender and his results indicated that the rate of unemployment significantly affected the male enrollment in Canadian schools. Also, the study indicated that a depreciation of the Canadian dollar led to an upsurge in enrollment rates. From the findings, one can deduce that even in developed countries, economic factors greatly influence the enrollment and retention of pupils in schools.

Hlinka (2017) conducted a study on the retention theories to meet the needs of rural Appalachian community students and found out that economic factors influenced the retention of college students in Kentucky. The study utilized a qualitative technique where the perspectives of students were gathered using a theoretical foundation of Tinto integration model. The data was then qualitatively analyzed and results presented using qualitative techniques. The sample size used was large enough to permit the researcher to generalize the target populace. The study recommended that communities be economically empowered to enhance the retention rates of students in colleges in the area. The study did not, however, employ quantitative techniques which the current study employed to find out the effect of economic factors on the retention rates of pupils in primary schools.

According to the Development Bank of Latin America (2018), efforts made by Chile and Mexico to promote school retention rates have succeeded in keeping most school-going kids in school. In this report, the Development Bank of Latin America noted that Chile and Mexico face challenges in regards to the reduction of dropout rates of pupils in their schools. The study also revealed that the efforts made by Chile and Mexico in extending education to the vast majority of their young populace have yielded fruits with some programs greatly reducing school dropouts in the countries. Besides, the study noted that despite the geographical distinctions amongst the two Latin American states, their governments have realized the need to develop mechanisms to improve retention rates of pupils in their schools as this will enhance literacy levels and improve the economic conditions of their people (Development Bank of Latin America, 2018).

In China, Chung and Mason (2012) sought to find out the reasons for increased dropout of students in rural areas. The researchers utilized a descriptive research design and collected data from the field involving rural areas where dropout rates were high. The study specifically focused on Yunnan Province of China. The outcomes of the study indicated that poverty and lack of school resources were the major causes of increased school dropout in the province. Also, the findings indicated that lack of government initiatives to improve the economic status of people led to increased poverty in the province which in return led to high school dropout rates (Chung & Mason, 2012).

Studies on the implementation of free primary education policies in Uganda, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe indicate that the execution of primary education without fee has had challenges that have reduced their effectiveness. In Uganda, for instance, the government's attempt to introduce Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997 did not achieve its objectives because the number of pupils demanding spaces in government schools where primary education was supposed to be free outgrew the available spaces. Despite the increase in primary school enrolments from three point one million in 1996 to seven point six million in 2003, a lot of challenges faced the system leading to its slowdown. Also, there was the problem of understaffing that strained the few teachers available to teach in secondary schools (Policy Brief 10, 2012).

Dzombo (2015) 's study found out that economic factors were among the reasons for the increased dropout of pupils in Kilifi county. Using a mixture of snowballing and purposive sampling to select the target population, the researcher interviewed pupils, and instructors and the outcomes indicated that schools in the county still charged other levies to parents apart from school fees. The charging of these levies led to financial straining for the parents, a majority of whom would not afford these levies. Increased poverty levels in the county meant that the parents kept their kids at home. The investigation also found out that the high poverty levels in the county occasioned by the lack of meaningful economic activities or formal employment led to serious challenges for the parents to afford the levies the schools charged them.

Scholars have studied the reasons for the reduced retention rates of pupils in primary schools in Kenya and revealed that the economic activities of parents resulted in increased school dropout rates. In a study on the factors influencing pupils' retaining in government primary schools in Maparasha Kajiado County, Njue (2015) revealed that the economic activities of parents in the region significantly affected the retention of pupils in primary schools in Maparasha, Kajiado County. The investigation also discovered that the income level of parents greatly affected the retaining of learners in government primary schools in the county. The researcher utilized a descriptive approach and simple random sampling to identify the target learning institutions to participate in the investigation. Systematic random sampling was also used to the target sample for pupils for the purposes of the research. The researcher also noted that despite the provision of free primary education in public schools in the county, parents still had to meet the indirect costs of education including buying the pupils uniforms and other miscellaneous items which they could not afford because of their poor economic status. Njue (2015), therefore, recommended the sensitization of parents on the need to keep their children in school their economic status notwithstanding.

According to a study by Makorani and Muli (2017) which utilized a survey research design to target specific primary schools for study and employed questionnaires to gather data, economic activities of parents were revealed to influence pupil retention. Data was analyzed using SPSS and the findings indicated that family backgrounds and economic activities of parents significantly influenced the retaining of learners in primary schools in the sub-county. Also, the researchers identified the gender of the family, number of siblings in the family and geographical factors as some of the reasons why the retention rates of pupils in public primary schools was low in the region. Makorani and Muli (2017) recommended that the government find a way of empowering the people economically in order to reduce cases of school dropouts in the region.

Ogola (2010) studied the state of free primary education in the government primary schools in Kenya and noted that parents abandoned their support for the schools once they learned of the commitment of the government to delivery of free primary education. Some parents withdrew their support because they felt that they no longer cannot afford to do so or

because they believed the government was capable of handling the needs of pupils. However, delays in disbursement of funds to schools has seen some pupils miss the necessities leading to increased school dropout rates and low holding rates of pupils in schools.

Studies conducted on the retention rates of pupils in public primary schools in Kenya also revealed that the number of siblings in the family greatly influenced their retention rates in school. Njue (2015), Makorani & Muli (2017), Muhindi (2017), Dzombo (2015) and Oigara (2017) revealed that the number of siblings in a family significantly affected the capability of the family to keep them in school. In Njue (2015), the higher the number of siblings in a family the higher the dropout rates since the families had no financial muscles to maintain all the pupils in school at the same time. Dzombo (2015) also noted that parents with large families, as it was the case with most families in Kilifi County could not afford to maintain them in schools given their low levels of education and poor economic status. This explains the reduction in retention rates of students in public primary schools in most Kenyan counties.

### **2.3.3 Socio-cultural Factors and Pupils' Retention**

A study on the enrollment and retention rates of indigenous communities in Australia by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2019) indicated that despite the strides made in ensuring that they remain in school, some cultural beliefs still hindered their progress. The study that utilized a descriptive design and stratified sampling used questionnaires and interview guides to collect data. The sample size was 200 respondents drawn from indigenous communities in Australia. The findings indicated that some communities still valued their cultural beliefs and this greatly impacted the rate of enrollment in schools where these communities reside. Besides, the study also found out that these communities had some socio-cultural practices that were detrimental to the government efforts to increase enrollment and improve retention of pupils in schools in these communities.

Soares *et al.* (2015) studied the main factors influencing school dropout in Brazil's Minas Gerais. The findings of the study indicated that the rate of dropout in this region was directly proportional to the socio-cultural factors and the beliefs of the communities

regarding the importance of education. The study utilized interview methodology and conducted over 3418 interviews of students and dropouts in the region. The researchers also used a model called PNAD for which a Logit model was used to analyze the collected data. The study did not, however, look the economic or geographical factors that influence school retention rates but rather concentrated on cultural and socio-cultural factors including perception of the people on school system. This research gap will be filled in the proposed study.

Namukwaya and Kibirige (2014) studied the factors influencing primary school enrollment and retention in Uganda and revealed that cultural factors had the greatest influence on the retention rates of pupils in Uganda's Kotido District. The researchers utilized an interpretive paradigm and used face to face interviews and focus discussion groups to collect data. The sample size used for the study was 177 respondents. The outcomes revealed that the pastoralist lifestyle, strong cultural beliefs and a negative attitude towards education were the key factors influencing the enrollment and retention of pupils in Kotido District of Uganda. The study, however, did not look at the macroeconomic effect on the retention rates.

A report by World Bank Group and Wodon (2017) indicated that child marriages had a serious impact on education. The report indicates that over 41,000 girls are forced to early marriages in Africa before the age of 18 every single day. This alarming rate has serious consequences on the economic, social and development outcomes of women in these regions. Additionally, early child marriages make it impossible for girls to complete their schooling or stay in school. Unfortunately, this practice is deeply entrenched in most African societies where girls are considered as resources and marrying them off early is seen as a source of wealth for their families. In Kenya, the practice is common among many communities. A study by Ganira, Inda, Odundo, Akondo & Ngaruiya (2015) noted that premature and obligatory marriages had a significant effect on girls' education in Migori County, Kenya. The researchers discovered that the perceptions of parents regarding the girl child and her education were negative thereby adversely influenced their schooling. In addition to repugnant traditions and cultural practices in the region, the parents gave little attention to the education of the girl child thereby putting her at a disadvantaged position.

In Africa, early and forced marriages of girls have forced a majority of them out of school at a tender age. According to Walker (2012), early marriages in Africa had a substantial influence on the quality of education. Trends of early marriages in Malawi, Guinea, Zambia, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) indicate that most of the school-aged girls fail to attend school to be married off. For some who had already enrolled in schools, they are forced to drop out of school to get married off to older men in exchange of few cows, goats and money. This trend has significantly and adversely affected the retention of pupils in public schools in these regions as Oigara (2017) noted. According to a brief issued by the African Institute for Development Policy (2017) in conjunction with the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, Malawi had the eleventh highest rate of child marriages in the globe with 47 percent of girls in the county marrying before attaining the age of eighteen years. The report further noted that child marriages had negative effects on the health of girls which included increase in maternal morbidity. Also, the report noted a significant association amid the age at first marriage and their levels of education. Early marriages were discovered to affect the educational attainment of girls as well as their future earnings thereby affected their rate of retention in schools. In a study on “why ending child marriage needs to be an educational goal” Walker (2016) noted that ending child marriages would help in freeing untapped human resources and enabling girls and women to contribute more effectively to the worldwide development of human life. In the study, Walker (2016) used a case study of West Africa where the tradition is deeply entrenched in the societies. The researcher singled out Nigeria as one of the largest hotspots of early marriages in the entire African continent. Over 39.4 percent of all school-going girls were married off attaining the age of 18 in Nigeria by 2011 (Walker, 2016). Walker proposed a working strategy for reducing child marriages by keeping them in school as this would reduce the number by a sixth. The finding was that if girls delay marriage by a year while in school, her chances of increasing her literacy is higher and up to 5.6 percent as Walker (2016) argues.

African communities force their girls into early marriages because they do not believe that girls need to go to school. Studies by Njue (2015), Dzombo (2015), Makorani & Muli (2017) and Ganira et al. (2015) revealed that the girl child was very disadvantaged in the

African society because of the repugnant traditions and cultural beliefs that consider the position of a woman as that of home keeping. In Kilifi and Lamu counties, girls would be married off to older men at a very young age meaning that they cannot go to school or complete their schooling. The result of these practices is increased population growth and high levels of poverty among them. The cycle of poverty keeps on increasing with increased dropout rates and low retention of pupils in public primary schools in the counties. According to the World Bank Group & Wodon (2017), it is extremely challenging for girls to remain in school after getting married. Ogola (2010)'s study recommended that communities take a serious stance on issues to do with child marriages and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as a means of improving the education levels of African girls. The researcher made this recommendation after observing that the girl child's education was under threat thanks to cultural issues like FGM and forced marriages.

Dzombo (2015) and Njue (2015) noted in their studies that some pupils came from families where chronic illnesses like tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and cancer are common. Treatment and management of these diseases take a toll on the families' incomes (if any) leaving little to take care of the needs of school going children. For instance, despite the provision of free primary education, parents are required to meet the uniform expenses for their children and this can be quite costly for families that do not have any source of income or have two or three of their members affected by chronic illnesses. In Lamu County, Makorani & Muli (2017) revealed that most parents face the dilemma of financing treatment for their sick family members and financing their pupil's education. Given the high poverty rates in the region, the parents end up telling their children to stay at home either to take care of their sick siblings or for lack of finances.

#### **2.3.4 Geographical Proximity and Pupils' Retention**

Hlinka (2017) on the factors influencing retention of students in Kentucky's Appalachian mountain also showed that apart from economic and socio-cultural factors, geographical proximity of schools also influenced the rate of retention of students in schools. In the study, the researchers noted that from the outcomes of the study, the topographical issues also had an impact on retention rates since the Appalachian Mountains were synonymous

with steep topographical features. The study utilized a small sample size which would have made generalization a bit inaccurate since the Appalachian Mountains are only a smaller part of Kentucky region.

Soilemetzidis and Dale (2013) studied the retention rates of UK students and revealed that retention in most UK schools was greatly determined by the entry grades as well as other factors including accessibility of the school by the students. The study used secondary and primary data to assess the factors affecting retention of students in the schools in the UK and other regions surrounding the area. Among the factors that were discovered to be essential were the accessibility and proximity of schools to the residential areas (Soilemetzidis & Dale, 2013).

Chung and Mason (2012)'s study revealed that in China's Yunnan Province, geographical proximity of schools greatly influenced the rate of enrollment and retention of pupils in primary schools in the region. The study's findings pointed out to a great role played by the province's topographical features on the retention rates of pupils. Since the Chinese government has not developed infrastructural facilities in entirely every part of the country, challenges have been experienced in accessing areas where the topography does not permit movement of people thereby hindering enrollment and retention rates (Chung & Mason, 2012).

In the study on the factors influencing primary school enrollment and retention in Uganda, Namukwaya & Kibirige (2014) revealed that the topography of various regions also influences the enrollment and retention rates of pupils in public schools. The researchers also noted in Kotido District, some regions have raised mountains and the state of roads and general infrastructure in the region greatly affects the morale and resolve of pupils to attend schools. The study did not emphasize on the role of economic factors on the retention rates of pupils in primary schools in the district necessitating a study on the same.

Njue (2015) notes that the distance from school to homes played a key part in the retention of learners in government primary schools in Maparasha, Kajiado County. The researcher noted that some schools in the largely pastoralist county were many miles away from the homes of some pupils making them walk for long distances in the hot sun. The situation is

no different in largely pastoralist communities like Garissa, Maasai, Samburu, Pokot and other Arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) in the country.

A study conducted by Kaburu (2014) indicated that before devolution, the government of Kenya paid little or no attention on improving infrastructural facilities in Kenyan primary schools. As a result, the inadequacy of physical facilities, for example, latrines, classrooms and libraries contributed to low enrolment rates in most regions of the country. The schools also have insufficient human resources to take care of the increased needs of learners meaning that there was no close supervision of pupils leading to high dropout rates. In addition to this, the schools were miles away from homes of pupils which meant that they walked for long before quenching their thirst for education. The long distances coupled by the hard-economic conditions at home led some of the learners to abandon school despite the government's efforts to make primary education free for all.

Muhindi (2012) noted that good boarding facilities were some of the indicators of quality education in most of the Kenyan primary schools. The presence of high-quality physical facilities like latrines, enough classrooms, instructional materials, textbooks, seats, desks and a clean environment are crucial in retaining pupils at school. The lack of these facilities can lead to truncated retaining rates of learners in government primary schools in the country as Njue (2015), Makorani & Muli (2017) and Dzombo (2015) found out in their studies.

In a study on the school-based factors affecting the retaining of boys in schools in Maara District of Tharaka Nithi, Njue (2014) utilized a descriptive research design targeting forty principals from selected schools in the district and over five hundred and ten teachers as well as over seven thousand boys. The investigator used stratified sampling to draw a sample of twenty principals, 102 teachers and 769 pupils and collected data using questionnaires which was then analyzed using SPSS. The outcomes of the study indicated that a majority of the schools had good boarding facilities for the boys thereby positively influencing their retention in schools. The findings also noted that most of the schools had guidance and counseling facilities that helped learners to improve their psychological and

social welfare. This ensured that most students remained in school for a long time thereby completing their studies on time.

## 2.4 Research Gap Identified

Studies on the topic have focused on economic and socio-cultural issues that impact retention of learners in government primary schools. The review discovered only a handful of studies on the influence of geographical factors and boarding facilities on the retaining rate of pupils in public primary schools in Kenya. Additionally, no study was found to have been conducted to determine the factors influencing the retaining of learners in public primary schools in Narok-East sub-county. Though other studies on the topic have been undertaken in other regions of the state, the findings might not be conclusive and applicable for Trans Mara East sub-county because of the individual factors that play a part in the retention. This investigation will, consequently, seek to cap this gap by examining the factors influencing retaining of learners in public primary schools in Trans Mara East sub-county. Table 2.1 summarizes the gaps identified from the review of existing literature on the factors influencing the retention of pupils in public primary schools.

**Table 1:** Summary of the Research Gaps Identified (Source: Researcher, 2019).

Author	Deficiencies in Research	Research Gaps
Dzombo, 2015; Oigara, 2017; Muhindi, 2012, Makorani & Muli, 2017; Ogola, 2010; Walker, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The researchers did not specifically focus on the factors influencing pupils' retention but rather emphasized on factors influencing school enrollment.</li> <li>• No mention of the influence of geographical proximity on the retaining rates of pupils in primary schools.</li> <li>• Used diverse sample sizes as well targeted diverse areas/regions meaning their findings might not be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did not focus on the three key variables of this study: economic activities or parents, geographical factors, and socio-cultural factors.</li> <li>• Need to focus on FPE as a policy issue that can influence retention rates of pupils in public primary schools.</li> <li>• Need to clearly assess the influence of all the three variables on the retention rates of pupils in public</li> </ul>

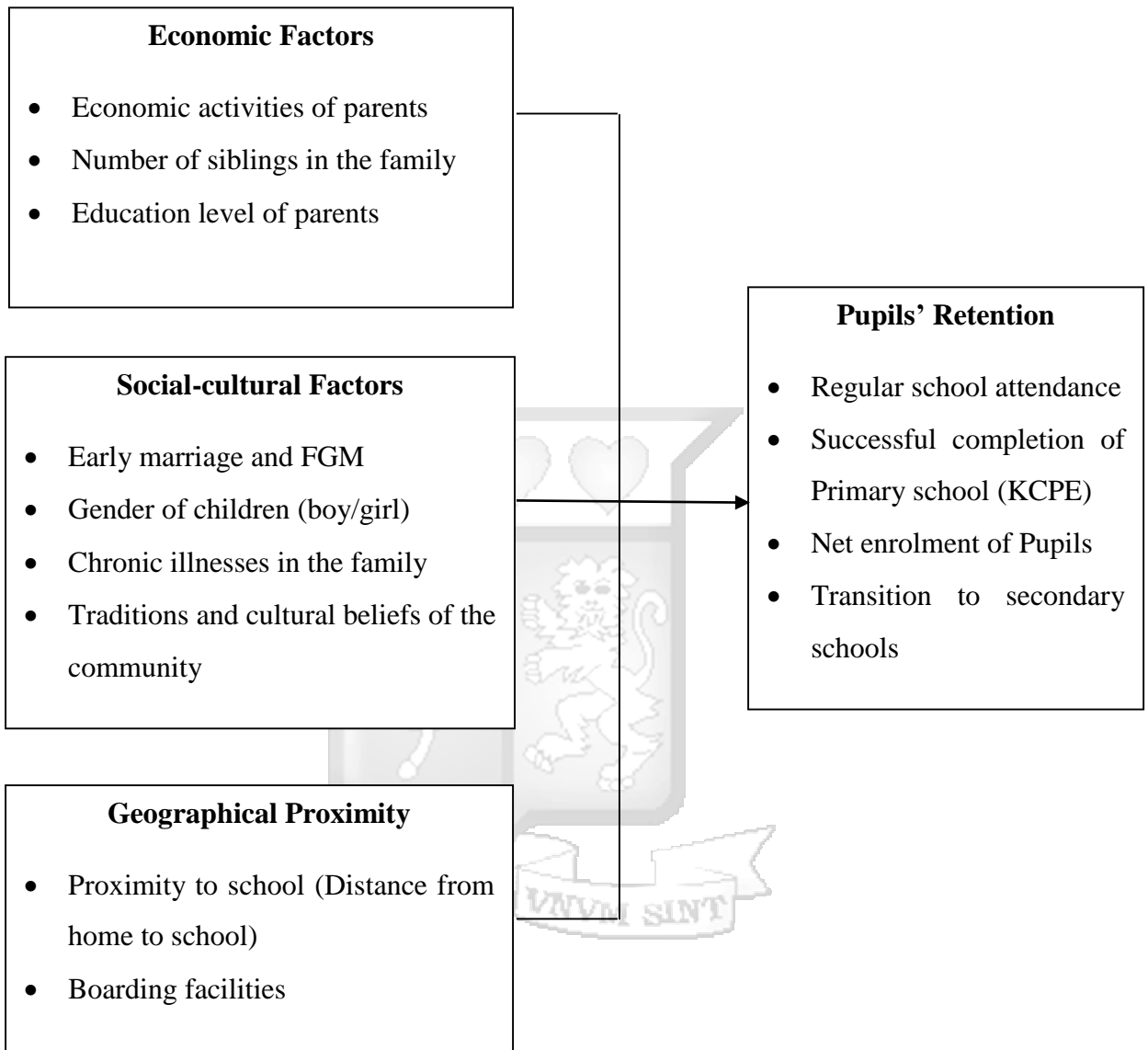
	<p>applicable to Trans Mara East Sub-county.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did not focus on FPE as a policy issue rather than a random government initiative to increase enrollment of pupils.</li> </ul>	<p>primary schools in Trans Mara East Subcounty.</p>
<p>Ouda &amp; Ndung’u, 2016; MoEST &amp; UNICEF, 2014; Njue, 2015; Njue, 2014, Kaburu, 2014</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some only focused on a specific project’s influence on retention of pupils (Ouda and Ndung’u, 2016) therefore limiting their scope</li> <li>• The researchers used different sample sizes and studied different areas which might be reflective of the situation in Trans Mara East Subcounty.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for the scope of the proposed study to be broad and representative covering an entire sub-county meaning the findings will be reflective of the situation at the county.</li> <li>• The need to use a representative sample size that will enhance the accuracy of the findings.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The literature review did not find any existing study that combined all the three variables (economic factors, socio-cultural and geographical factors) and assessed their influence on the retention rates of pupils in public primary schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need to find out the influence of the three independent variables of the proposed study on the learner retention in public school in Trans Mara East Sub-county.</li> </ul>

## 2.5 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework refers to a diagrammatic presentation of the nature of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of a study. It indicates how the variables in as a specific research interlink and the nature of the association between them. Figure 2.1 indicates the conceptual framework for the study.

**Independent Variables**  
**Variable**

**Dependent**



**Figure 1:** *Conceptual Framework (Source: Researcher, 2021).*

Figure 1 above shows a conceptualization of the anticipated relationship between the factors influencing retention rates of pupils in primary schools and the actual retention of pupils. In the figure, economic factors, socio-cultural factors, and geographical proximity are the independent variables that the researcher measured in the study. The retention of

pupils in public primary schools is the dependent variable. The hypothesized direction of the study is that all the independent variables influence the dependent variable.

## 2.6 Operationalization and Measurement of the Variables

**Table 2:** Operationalization and Measurement of Variables (Source: Researcher, 2019).

Variable	Type of Variable	Indicators	Measurement	Data Collection Method	Source(s)
Pupils' Retention	Dependent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful completion of Primary school</li> <li>• Net enrolment of Pupils</li> <li>• Transition to secondary schools</li> </ul>	Binary variable	Questionnaire	(Makorani & Muli, 2017; Ogola, 2010; Muhindi, 2017)
Economic Factors	Independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of siblings in the family</li> <li>• Education level of parents</li> <li>• Parents' earnings</li> </ul>	Quantitative measurement	Questionnaire	(Dzombo, 2015; Njue, 2014, 2015; Makorani & Muli, 2017; Ogola, 2010)
Social-cultural Factors	Independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early marriage and FGM</li> <li>• Gender of children (boy/girl)</li> </ul>	Likert Scale	Questionnaire	(World Bank Group and Wodon, 2017; Ganira <i>et al.</i> , 2015; Oigara,

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chronic illnesses in the family</li> <li>• Traditions and cultural beliefs</li> </ul>			2017; Walker, 2012, 2016)
Geographical Proximity	Independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity to school (Distance from home to school)</li> <li>• Boarding facilities</li> </ul>	Quantitative measurement	Questionnaire	(Njue, 2015; Kaburu, 2014; Muhindi, 2012)

## 2.7 Chapter Summary

The chapter has discussed the main theories guiding the study. It has also reviewed the existing empirical studies on the factors influencing the retention of pupils in public primary schools with a specific focus on the three research objectives, from where the study variables got derived. Also, the chapter has also identified the existing research gaps that anchor necessitate the study and also operationalized the study variables.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the methodology the investigator used to gather, analyze and present data. The chapter is systematized into the ensuing subheadings: Study area; research design; target population; data collection procedure and instruments; data reliability; data analysis and logistical and ethical considerations.

### 3.2 Research Design

The researcher adopted an descriptive research design to determine the existence of a relationship amid economic factors, socio-cultural, and geographical proximity and retaining of learners in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county. A descriptive research design gave the investigator more flexibility to acclimatize with any changes occurring even as the study progresses (Selvam, 2017). Apart from the design being a low-cost design, it also sets the foundations for the research as Creswell (2014) argues. The design was thus appropriate for this study since it is faster, does not take much time and resources and permits the researcher to gain insights that he might use in other studies. It also permits room for the investigator to conduct further investigations in the future.

### 3.3 Population of the Study

The target population for the study will comprise of primary school heads, school board members, teachers, pupils, committee members and parents of schools in Trans Mara East sub-county. The study will also target the sub-county director as indicated in table 3:

**Table 3.1** : Target Population (Source: DigiSchool 2021).

Target Group	Target Size
School heads	169
Board members	338
Committee members	507
Pupils	676

Parents	338
Sub-County director	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2029</b>

### 3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

#### 3.4.1 Sampling Techniques

The researcher utilized quota sampling technique to select the number of school heads, board members, committee members, pupils, parents and sub-county director included in the study. Convenience sampling was employed to select respondents from each stratum as documented in table 3. Convenience sampling was used because it allowed the researcher to draw a sample from the group of potential respondents that are easily accessible or easy to contact (Selvam, 2017). Convenience sampling was used to select the number of sub-county directors, committee members and board members to be interviewed. Stratified random sampling method was used to select the school heads, board members, committee members, pupils, parents and sub-county director to be given questionnaires to fill.

#### 3.4.2 Sample Size

According to Pattern & Newhart (2017), the sample size needs to be big enough to adequately represent the target populace as well as its variability in the appropriate areas of study. Pattern & Newhart (2017) recommend a sample size of 10% for a target population not exceeding 10000. The researcher will, therefore, use a sample of 10% of the target population, which totals up to 203 respondents as tabulated in Table 4.

**Table 3.2:** Sampling Frame (Source: Researcher, 2021).

<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>
School heads	17
Board members	33
Committee members	51

Pupils	68
Parents	33
Sub-County directors	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>203</b>

### **3.5 Data Collection Procedures and Instruments**

The researcher utilized primary data. The data was assembled from the field using questionnaires as the method of data collection. A structured questionnaire comprising of closed-ended queries was utilized in gathering primary data from the 17 school heads, 33 board members, 51 committee members, 68 pupils, 33 parents and 1 sub-county director. Questionnaires were given to the identified participants on a face-to-face basis where the researcher asked the respondents to fill them and ask for clarification where they do not understand. The questions included Likert scale measures where the respondents were asked to choose a scale and indicate whether they agree, disagree, remain neutral, strongly agree or strongly disagree.

The questionnaires were administered between January and April 2021. Owing to the COVID 19 pandemic and closure of schools, the researcher transformed the questionnaire to a Google form and sent to the School Heads and County Government staff. Other groups, especially parents and pupils were assisted by Research Assistants.

### **3.6 Research Quality**

#### **3.6.1 Data Reliability**

Reliability of the research instrument was assured by conducting a pilot study to ascertain the reliability of the questions included in the questionnaire. The researcher issued 20 questionnaires for pilot-testing. This is because Creswell (2014) recommends a sample of 10 percent of the total sample size for pilot-testing.

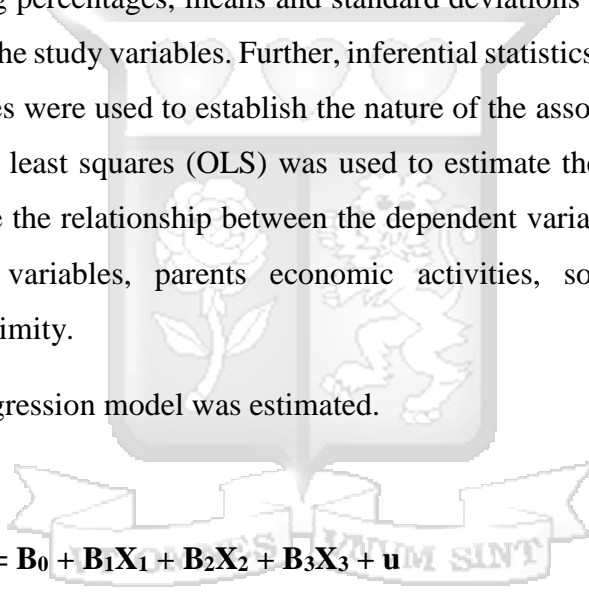
### 3.6.2 Instrument Validity

To ensure validity of the questions in the questionnaire, the researcher sent a copy of the questionnaire to the supervisor and experienced researchers for review and correction. Also, a pilot study was conducted on 20 respondents (10% of the sample size) to determine the validity of research questions included in the questionnaire. After the pilot study, errors in the questionnaire were corrected in readiness for the actual exercise.

### 3.7 Data Analysis

Collected data was analyzed quantitatively using SPSS version 20 software. Data extracted from questionnaires was prepared, cleaned and analyzed for presentation. Descriptive statistics including percentages, means and standard deviations were used to describe the characteristics of the study variables. Further, inferential statistics including correlation and regression analyses were used to establish the nature of the association between the study variables. ordinary least squares (OLS) was used to estimate the regression analysis. This helped to estimate the relationship between the dependent variable, student retention and the independent variables, parents economic activities, socio-cultural factors and geographical proximity.

This following regression model was estimated.


$$Y = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + u$$

**Where:**

**Y** = Pupils' retention,

**X<sub>1</sub>** = economic factors,

**X<sub>2</sub>** = Socio-cultural factors,

**X<sub>3</sub>** = Geographical proximity

**B<sub>0</sub>** = the constant (y-intercept)

**B<sub>1</sub>** = slope (regression coefficient) for variable X<sub>1</sub>

$B_2$  = slope (regression coefficient) for variable  $X_2$

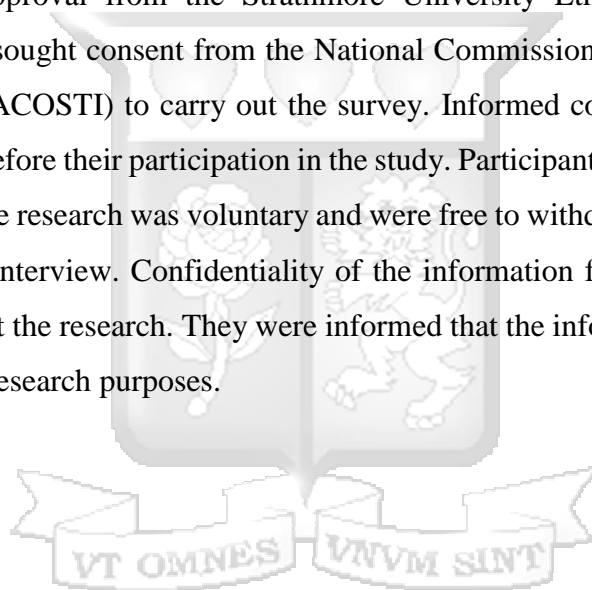
$B_3$  = slope (regression coefficient) for variable  $X_3$

$u$  = Error term

The multiple regression model helped in delivering an indication on the direction of influence the study variables are likely to take. It also indicate the nature and degree of influence of the three independent variables on the dependent variable of the study: pupils 'retention in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-County.

### **3.8 Ethical Consideration**

The researcher avoided the presentation of biased or erroneous outcomes. The researcher sought ethical approval from the Strathmore University Ethics Review Board. The investigator also sought consent from the National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI) to carry out the survey. Informed consent was obtained from the respondents before their participation in the study. Participants were informed that their participation in the research was voluntary and were free to withdraw from the study at any stage during the interview. Confidentiality of the information from the respondents was upheld throughout the research. They were informed that the information they gave would only be used for research purposes.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the data analysis, presentation, and interpretation of the findings. The aim of the study was to assess the factors influencing the retention of pupils in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county, Narok County.

#### 4.2 Response Rate

This is the outcome as decided by the cooperation of the respondents in sharing their views on the questions posed, which were expressed under various themes.

**Table 5:** Response Rate

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Returned	126	62%
Unreturned	77	38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>100</b>

The questionnaires issued were 203, out of this, 126 were successfully filled and returned. However, the remaining 77 questionnaires were either unreturned or incomplete. The valid questionnaires present 62% response rate, which was adequate for analysis. A response rate above 50 percent is sufficient for research (Allen, 2016). The non-response rate was occasioned by the COVID 19 pandemic and closure of schools.

#### 4.3 Reliability Analysis

The research applied reliability analyses to test the internal consistency. In this case, the Cronbach's alpha was used because it is considered to be a more precise indicator of internal consistency. Data on reliability are reported in Table 6.

**Table 6:** Reliability Results

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Number of items</b>	<b>Comment</b>
------------------	-------------------------	------------------------	----------------

Economic factors	0.802	6	Reliable
Social-cultural factors	0.741	6	Reliable
Geographical proximity	0.888	6	Reliable
Learner Retention	0.779	4	Reliable

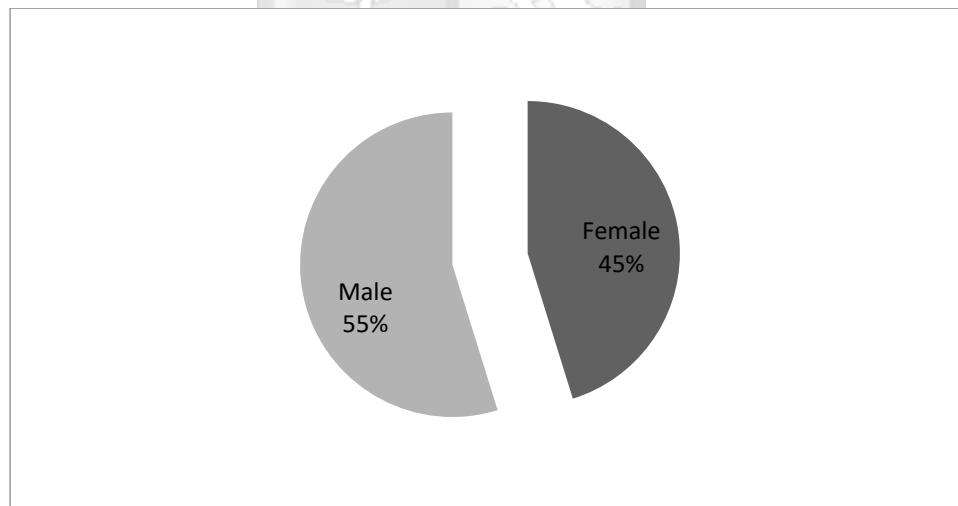
The results in Table 6 indicate that all the study variables had alpha coefficients greater than 0.7. This means that the items measuring each of the variables were reliable and therefore could be adopted in the subsequent analysis.

#### 4.4 Demographic Information

This section present results based on demographic characteristics of the respondents. The categories include gender, education, service and position.

##### 4.4.1 Gender of the Respondents

The participants were requested to state their gender and results are shown in Figure 2.



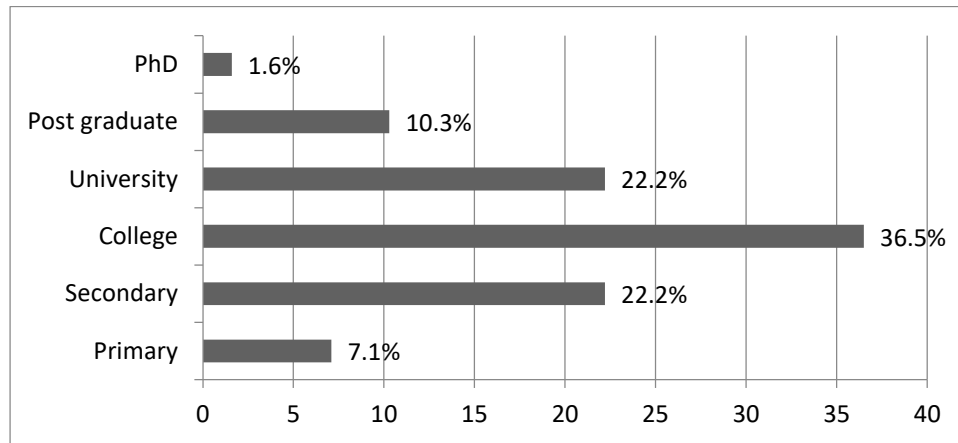
**Figure 2:** Gender of the Respondents

The findings in Figure 2 reveal that majority of the respondents (55%) were male while the remaining 45% were women. This indicates that there were more men who participated in

this study compared to women. However, the constitutional minimum requirement of one-third was met.

#### 4.4.2 Highest Education Level

The non- student participants were requested to indicate their highest level of education and outcomes are shown in Figure 3.

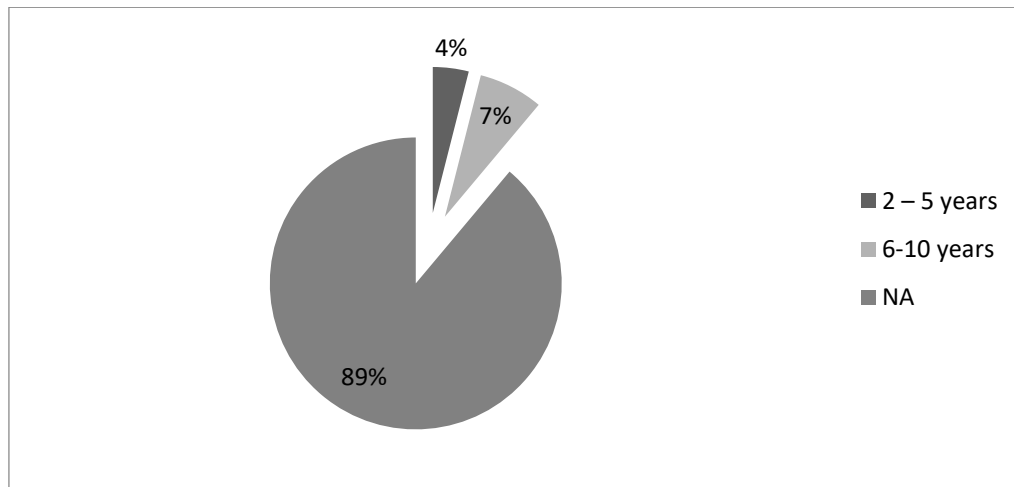


*Figure 3: Highest Education Level*

The findings in Figure 3 shows that 36.5% of the respondents had attained college education, 22.2% had attained secondary and university education respectively, 10.3% postgraduate, 7.1% primary and 1.6% PhD. The different education levels could be explained by groups of respondents. The level of education was important as it informed how the respondents responded to the research questions.

#### 4.4.3 Serving in the County Government

The respondents who served in the County government were asked to state the period of time they had served.

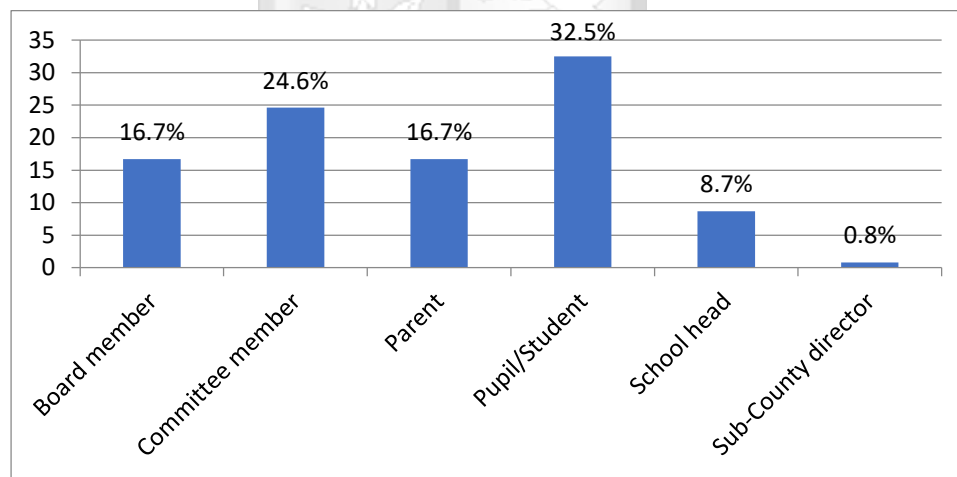


**Figure 4: Serving in County Government**

The findings in Figure 4 reveal that only 11% of the participants served in the County government. Out of this, 7% had served for 6-10 years, while 4% had served for 2-5 years.

#### 4.4.4 Position

The respondents who asked to state their position and results indicated in Figure 5.



**Figure 5: Position**

Results indicate that 32.5% of the respondent were pupils, 24.6% were committee members, 16.7% were board members and parents respectively, 8.7% were school heads while 0.8% was Sub-County director.

## 4.5 Descriptive Statistic

This section presents descriptive statistic results on the study variables including economic factors, social-cultural factors, geographical proximity and learner retention. The participants were required to express their views in regard to the statements on the study variables using the following scale: Strongly disagree (1) Disagree (2) Neutral (3) Agree (4) and Strongly agree (5).

### 4.5.1 Economic Factors

The study sought to establish the influence of economic factors on pupil retention in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county. The participants were asked to state their agreement or otherwise with statements relating to economic factors. Table 7 demonstrates the outcome.

**Table 7:** Descriptive Statistics on Economic Factors

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	M	Std dev
The level of education of parents in this region has a negative influence on retention rates of pupils in public primary schools.	0.0%	1.6%	11.1%	73.8%	13.5%	4.0	0.6
The number of children in a family is a significant determinant of dropout in primary schools	2.4%	1.6%	27.0%	58.7%	10.3%	3.7	0.8
Most parents in this region do not work and therefore have little or no income to buy their children uniform to attend primary schools.	0.8%	5.6%	25.4%	61.1%	7.1%	3.7	0.7
Most parents engage in pastoralism and do not make enough cash to allow their kids enroll in schools.	1.6%	5.6%	33.3%	55.6%	4.0%	3.6	0.7

Management of school resources is open to the general public, especially parents.	3.2%	3.2%	34.9%	54.0%	4.8%	3.5	0.8
The county government of Narok offers financial support to parents with no income to enroll kids in primary schools.	2.4%	10.3%	27.8%	52.4%	7.1%	3.5	0.9
<b>Overall mean</b>						<b>3.7</b>	<b>0.7</b>

The findings in Table 7 shows that most of the respondents (87.3%) agreed with the statement that the level of education of parents in the region has a negative influence on retention rates of pupils in public primary schools, the number of children in a family is a significant determinant of dropout in primary schools (69%), and most parents in the region do not work and therefore have little or no income to buy their children uniform to attend primary schools (68.2%). Further, the respondents noted that most parents engage in pastoralism and do not make enough cash to allow their kids enroll in schools (59.6%), management of school resources is open to the general public, especially parents (58.8%), and the county government of Narok offers financial support to parents with no income to enroll kids in primary schools (59.5%).

In summary, the overall mean of 3.7 with a standard deviation of 0.7 indicated that majority of the respondents were in agreement with most statements on economic factors. The economic factors are expected to have an influence on pupil retention in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county. These findings echo the findings of the study by Hlinka (2017) who conducted a study on the retention theories to meet the needs of rural Appalachian community students and found out that economic factors influenced the retention of college students in Kentucky

#### **4.5.2 Social Cultural Factors**

The study sought to establish the influence of community socio-cultural factors on pupil retention in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county. The participants were

asked to state their agreement or otherwise with statements relating to socio-cultural factors. Table 8 illustrates the results.

**Table 8:** Descriptive Statistics on Social Cultural Factors

<b>Statements</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Std. dev</b>
The Maasai community in Trans Mara practices female genital mutilation (FGM)	0.0%	1.6%	31.0%	60.3%	7.1%	3.7	0.6
The traditions and cultural beliefs of the Maasai community support early marriages.	0.0%	2.4%	26.2%	62.7%	8.7%	3.8	0.6
The Maasai culture does not encourage education of the girls.	0.8%	4.8%	35.7%	53.2%	5.6%	3.6	0.7
The Maasai culture encourages the education of boys.	0.0%	4.8%	32.5%	54.8%	7.9%	3.7	0.7
Prolonged illnesses in the family lead to the children dropping out of school.	0.8%	1.6%	23.0%	68.3%	6.3%	3.8	0.6
The rate of retention of pupils in public primary schools in this region is high because of the traditions and cultural beliefs of the Maasai community	6.3%	11.9%	37.3%	38.9%	5.6%	3.3	1.0
<b>Overall mean</b>						<b>3.6</b>	<b>0.7</b>

The findings in Table 8 reveal that majority of the participants (67.4%) agreed with the statement that the Maasai community in Trans Mara practices female genital mutilation (FGM), the traditions and cultural beliefs of the Maasai community support early marriages (71.4%), the Maasai culture does not encourage education of the girls (58.8%), the Maasai culture encourages the education of boys (62.7%), and prolonged illnesses in the family lead to the children dropping out of school (74.6%). Further, 44.5% of the participants noted that the rate of retention of pupils in public primary schools in the region was high because of the traditions and cultural beliefs of the Maasai community, 37.3% were neutral about this claim, while 18% disagreed with it.

In summary, the overall mean of 3.6 with a standard deviation of 0.7 indicated that majority of the respondents were in agreement with most statements on social cultural factors. These factors are expected to have an influence on pupil retention in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county. This finding is similar to that of Soares *et al.* (2015) who studied the main factors influencing school dropout in Brazil's Minas Gerais and found out that the rate of dropout in this region was directly proportional to the socio-cultural factors and the beliefs of the communities regarding the importance of education

#### 4.5.3 Geographical Proximity

The study sought to assess the influence of geographical proximity on pupil's retention in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county. The participants were asked to state their agreement or otherwise with statements relating to geographical proximity. The findings are shown in Table 9.

**Table 9:** Descriptive Statistics on Geographical Proximity

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	M	Std. dev
The distance from home to school in this region affects the chances of kids attending school or continuing to attend schools	0.8%	6.3%	21.4%	63.5%	7.9%	3.7	0.7
Schools in Trans Mara East are located far from the residences of people.	0.8%	8.7%	32.5%	50.0%	7.9%	3.6	0.8
The state of school infrastructure in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county does not support learning.	0.8%	4.0%	30.2%	60.3%	4.8%	3.6	0.7
The quality of boarding facilities in primary schools in Trans Mara East sub-county is poor thus reducing the number of students attending school.	1.6%	6.3%	38.9%	47.6%	5.6%	3.5	0.8
The harsh weather (extremely hot or cold) affects the chances of kids	6.3%	11.9%	28.6%	50.0%	3.2%	3.3	1.0

continuing to attend primary schools in the region								
Most schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county do not have adequate toilets to cater for the growing number of pupils in the schools.	1.6%	8.7%	36.5%	49.2%	4.0%	3.5	0.8	
<b>Overall mean</b>						<b>3.5</b>	<b>0.8</b>	

The findings in Table 9 reveal that majority of the participants (71.4%) agreed with the statement that the distance from home to school in this region affects the chances of kids attending school or continuing to attend schools, schools in Trans Mara East are located far from the residences of people (57.9%), the state of school infrastructure in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county does not support learning (65.1%), the quality of boarding facilities in primary schools in Trans Mara East sub-county is poor thus reducing the number of students attending school (53.2%), the harsh weather (extremely hot or cold) affects the chances of kids continuing to attend primary schools in the region (53.2%), and most schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county do not have adequate toilets to cater for the growing number of pupils in the schools (53.2%).

In summary, the overall mean of 3.5 with a standard deviation of 0.8 indicated that majority of the respondents were in agreement with most statements on geographical proximity. These factors are expected to have an influence on pupil retention in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county.

#### 4.5.4 Learner Retention

The learner retention is the dependent variable in this study. The respondents were asked to state their agreement or otherwise with statements relating to learner retention. The results are indicated in Table 10.

**Table 10:** Descriptive Statistics on Learner Retention

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	M	Std. dev
------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------

Pupils in this region are highly encouraged to remain in school.	0.0%	3.2%	17.5%	61.9%	17.5%	3.9	0.7
The number of pupils dropping out of school has declined in the recent past.	0.0%	0.8%	17.5%	56.3%	25.4%	4.1	0.7
There has been an increase in the number of pupils sitting for class 8 exams from 2009-2019	0.0%	0.0%	12.7%	55.6%	31.7%	4.2	0.6
Learners are focused on staying in school because they are encouraged to do so by the school learning environment.	0.0%	4.8%	37.3%	51.6%	6.3%	3.6	0.7
<b>Overall mean</b>						<b>3.9</b>	<b>0.7</b>

The findings in Table 10 indicate that majority of the participants (79.4%) agreed with the statement that pupils in this region are highly encouraged to remain in school, the number of pupils dropping out of school has declined in the recent past (81.7%), there has been an increase in the number of pupils sitting for class 8 exams from 2009-2019 (87.3%), and learners are focused on staying in school because they are encouraged to do so by the school learning environment. In summary, the overall mean of 3.9 with a standard deviation of 0.7 indicated that majority of the respondents were in agreement with most statements on learner retention.

#### 4.7 Correlation Analysis

This section provides findings on the correlation between the independent variables – economic factors [X1], social cultural factors [X2], geographical proximity [X3], and dependent variable – learner retention [Y]. The correlation test provides results on the association between the independent variables and the dependent variable in terms of strength and direction. The results are shown in Table 11.

**Table 11:** Correlation Matrix

	Learner Retention	Economic Factors	Social Cultural	Geographical proximity
--	-------------------	------------------	-----------------	------------------------

Learner Retention	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
Economic Factors	Pearson Correlation	.340**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
Social Cultural Factors	Pearson Correlation	.527**	.669**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
Geographical proximity	Pearson Correlation	.327**	.450**	.715**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	126	126	126	126

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 11 shows that there is a weak positive and significant association between economic factors and learner retention ( $r=0.340$  \*\*,  $p=0.000$ ). It further demonstrates that there is a strong positive and significant association between social cultural factors and learner retention ( $r=0.527$  \*\*,  $p=0.000$ ). In addition, the results reveal that there exists a weak positive and significant association between geographical proximity and learner retention ( $r=0.327$  \*\*,  $p=0.000$ ). Overall, the findings implied that an improvement in economic factors, social cultural factors and geographical proximity would be accompanied by an improvement in learner retention.

#### 4.8 Multiple Regression Analysis

Having identified that each of the independent variables has a positive and significant influence on learner retention, it was important to determine the combined influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Therefore, a multiple regression analysis was conducted and results presented below.

**Table 12:** Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.532a	0.283	0.265	0.44756

a Predictors: (Constant), Geographicalproximity, EconomicFactors, SocialCultural

Findings in Table 12 indicate that all the three predictor variables in this study jointly explain 28% ( $R^2 = .283$ ) of the total variations in the retention of pupils in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county, Narok County. However, the R square was relatively small implying a combination of the three factors does not greatly predict changes in learner retention.

**Table 13: ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.638	3	3.213	16.039	.000b
	Residual	24.438	122	0.2		
	Total	34.076	125			

a Dependent Variable: LearnerRetention

b Predictors: (Constant), Geographicalproximity, EconomicFactors, SocialCultural

The results in 13 indicate an F statistic of 16.039 and reported a P-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This implies that the proposed model is statistically significant (good fit) in predicting the dependent variable.

**Table 14: Regression of coefficients**

Model	I	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	1.88	0.324		5.793	0.000
	EconomicFactors	-0.028	0.102	-0.028	-0.273	0.785
	Social Cultural factors	0.68	0.145	0.619	4.688	0.000
	Geographical proximity	-0.085	0.091	-0.102	-0.931	0.354

a Dependent Variable: Learner Retention

The results in Table 14 indicate that when combined with other factors, social cultural factors have a positive and significant influence on retention of pupils in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county, Narok County ( $\beta = 0.68$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This implies that social cultural factors have a significant predictive ability to influence learner

retention. However, economic factors and geographical proximity have insignificant influence on learner retention (P values >0.05). This means that economic factors and geographical proximity have no significant predictive ability to influence learner retention.

The hypothesized model:  $Y = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + u$ , therefore becomes:

$$Y = 1.88 + 0.68X_2$$

Where:

Y = Pupils' retention

$X_2$  = Socio-cultural factors



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations. This is done in line with the objectives of the study. It also provides suggestions for further studies.

#### 5.2 Discussion of the Findings

This section presents the summary of the key findings based on the research objectives that the study sought to achieve. The findings are arranged thematically according to the objectives of the study.

##### 5.2.1 Economic Factors

The first objective of the study was to establish the influence of economic factors on pupil retention in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county. Based on the descriptive statistic results, majority of the participants viewed parents education level, number of children in a family, parent income, parent occupation and financial support from the county government as critical economic aspects that influence retention rates of pupils in public primary schools.

Muthoni (2014) notes that the Kenyan administration spends over 5% of its national budget on education as a way of complying with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights that provided that every individual had a right to education. Apart from complying with the declaration, the government considers education as one technique of enhancing its economic, social, political, cultural and civil rights and enhancing its growth. In Kenya, like any other state, the process of educating its citizens is organized and supervised through an articulate system set up by the government. The Ministry of Education (MoE) is mandated with the duty of overseeing, managing and supervising all educational institutions in the country and is responsible for formulating policies meant to improve the delivery of instruction in all parts of the nation.

The Free Primary Education Policy is seen to have led to a positive result because it resulted in increased enrolments in many of the public primary schools in the republic (Ogola, 2010). Participation in ECDE improved from a net enrolment rate (NER) of fifty-six out of a hundred in 2009 to seventy-five out of a hundred in 2016. The basic school NER in 2016 was eight-nine out of a hundred, and there was an 81 percent transition proportion to secondary, a notable improvement from fifty-five percent in 2009. Whereas NER at the secondary education level was a diffident fifty-one percent in 2016, the proportion was a reassuring improvement from thirty-three percent in 2009. This shows that economic factors really have a significant impact on the enrolment and retention of pupils.

The correlation analysis results indicated that there was a significantly positive association between economic factors and learner retention. However, the association was weak. Further, the regression results indicated that seperately, economic factors have a positive and significant influence on learner retention. However, when combined with other variables, economic factors have insignificant influence on retention of pupils in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county, Narok County.

### **5.2.2 Social Cultural Factors**

The second objective of the study was to establish the influence of community socio-cultural factors on pupil retention in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county. Based on the descriptive statistic results, majority of the participants noted female genital mutilation, early marriages, lack of support for girl education, and prolonged illnesses as leading social cultural factors influencing pupils' retention in schools. This is in line with the Robert Merton's Goal Means Gap theory which explains the strain the society undergoes to explain the association amid cultural goals and legitimate means available for attaining them and the niche existing in attempting to attain the goals set by a specific group.

Soares *et al.* (2015) studied the main factors influencing school dropout in Brazil's Minas Gerais. The findings of the study indicated that the rate of dropout in this region was directly proportional to the socio-cultural factors and the beliefs of the communities

regarding the importance of education. A Kenyan study by Macharia 2011 and Malelu (2017) equally indicate the challenges that cultures have and their impact on education.

The correlation analysis results revealed that there was a significantly positive association between socio-cultural factors and learner retention. Further, the regression results indicated that separately and when combined with other variables, socio-cultural factors have a positive and significant influence on retention of pupils in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county, Narok County.

### **5.2.3 Geographical Proximity**

The third objective of the study was to assess the influence of geographical proximity on pupil's retention in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county. Based on the descriptive statistic results, majority of the participants viewed distance from home to school, state of school infrastructure, quality of boarding facilities in primary schools, harsh weather (extremely hot or cold) and lack of adequate school facilities such as toilets as major geographical aspects hindering retention rates of pupils in public primary schools.

The correlation analysis results indicated that there was a significantly positive association between geographical proximity and learner retention. However, the association was weak. Further, the regression results indicated that separately, geographical proximity has a positive and significant influence on learner retention. However, when combined with other variables, geographical proximity has insignificant influence on retention of pupils in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county, Narok County.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

From the findings of objective one, the study concluded that economic factors have a statistically significant and positive relationship with retention of pupils in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county, Narok County. The key economic aspects that determine learner retention were; parents education level, number of children in a family, parent income, parent occupation and financial support from the county government.

From the findings of objective two, the study concluded that social cultural factors have a statistically significant and positive relationship with retention of pupils in public primary

schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county, Narok County. The key social cultural aspects that determine learner retention included female genital mutilation, early marriages, lack of support for girl education, and prolonged illnesses.

Based on the findings of objective three, the study concluded that geographical proximity has a statistically significant and positive relationship with retention of pupils in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county, Narok County. The key geographical proximity aspects that determine learner retention were; distance from home to school, state of school infrastructure, quality of boarding facilities in primary schools, harsh weather (extremely hot or cold) and lack of adequate school facilities such as toilets.

#### **5.4 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

The researcher experienced some limitations during the study. These included:

Non-cooperative respondents - Some of the respondents were hesitant to cooperate with the researcher during the process of data collection for fear of being victimized. To delimit this, the researcher explained to them that their responses would be treated with a lot of confidentiality and assured them that no one would be victimized.

Biased data – To avoid dishonest and biased responses from the respondents, the researcher explained to them the primary purpose of the study and the need to give honest and trustworthy answers.

Inaccessibility of some regions - Because of the topography of the county, some regions were difficult to access during the study. To avert this, the researcher organized for efficient and reliable transport to ensure that all the targeted schools were reached.

#### **5.5 Recommendations**

In view of the foregoing conclusions, the study made several recommendations which are presented as per each research objectives.

The study established that, economic factors have a positive and significant influence on pupil retention in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county. The study

recommends that the national government in collaboration with the Narok County government should strengthen economic factors in this region. In particular, they should make policies aimed at enhancing the economic activities of the people living in this region. Most of the people living in this area are pastoralist. The two governments should therefore streamline policies relating to pastoralism to ensure that the people gain from this economic activity. The county government should also set up policies that allows them to set aside funds for pastoralist support programs like feed lots to help reduce much migration during dry seasons. This will allow children to continue going to schools at such times. The County government should also advocate for family planning to ensure that parents give birth to children that they can provide quality basic life.

The study also established that social cultural factors have a positive and significant influence on pupil retention in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county. The study recommends that the national government in collaboration with the Narok County government should improve social cultural factors in this region. In particular, they should eliminate female genital mutilation and early marriages. They should also encourage and support both girl and boy education. There is also need to ensure availability and accessibility of affordable health services, which will ensure that children do not stay out of school due to curable illnesses.

The study further established that seperately, geographical proximity has a positive and significant influence on pupil retention in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county. The study recommends that the national government in collaboration with the Narok County government should improve geographical proximity factors in this region. In particular, they should build more schools, improve infrastructure of existing schools, and ensure availability of quality school facilities such as toilets.

It is also highly recommend for the governemtn and the education sectore to set aside enough funds for the estbalishment of integrated system an advising tools that can effectively clear the path for more effective student retention in the schools. Futher, it is also advisable to significantly encourage peer leadership and mentorship in schools to add on the retention rate of students in schools. It is also important to engage in early

identification of risk behaviors and solving them the appropriate time before things get out of hand. This process can be very effective as the first line of defence. Also, it is highly recommended to take a student centric approach inclusive of an organized institution towards aiding students thrive. Therefore, with the given initiative, early engagement will essentially become an intrinsic element of the given institutions student success strategy.

To effectively attain the desired changes or transformation, schools need to first establish significant foundational strategies that encourage a culture of student success and facilitate a strong and integrated early alert or notification system and intervention process. Therefore, this is to infer that once the aspects are effectively put in place, there will be an increased growth in the opportunity to engage students in numerous meaningful ways to grow. This initiative will also be vital in encouraging learning and graduation among students in the given schools.

### **5.6 Suggestions Further Research**

This study focused on factors influencing the retention of pupils in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county, Narok County. The study recommends that future studies to be carried out in other regions for comparative purposes. Further, the factors in this study (economic factors, social cultural factors and geographical proximity) only explained 28% of changes in learner retention. Other studies should consider other factors that may account for the remaining 72 percent and not included in this study. Further studies should be carried out on the ways that student re-attendance can be improved or encouraged within schools. Additionally, further studies should also be carried out on the collaborative engagement measures between the government and schools that can facilitate student retention and success within the schools.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

The aim of this questionnaire is to collect information relating to the “**Factors influencing the retention of pupils in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county, Narok County**” You have been chosen as one of the respondents and thus invited to participate by way of filling in your responses to the questions below with utmost honesty. Kindly note that this data will be treated with confidentiality and will not be used for any other purpose apart from the purpose of research.

#### SECTION I: Demographic Data

1. What is your gender? Kindly tick the appropriate box.

i) Male

ii) Female

2. What is your highest level of education? Please tick the appropriate box.

i) Primary  ii) Secondary  iii) College

iiii) University  iv) Post graduate  v) PhD

3. If serving in the County government, for how long have you served?

i) less than 2 years  ii) 2 – 5 years  iii) 6-10 years

4. Please tick the category you fall in the list below:

i) School head  ii) Board members  iii) Committee member

iv) Pupils  v) Parents  vi) Sub-County directors

## SECTION II: Influence of Economic Factors on Public Primary School Pupils’

### Retention

The aim of this section is to determine the influence of economic factors on the retaining of pupils in public primary schools in Trans Mara East sub-county. Please use numbers 1-5 to indicate your level of agreement with the statement on the left, where 1 - Strongly disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Neither Disagree nor Agree; 4 – Agree; 5 – Strongly Agree.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
5. The level of education of parents in this region has a negative influence on retention rates of pupils in public primary schools.					
6. The number of children in a family is a significant determinant of dropout in primary schools					
7. Most parents in this region do not work and therefore have little or no income to buy their children uniform to attend primary schools.					
8. Most parents engage in pastoralism and do not make enough cash to allow their kids enroll in schools.					
9. Management of school resources is open to the general public, especially parents.					
10. The county government of Narok offers financial support to parents with no income to enroll kids in primary schools.					

**SECTION III: Influence of Socio-cultural Factors on Public Primary School Pupils’ Retention**

The objective of this section is to assess the influence of socio-cultural factors on the retention of pupils in public primary schools in Trans Mara sub-county. Please use numbers 1-5 to indicate your level of agreement with the statement on the left, where 1 - Strongly disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Neither Disagree nor Agree; 4 – Agree; 5 – Strongly Agree.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
11. The Maasai community in Trans Mara practices female genital mutilation (FGM)					
12. The traditions and cultural beliefs of the Maasai community support early marriages.					
13. The Maasai culture does not encourage education of the girls.					
14. The Maasai culture encourages the education of boys.					
15. Prolonged illnesses in the family lead to the children dropping out of school.					
16. The rate of retention of pupils in public primary schools in this region is high because of the traditions and cultural beliefs of the Maasai community					

**SECTION IV: Influence of Geographical proximity on Public Primary School Pupils’ Retention**

The aim of this section is to determine how geographical proximity influences the rate of retention of pupils in public primary schools in Trans Mara Sub-county. Please use

numbers 1-5 to indicate your level of agreement with the statement on the left, where 1 - Strongly disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Neither Disagree nor Agree; 4 – Agree; 5 – Strongly Agree.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
17. The distance from home to school in this region affects the chances of kids attending school or continuing to attend schools				
18. Schools in Trans Mara East are located far from the residences of people.				
19. The state of school infrastructure in public primary schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county does not support learning.				
20. The quality of boarding facilities in primary schools in Trans Mara East sub-county is poor thus reducing the number of students attending school.				
21. The harsh weather (extremely hot or cold) affects the chances of kids continuing to attend primary schools in the region				
22. Most schools in Trans Mara East Sub-county do not have adequate toilets to cater for the growing number of pupils in the schools.				

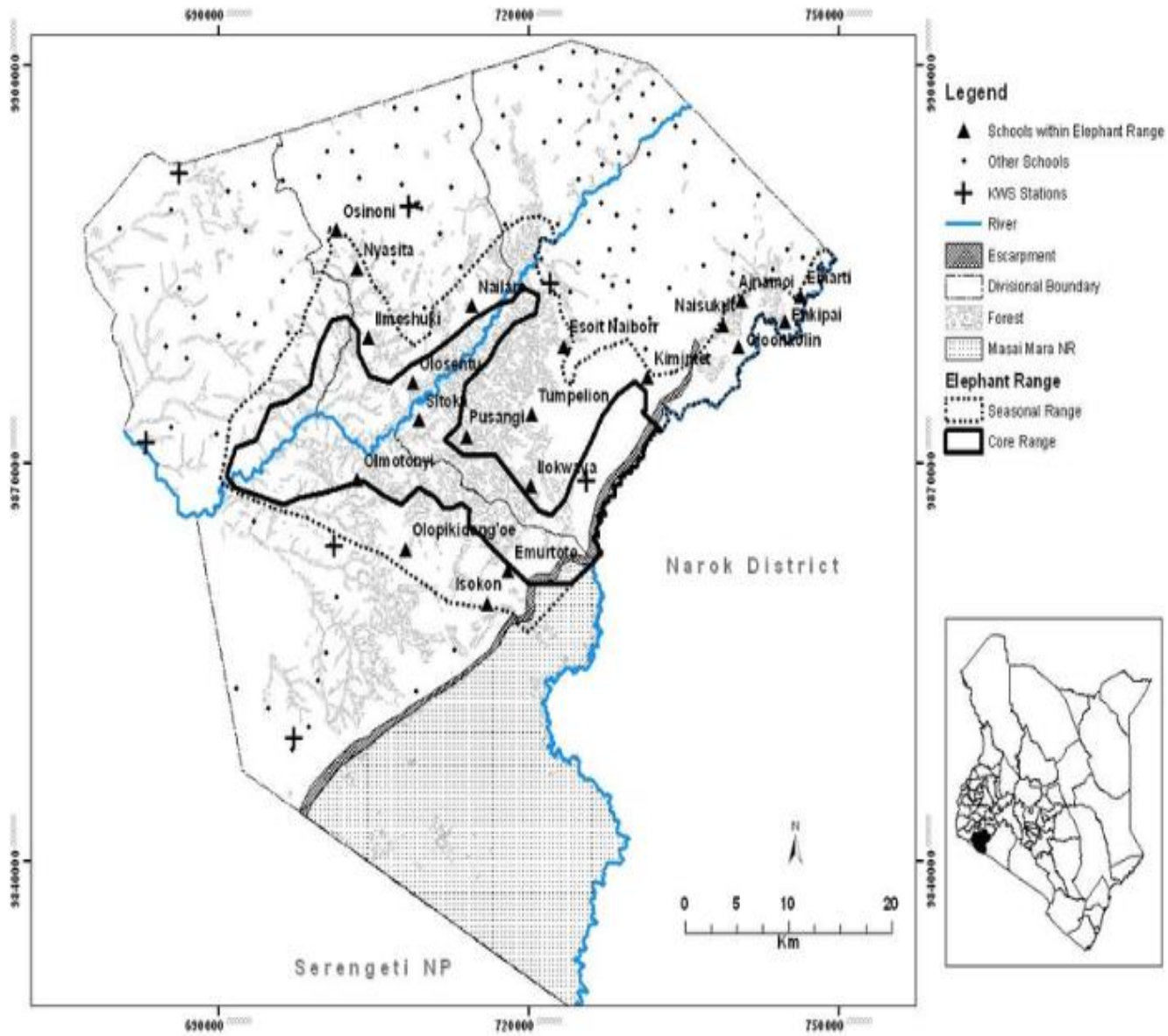
#### **SECTION V: Learner Retention**

This section aims to determine retention rates of learners in public primary schools in Trans Mara Sub-county. Please use numbers 1-5 to indicate your level of agreement with the statement on the left, where 1 - Strongly disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Neither Disagree nor Agree; 4 – Agree; 5 – Strongly Agree.

Statement	1	2	3	4
23. Pupils in this region are highly encouraged to remain in school.				
24. The number of pupils dropping out of school has declined in the recent past.				
25. There has been an increase in the number of pupils sitting for class 8 exams from 2009-2019				
26. Learners are focused on staying in school because they are encouraged to do so by the school learning environment.				



## Appendix II: Map of Trans Mara District Showing Location of Primary Schools





REPUBLIC OF KENYA



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