

Factors Influencing Pupils Access to education among primary schools in Conflict Prone areas of Turkana East Sub county Kenya

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Abstract: Conflict in Turkana East Sub County has been persistent over many years and has evolved since Turkana East was identified as one of the sub-counties in the Kenya Vision 2030. The frequent conflicts have greatly affected access to primary education in the area. This study examines factors influencing pupils access to primary education in conflict prone areas of Turkana East sub-County. The study sought to examine how attacks on schools during conflict affect access to primary school education in Turkana East County. The sample population was 1 headteachers, 20 teachers and 200 pupils of the ten most affected public primary schools in Turkana East Sub County. The research used simple random sampling and stratified sampling to select teachers and students. The study found that the majority (75%) of the schools surveyed reported having pupils displaced from school due to conflict.. It is found that attacks on schools during frequent ethnic conflicts in Turkana East Sub County affects access to primary education negatively. Over 60 per cent of head teachers interviewed stated that their schools had been attacked during the conflict. The fear caused by such attacks leaves many schools closed and parents afraid to send their children to school. The study recommends the government through the security agencies to work with the local community of Turkana East Sub County to come up with a lasting solution to the problem of armed conflicts and ensure lasting peace.

Keywords: education, pupil's access, conflict, Turkana.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The world from the year 2010 has missed the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of achieving universal primary education (UPE) by 2015. The global number of out-of-school children of primary school age rose by 2.4 million between 2010 and 2013, reaching a total of more than 59 million. One of the biggest contributors to this is armed conflict. Armed conflict has devastating effects on access to education, is seen as a luxury during the conflict and not as important as providing food, shelter and clean water (Makate & Makate, 2016). Although Children in conflict-affected countries account for just 22 per cent of primary-school-age children, they account for one-half (28.5million) of out-of-school children of primary school age. So a child living in a conflict-affected country is three to four times more likely to be out of school than a child living elsewhere (Smith, Datzberger & McCully, 2016).

Displacement is a primary consequence of the nature of the frequent conflicts. The number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) grew to 51.2 million in 2013, the highest number since the Second World War. Half of these forcibly displaced people are children (Adhikari, 2013). Conflict-induced displacement has great implications for education, both for refugees and IDPs. Displaced children are hard to find and get in school since they are hiding and frequently on the move roaming from hiding place to a hiding place in search of refuge. In other cases, refugees and IDPs simply move into towns where they live illegally and the children provide cheap labour, therefore, missing out on school (Adhikari, 2013). Areas in which refugees and IDPs live are often the most neglected regions with infertile land and lack of access to services and infrastructure, including schools.

Displacement also jeopardizes children's physical and psychosocial health, and it presents challenges to child protection especially related to sexual violence and recruitment into armed forces this makes many children miss out on education opportunities (Ferris & Winthrop, 2010). Besides, displaced children face discrimination from host communities and increased poverty which is an impediment to their access to education. There is evidence that schools, students and teachers are increasingly being targeted during the conflict. Between 2009 and 2013, non-state armed groups, state armed and security forces, and armed criminal groups launched nearly 10,000 attacks on schoolchildren teachers and education establishments in at least 70 countries worldwide (Combs, 2017). Schools are targeted during conflict for various reasons. The closure and destruction of schools are used as a weapon of war to erode civilian support and punish insurgency. Schools and education systems can also be targeted if they are perceived to be a contributory factor in conflict for instance if there are racial, ethnic, religious or other forms of discrimination. Attacks on schools cause fear which prevents children from going to school. Typically, children will be afraid to go to school, parents will be afraid to send them easily and teachers will be afraid to go to work. It also causes schools to close for a long time after war as the governments may not have resources to repair the schools or they may be reluctant to re-open schools until threats have passed. In Afghanistan, 670 schools remained closed in March 2009, denying education to 170,000 children (Mundy & Dryden-Peterson, 2015).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Conflicts among the different communities in Turkana have negatively affected the education of children in the region, thus leaving them in a disadvantaged position as compared to their peers in other regions that do not experience cases of violent conflicts. Through a combination of cultural practices, incitement from local leaders and also the desire to dispossess rival communities, these conflicts have become synonymous with the counties in the former North Eastern

Province. When these conflicts occur, the children's academic programs are thrown into disarray as some are forced to stay away from school due to the insecurity, while others will move to different areas with their families so as to avoid being caught in the conflict. In response to the conflict in Turkana East Sub County, several interventions have been put in place by both the county government and other stakeholders including the community, NGOs and faith-based organizations. Through the concerted efforts of the various actor's Peace Committees, for example, Turkana East Peace Link (IPL), has been formed. These committees are in charge of implementing and enforcing peace agreements.

The government has also been handy in responding to conflict by conducting security operations in the area, disarmament and facilitating dialogue between the warring communities. The interventions that are put in the place every time conflict erupts in Turkana East Sub County have not borne lasting solutions and the area still faces the risk of conflict ahead scheduled polls due to internal electoral competition along ethnic lines and increasing conflict over internal administrative borders – which are often badly demarcated (Adhikari, 2013). The aid that is provided during and after conflict usually responds to the immediate humanitarian needs like food and shelter with education being neglected. Turkana East Sub County has therefore continued to lag behind in education with many learners unable to acquire any meaningful education. If this is not checked, the country will not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals deadline for inclusive and equitable quality education for all by the year 2030. This study aimed to fill the information gap on factors influencing access to education in conflict prone areas in Turkana East Sub County.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The study sought to establish how attacks on schools affect pupils access to primary school education in Turkana East Sub County.

1.4 Justification of the Study

This study is important in that, the results provide information on factors that influence access to Primary school education in insecurity areas of Turkana East Sub County. The results of the study will enable educational stakeholders including the national and county governments; teachers and parents understand the barriers to education in areas that experience conflicts. Furthermore, attacks on locals do not necessarily means that they locals will relocate or subsequently be displaced, as some families, or family members may choose to stay and retaliate. This will mean that the children in those families will not attend school not because they are away from their locality but they have been engaged by the family elders to look for water, or herd the animals away as the head of the families plan to attack those who have attacked them.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

In the process of collecting data some difficulties were experienced; accessing schools in Turkana East Sub County was a challenge due to the poor road network and distance from one primary school to the other. The distances were covered by the use of motorbikes. The nature of the study was sensitive and respondents especially pupils were not willing to give information due to suspicion or trauma. Respondents were also not willing to talk about sexual violence which is not culturally accepted. The respondents were spoken to from the beginning to make them psychologically prepared. There were some areas that were still insecure. This was solved by utilizing a local guide who is known by the local authority.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The research study focuses on the factors influencing pupils' access to basic education in Turkana East subcounty, Turkana County, insecurity prone areas as the targeted areas. The subjects of the investigation were teachers, headteachers and pupils in sampled primary schools within the three wards of Turkana East Sub County. The study sought to investigate the stakeholders' perceptions of the influence of insecurity on pupils' access to primary education. The researcher analyzed the effect of both insecurity and attacks on how it affects the pupils' performance in accessing primary education.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

The study assumed that all the respondents would be honest and co-operative during the course of carrying out this research. Furthermore, it was assumed that the respondents would be knowledgeable about the subject and that the study area would remain relatively peaceful and accessible during the research period.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contains a review of relevant literature on the impact of conflict on education. The literature touches on: influence of displacement during the conflict on access to primary school education, the influence of attacks on schools on access to primary school education, Influence of loss of livelihoods during the conflict on access to primary school education and influence of insecurity during the conflict on access to primary school education. The chapter is summarized by presenting the theoretical framework and conceptual framework of the study.

2.2 Theoretical Review

This study is based on the greed versus grievance theory of conflict by Collier and Hoeffler, (2002). The phrase greed versus grievance refers to a two baseline argument put forward to explain the causes of armed conflict. Greed stands for the argument that combatants in armed conflict are motivated by economic reasons while grievance stands for the argument that people rebel over issues of identity such as ethnicity religion social class and so on, in other words, people start wars either because they are greedy or aggrieved. The theory of 'agreed versus grievance' can be used as an analytical tool in understanding conflicts in Africa.

According to Hasan and Lahiri (2017), countries with abundant natural resources have a higher risk of conflict, Examples of this include diamonds in Sierra Leone and Angola, timber in Cambodia, and coca in Columbia. Grievance argues that relative deprivation and the hurt it produces fuels conflict When people don't get what they think they deserve for example when certain ethnic, religious or tribal groups are polarized by the state, then this is a significant cause of contemporary conflict.eg in Gaza. David Keen one of the major critics of greed vs. grievance theory, however, argues that greed and grievance cannot be examined separately, but rather that they are partner terms that must be implemented in a complementary way. He disagrees with the quantitative research methods of Collier and believes a stronger emphasis should be put on personal data and the human perspective of the people in conflict. They believe that although conflict may be centred on some concept of greed or grievance, this can never solely explain a conflict (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002). This theory is applicable to the study because both greed and grievance come into play in the conflict in Turkana East Sub County. Some communities feel they have been sidelined and therefore feel justified fighting. The conflict is also partly caused by the need to control water and pasture.

The researcher sees this theory as an excellent definition, theory and an adequate explanation of the problems that bedevil not only Turkana East but the larger Turkana Region, whereby the frequent attacks and conflicts occur due to economic and cultural reasons. These negative practices means that the young men and women (1-7 years) are forced to engage in the native culture and practices with little regard to the formal education systems.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

Effects that Attacks on Schools have on Access to Education

Thousands of targeted attacks on education have been reported across dozens of countries and spanning most regions of the world. The vast majority of these attacks involved the bombing, shelling or burning of schools or universities, or the killing, injury, kidnapping, abduction or arbitrary arrest of students, teachers and academics. Some were carried out by armed forces or security forces, others by armed non-state groups or in some cases by armed criminal group (Khan,

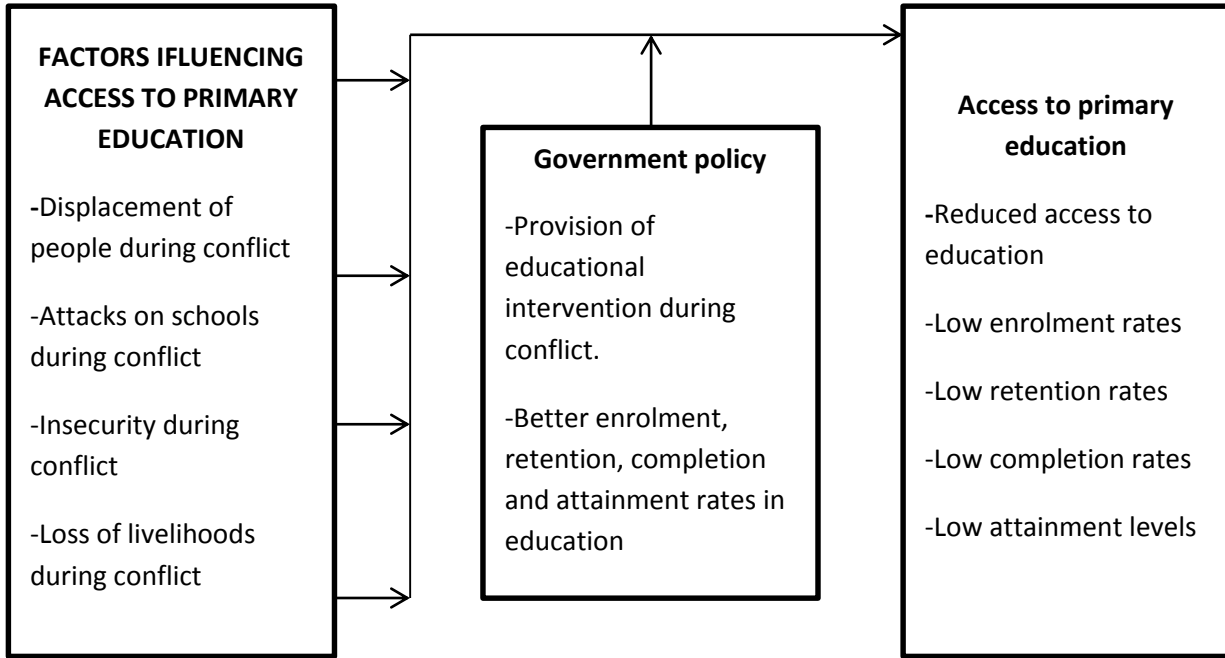
Kanwal & Wang, 2018). Destruction of infrastructure and limited access to remaining schools has the potential to deny education for several years and results in entire generations missing out on an education. In Pakistan, the Taliban's ban on girls' classes, issued in Swat District in December 2008, led to the closure years and of 900 state and private schools, depriving 120,000 girls of their right to education. In addition, it leaves very high ratios of pupils to books or pupils to desks and facilities such as sanitary facilities are usually broken. Damage caused by conflict leaves schools without basic facilities like separate latrines for girls (Zada, 2018). This presents an often unacceptable risk to a girl's modesty, dignity and basic human rights especially for girls who are menstruating and is a factor in girls abandoning their education. The problem is compounded by the fact that formal education is also generally at risk during the war because it relies on consistent funding and administrative support that is difficult to sustain during political turmoil. This delays any replacement or repairs on the damaged education infrastructure locking out many children from educational opportunities (Knopman, Wachs, Miller, Davis & Pfrommer, 2017).

Teachers are also prime targets because they are important community members and tend to be more than usually politicized. They are exposed to intimidation, torture and persecution and are frequently killed. During the crisis in Rwanda, more than two-thirds of teachers either fled or were killed. Attacks on teachers may force them to leave their communities – for fear of death and reprisals against their own children or family members. For every teacher who is attacked, scores of children are affected (Auron, 2019). Save the Children's experience in conflict-affected countries shows that, given the centrality of teachers in any learning process, a reduction in numbers of qualified teachers has a significant impact on children's access to education.

Much harder to measure are the psychological effects of the attack and destruction of institutions that are supposed to be protective. Students, teachers and support staff may suffer trauma, fear, insecurity, demonization and despondency when schools are attacked; merely the fear of attack can undermine the feeling of security that is necessary for a good teaching and learning environment. Public knowledge of repeated incidents and threats of attack gleaned from word of mouth or the media can spread fear throughout a region (Khamis, 2015).

The military use of school buildings leaves them damaged and destroyed with many being altered in some way to make them even more suitable for military use. Course notes, textbooks, classroom furniture and a great deal of other educational material are damaged or lost. The presence of soldiers can seriously undermine general personal security, with girls and a woman being especially vulnerable. This, in turn, causes lower rates of enrolment and high rates of drop (Weiss, 2018). One of the most alarming trends in armed conflict is the participation of children as soldiers. Schools are increasingly being attacked to abduct and conscript children as soldiers. Children serve armies in supporting roles, as cooks, porters, messengers and spies. Some commanders have even noted the desirability of child soldiers because they are 'more obedient, do not question orders and are easier to manipulate than adult soldiers' (Kingsley, 2017).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



Independent variables

Intervening variables

Dependent variables

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Design

This research used descriptive survey design. According to Kumar (2019), a descriptive survey strategy is useful in gathering information by interviewing or administering questions to a sample of individuals to obtain data useful in evaluating present particulars which have not controlled or manipulated the situation. A descriptive survey strategy is appropriate as more focus is given to an answer to one question given by all respondents than an answer to all questions given by an individual. The study involved the collection of data at a defined time on establishing the factors influencing access to basic education in Turkana East. The study utilized the differences opinions about the status of access to education and the root causes of problems affecting access to education.

3.2 Target Population

Kumar (2019) defines a population as an entire group of individuals, events or having common observable characteristics. He defines the target population as a large population from which a small population is selected for observation and analysis. The target population for this study comprised of 10 headteachers, 200 teachers and 2,000 pupils both boys and girls in primary schools from the area affected by conflict. The study targeted a cross-section of pupils from class four to eight.

3.3 Research Instruments

Questionnaires were used for this study because they are much more efficient in that they permit the collection of data from a much larger sample (Mohamad, Sulaiman, Sern & Salleh, 2015). Questionnaires also allow respondents to give frank answers to sensitive questions if they are not required to disclose their identity two sets of Questionnaires were used one for the headteachers and another for teachers. The questions are both close-ended and open-ended to elicit certain responses which were sought and to add more information that is of importance to the study. The questionnaires were offered to headteachers and teachers. The questionnaire consisted of five sections which included Demographic characteristics of Headteachers, Teachers and pupils (Gender, Age, Academic status), Section B entails items on influence of displacement on access to primary education, loss of livelihood on access to primary education, attacks on schools on access to primary education and insecurity during conflict on access to primary school education. The respondents were required to tick the appropriate answer and also fill in the blank space the possible correct answer. The questionnaire had been preferred over other instruments of data collection because the respondent would be able to record respondents themselves, a fact which ensured that no distortion of information as it was recorded. Rwegoshora (2016) considers this method as being very useful in extensive inquiries and can lead to fairly reliable results.

The researcher first obtained a letter of introduction from Kenya Methodist University, which was used to apply for a permit from National Council of Science and Technology (NACOSTI) and also the Turkana East Sub County Education Officer. This was followed by a visit to all sampled schools to liaise with the schools' headteachers and seek for appointment dates for the admission of the questionnaires and brief them on what will be required in the questionnaires on the appointment day. The questionnaires were collected immediately after they had been filled to ensure high return rates.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis involved the reduction of accumulated data to a manageable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns and applying statistical techniques. The data collected was cleaned and coded. This involved categorizing and summarizing the responses to each question and developing specific themes for discussion and analysis. The data was entered into a computer and analyzed with the help of the computer software IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 22) so as to find descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages and means. The findings were presented using graphs and tables. According to Krosnick (2018), this is essential for a scientific study to ensuring that all relevant data for making contemplated comparisons and analysis are available.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

Influence Of Attacks On Schools On Access To Primary School Education

The second objective of the study was to establish the influence that attacks on schools had on access to education. Several studies had already established that attacks on schools were a big hindrance to access to education. The attacks result in massive destruction of educational infrastructure and fear which makes many schools remain closed for a long time. The study wanted to establish whether this was the case in Turkana East Sub County. The results are presented in the subsequent subsections.

Headteachers' Responses on the Influence of Attacks on Schools on Access to Education

From the study findings in figure 4.5, 61.0% of the headteachers said that their schools had been attacked compared to just 39.0% who said their schools had not been attacked. The findings indicate that many schools were attacked during the conflict in Isiolo sub- County denying many children a chance to go to schools. Such schools were forced to close for a while until the area was more secure. In other instances, the damage was so extensive that the schools were closed for a long time before repairs were done. The findings agree with those of a study by Khan, Kanwal and & Wang (2018), who found that that destruction of infrastructure and limited access to remaining schools during conflict has the potential to deny education for several years resulting in entire generations missing out on education

4.5.2 Teachers Responses On The Influence Of Attacks On Schools On Access To Education

Teachers were asked to indicate how attacks on schools affected access to education. They were to state whether several statements relating to attacks on schools were true.

Responses Frequency Percent

Attacks on schools lead to the closure of the school 11 55.0 Attacks on schools lead to increased absenteeism for pupils and teachers 19 95.0 Attacks on schools lead to an increased ratio of pupils to books 12 60.0 Attacks on schools make pupils study in unsafe buildings or Outside. 7 35.0 From the study findings in table 4.7, 95% of teachers stated that attacks on schools led to increased absenteeism for both pupils and teachers. Sixty per cent (60.0%) indicated that there were increased pupils- to - books ratio following attacks on schools. Fifty-five per cent (55.0%) said that attacks on schools led to the closure of schools while 35% said that pupils were forced to study in unsafe buildings or outside when their schools were attacked. These findings indicate that attacks on schools in Turkana East Sub County have negatively influenced access to education. The fear of more attacks and the damage caused makes many pupils and teachers stay away from school while other schools close indefinitely. The damage to school buildings and other resources like books leads to high ratios of the pupil to books and sometimes pupils are forced to study outside or in unsafe buildings, this, in turn, reduces enrolment and increases dropout rates.

From the study findings, the biggest reason pupils did not attend school after attacks in Turkana East Sub County was fear that there would be more attacks 70.2% of pupils gave this as a reason for non-attendance. Fifty-three per cent (52.7%) of pupils stayed home because schools were closed after they had been attacked. It is also clear from the table that attacks on schools are a big hindrance to access to education in Turkana East Sub County as it leads to the destruction of educational infrastructure with and spreads fear not only among the pupils and teachers but also among parents who keep their children home for fear of more attacks. Schools are not provided with any security making the situation worse. The

findings agree with those of a study by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA, 2014). The study states that the psychological effects of the attack and destruction of institutions that are supposed to be protective are immense. Students, teachers and support staff may suffer trauma, fear, insecurity, demotivation and despondency when schools are attacked and end up dropping out of school.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings of the study, the conclusions on the key issues in the study, the recommendations given in the study and finally areas for further research.

5.2 Summary

The study established a positive relationship between attacks on schools and inaccessibility to education in primary schools in Turkana East Sub County. 61% of the headteachers surveyed said that their schools had been attacked during ethnic conflicts. It was found that the attacks led to the closure of schools either due to the damage done or for fear of further attacks. Even when schools remain open a massive 70% of pupils stated that they stayed away from schools after attacks because of fear of more attacks. It was also established that the destruction of educational infrastructure during the attacks led to high ratios of pupils to books which hindered access. In addition, destruction of sanitary facilities and water systems led to high absenteeism and dropout rates, especially for girls.

5.3 Conclusion

The study further concludes that attacks on schools during frequent ethnic conflicts in Turkana East Sub County affects access to primary education negatively and leads to low enrollment rates, high cases of absenteeism for both pupils and teachers and high dropout rates. When schools are attacked, educational infrastructure like classrooms, desks and books are destroyed. The fear caused by such attacks leaves many schools closed and parents afraid to send their children to school.

5.4 Recommendation

The study identifies attacks on schools during the conflict as negatively affecting access to primary school education in Turkana East Sub County. The study recommends that the government in collaboration with nonstate actors in the county should sensitize the community on the importance of education and the need to respect schools even during conflict.

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