

**AN ASSESSMENT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS INFLUENCING  
PUPILS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
IN LONGIDO DISTRICT, TANZANIA**

**KAWISHE, BASILISA, R**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
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**2025**

## CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that have read and hereby recommend for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania a dissertation entitled; “***Assessment of Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Pupils’ Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools in Longido District; Tanzania.***” in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Administration, Planning and Policy Studies (MED-APPS) of the Open University of Tanzania.

.....

Dr. Goodluck Jacob  
(Supervisor)

.....

**Date**

.....

Dr. Kassim Kassim,  
(Supervisor)

.....

**Date**

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**DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my Almighty Yahweh, who made it possible for me to become the person I am today. For their steadfast support, I also dedicate it to my mother and father, whom I adore. My sincere appreciation is extended to my supervisors, Dr. Goodluck Jacob and Kassim Kassim, for their significant mentorship and advice during my academic career. I also want to express my gratitude to the spiritual prayer fathers who gave their time both intellectually and physically during my academic career. This commitment also goes out to all of my loved ones who have helped me succeed and achieve my goals. Your encouragement and support have been invaluable

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the socio-cultural factors influencing pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Longido District. Specifically, it explored community perceptions of these influences, examined how cultural practices affect PSLE performance, and proposed strategies to address the challenges identified. Guided by socio-cultural theory, the study adopted a mixed-methods approach involving both quantitative and qualitative data. A descriptive and exploratory research design was utilized, and participants were selected through purposive and stratified random sampling. The sample included 95 respondents: 20 Standard Seven pupils, 50 teachers, 10 head teachers, 10 school committee members, 3 Ward Education Officers (WEOs), 1 District School Quality Assurance Officer (DSQAO), and 1 District Primary Education Officer (DPEO). Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 25) with descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Findings revealed that deeply rooted socio-cultural norms especially those linked to Maasai traditions such as early marriages, initiation rites, and gender roles significantly hinder academic success by diverting pupils' attention and time from schooling. While some community members value education, others prioritize traditional practices over schooling. It is recommended that multi-stakeholder interventions including community sensitization program, enforcement of child protection laws, alignment of school calendars with cultural activities, and stronger partnerships between schools, local governments, and NGOs.

**Key words:** *Social-cultural factors, Academic performance, Public Primary School.*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSEE	Certificate of Secondary Education Examination
DPEO	District Primary Education Officer
DSQAO	District School Quality Assurance Officer
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
MOEVT	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training.
NECTA	National Examination Council of Tanzania.
OST	Open system Theory.
PEDP	Primary Education Development Program
PSLE	Primary School Leaving Education'
TQM	Total Quality Management Theory.
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WEO	Ward Education Officers.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study, outlining the background, problem statement, research objectives, and questions. It highlights also the significance of the research, the scope of the study and limitations. Lastly, the chapter concludes by detailing the organization of the study, setting the stage for subsequent chapters.

#### 1.2 Background to the Study

Education serves as a cornerstone of human development and is universally acknowledged as a basic right essential for fostering economic progress, societal harmony, and sustainable growth (Assefa, 2020). Its role is especially vital in developing regions like sub-Saharan Africa, where education not only uplifts individuals but also addresses poverty and stimulates national development (Asongu et al., 2019). However, despite global initiatives to enhance educational access, many African countries still face persistent setbacks. Socio-cultural dynamics and economic hardships continue to impede educational advancement, particularly in marginalized and rural communities. This study explores how such socio-cultural variables shape the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Longido District, Tanzania.

Education plays a critical role in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which focuses on inclusive and equitable quality education for all by 2030 (Engida, 2021). Yet, performance gaps remain widespread. Millions of children globally still struggle to acquire essential skills such as literacy and numeracy.

Ludger (2015) points out that these learning deficiencies are often rooted in complex social and cultural environments, especially in low-income regions. Factors such as gender-based expectations, household responsibilities, and cultural norms around child roles frequently obstruct children's access to quality education. Reports like the Pakistan Journal (2013) affirm that traditions, poverty, and social inequalities continue to marginalize many children from achieving academic success, particularly in rural areas.

International studies reinforce this issue. For example, research in Wales by Gaetz (2021) highlights how family values and social standing influence learners' academic outcomes. Children from affluent or education-focused households generally perform better than peers from disadvantaged backgrounds. Similarly, Patel et al. (2016) show that in India, factors such as caste bias, gender roles, and geographic disparities significantly impact student achievement. These findings suggest that cultural and social settings can directly or indirectly restrict learning opportunities.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, educational challenges are compounded by cultural traditions that often de-emphasize schooling. Gender norms, early marriage, and child labor frequently affect school attendance and engagement. According to the World Bank (2018), young girls often exit school early due to pregnancy or domestic roles, while boys may be tasked with responsibilities like herding. These pressures diminish both participation and academic outcomes. The widespread effect of these practices has led to ongoing disparities in educational performance. Supporting evidence from Nigeria (Akinwumi et al., 2015) and Kenya (Mutisya & Kieyah, 2018) illustrates how traditional obligations such as household chores or agricultural work contribute

to absenteeism and learning setbacks. In many communities, girls are expected to care for siblings, while boys support livestock management. These expectations interfere with classroom engagement and performance. Additionally, resource limitations and infrastructural gaps further intensify these issues (Harsono & Wafik, 2024). In many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, including Tanzania, education is often deprioritized in favor of addressing household survival needs (Samarakoon, Christiansen & Munro, 2017).

While Tanzania has made strides in expanding educational access, rural areas still face entrenched cultural and economic barriers. According to Kitambazi & Lyamuya (2022), pupils particularly girls continue to encounter disruptions such as early marriage and lack of parental support. Sifuna (2010) also emphasizes the impact of societal expectations, which often pressure young girls into domestic roles, resulting in school dropout. Parsons et al. (2015) highlight how gender roles and household expectations in pastoral areas similarly affect boys who are expected to leave school to support family labor needs.

Thus, this research focuses on identifying how these social and cultural factors shape academic performance, particularly for Standard Seven pupils preparing for the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) in Longido. The aim is to recommend strategies that can address these barriers and promote better learning outcomes for pupils in rural Tanzania.

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

Despite various efforts to improve education, Longido District has continued to record unsatisfactory primary school performance over the past five years. A

significant number of pupils transition to secondary education without basic literacy skills such as reading and writing. For example, 39% of pupils in 2017, 40.8% in 2018, 40.5% in 2019, 49.5% in 2020, and 37.7% in 2021 could not read or write upon entry to secondary school (Journal, 2019). These statistics highlight a persistent gap between expected and actual learning outcomes, raising concerns about pupils' preparedness for higher levels of education.

Socio-cultural factors have been identified as key contributors to this problem. In Longido District, traditional beliefs, gender roles, early marriage, and economic hardships often undermine pupils' academic progress. Studies in the Arusha region show that cultural norms and early marriages disproportionately affect girls, leading to high dropout rates and poor examination performance (Mdee, 2017). Similarly, limited parental involvement in education often tied to cultural practices and economic challenges further constrains pupils' learning opportunities (Nzuruba, 2024; Green, 2021). As a result, many pupils fail to perform well in the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE), leaving them disadvantaged in secondary education and beyond (Merga, 2020). While existing studies have examined socio-cultural influences on education broadly, little is known about their specific effects on pupils' academic performance in Longido District, a gap this study seeks to address.

## **1.4 Objective of the Study**

### **1.4.1 The General Objective**

The general objective of this study was to examine socio-cultural factors influencing pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Longido district Tanzania

### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives of the Study**

This study was guided by the following specific objectives;

- i. To identify the socio-cultural factors influencing academic performance in public primary schools in Longido District.
- ii. To determine how social cultural practices affect pupils' academic performance in Longido District.
- iii. To explore and recommend strategies for addressing socio-cultural factors that hinder pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Longido District.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

This study sought to answer the following questions:

- i. What are the socio-cultural based factors influencing academic performance in public primary schools in Longido District?
- ii. How do socio-cultural practices affect pupils' academic performance in Longido District?
- iii. What strategies can be implemented to address socio-cultural factors that hinder pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Longido District?

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

This study holds considerable importance as it offers practical guidance for teachers, school leaders, and parents on how to address socio-cultural factors hindering academic achievement in public primary schools. By shedding light on how cultural norms and traditions impact pupils' education, it raises awareness among community stakeholders about the urgent need for a supportive and inclusive learning

environment that fosters academic growth. The insights gained are particularly useful for school administrators and educators in developing context-sensitive strategies to support at-risk pupils.

Furthermore, the findings provide a valuable reference for policymakers at the Ministry of Education and local government levels in designing targeted interventions and education policies aimed at reducing the adverse effects of socio-cultural practices. The study also underscores the need for a collaborative approach by involving key stakeholders including parents, teachers, community elders, and government representatives to ensure the successful implementation of strategies that promote equitable learning opportunities. By focusing specifically on the socio-cultural dynamics of Longido District, the study addresses a critical knowledge gap and contributes to the broader academic discourse, offering a strong foundation for future research in similar rural or culturally diverse settings.

### **1.7 The Delimitation and Scope of the Study**

This study examined the socio-cultural factors influencing pupils' academic performance in the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) within public primary schools. Although various factors may impact PSLE outcomes, this research specifically concentrated on socio-cultural dimensions. The study was carried out in Longido District, located in the Arusha Region of Tanzania, and engaged key stakeholders including pupils, parents, teachers, headteachers, and school committee members.

A qualitative research approach guided the inquiry, with data collected through interviews, questionnaires, and documentary reviews. The study focused exclusively

on public primary schools, which have consistently recorded lower academic performance compared to their private counterparts in the region. Consequently, private schools were deliberately excluded to ensure a focused analysis of challenges specific to public institutions. The research aimed to generate insights into how cultural norms and community practices contribute to academic underachievement in this context.

### **1.8 Definition Key Terms**

**Performance:** This refers to the manner in which an individual executes a task, evaluated by its effectiveness. In this study, performance is used to describe the working efficiency of an individual (Maganga, 2016).

**Academic Performance:** Defined as measurable or observable behaviors related to the attainment of academic objectives. (Narad, 2016)

**Public Schools:** Schools funded and maintained at a public expense for the benefit of children in a community or district, forming part of a system of free education. Public schools commonly include primary and secondary levels. (Rundell, 2015)

**Social-cultural:** Refers to aspects related to cultural and social factors, encompassing traditions, habits, patterns, and beliefs shared within a population group. It also involves behaviors and influences in a particular context, such as traditions, beliefs, and patterns present in a community (Causadias, 2020).

### **1.9 Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the research, including the background of the problem, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, operational definitions of

key terms, and limitations of the study. Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature, focusing on theoretical perspectives, empirical studies, and the conceptual framework. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology, detailing the design, population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and analysis procedures. Chapter Four presents the findings through data presentation, analysis, and discussion, aligning them with the research objectives and questions. Finally, Chapter Five provides a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations while offering also suggestions for further research. This structure ensures a logical flow and comprehensive examination of the research problem.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter is organized into four main sections. The first section presents the theoretical framework, outlining the concepts and theories that inform the study. The second section reviews empirical studies, highlighting previous research on the factors influencing pupils' performance in primary education, specifically the socio-cultural influences. The third section identifies the research gap, pointing out areas that have not been adequately explored in previous studies. The fourth section introduces the conceptual framework, providing a visual representation of the relationship between the variables studied and guiding the investigation of the socio-cultural factors affecting pupils' performance in the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE).

#### **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

##### **2.2.1 The Total Quality Management Theory (TQM)**

Total Quality Management (TQM), introduced in the 1950s, is a broad and systematic management approach that emphasizes continuous improvement and stakeholder satisfaction. Although originally applied in industrial settings, TQM has since been adapted to various sectors, including education, where it serves as a valuable framework for evaluating and enhancing quality. The theory promotes the integration of all organizational component's leadership, planning, processes, personnel, and communication to achieve high-quality performance (Gupta, 2017).

In educational settings, TQM supports the idea that all elements involved in the

learning environment must work collaboratively to improve students' academic performance (Johnson, 2018).

In relation to this study, socio-cultural factors such as parental background, community values, cultural beliefs about education, and gender roles are considered the key inputs influencing academic performance. These socio-cultural elements shape the foundational environment in which pupils learn and grow. TQM emphasizes the importance of understanding these inputs, as they determine how effectively the educational system can operate. The theory suggests that recognizing and addressing these factors can significantly improve the overall quality of education.

In terms of educational processes, TQM focuses on the continuous improvement of teaching practices, school leadership, and the overall learning atmosphere. These processes are influenced by socio-cultural norms, such as attitudes towards girls' education or expectations about child labour and household responsibilities. Teachers' approaches, student engagement, and the design of the curriculum are all impacted by these cultural dimensions.

The final aspect of TQM is the output, which in this context refers to pupils' academic achievement, particularly in standardized assessments like the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). According to the theory, if appropriate inputs are effectively managed through refined processes, the outcome should be improved academic performance. This study aims to assess how socio-cultural factors influence this chain, and how a quality-focused approach rooted in TQM can lead to better academic results by mitigating those challenges.

Although TQM offers a robust and structured framework, it has its limitations. Implementing TQM requires strong coordination and resource availability, conditions that may be lacking in underfunded public primary schools in Longido District (Evans & Lindsay, 2017). Moreover, the theory was originally designed for business settings, which may make its direct application in education somewhat constrained by the complexity of human and cultural dynamics in schools. Despite these challenges, the strength of TQM lies in its focus on inclusivity, collaboration, and continual development. These qualities make it a fitting model for exploring how community-based socio-cultural issues impact academic performance.

This study addresses theoretical gaps by adapting the TQM model to an educational and socio-cultural context within a rural Tanzanian setting a relatively under-researched area. Furthermore, the theory not only underpins the conceptual foundation of this research but also influences its methodological design. A mixed-methods approach is applied to investigate both the quantifiable effects of socio-cultural influences and the personal experiences of students and teachers. TQM guides the analysis by linking the relationship between inputs (socio-cultural factors), processes (educational delivery), and outputs (student performance). Through this lens, the research aims to generate insights that can inform context-specific strategies for improving academic performance in Longido District's public primary schools.

## **2.3 Empirical Literature Review**

### **2.3.1 Overview of Socio-Cultural Factors in Tanzania**

Tanzania is characterized by a broad cultural mosaic, with a population exceeding 60 million and comprising more than 120 distinct ethnic communities, mostly situated

on the mainland. These communities maintain unique languages, customs, and traditional systems that contribute to the nation's diverse cultural heritage (NBS, 2022). While Kiswahili and English function as the official languages for communication and instruction across the country, many communities continue to preserve and practice their indigenous customs and values in everyday life (URT, 2021).

These cultural traditions are interwoven into family and societal structures, significantly influencing individuals' social behavior and outlook from early childhood. Mlyakado (2020) points out that children in Tanzanian households are often introduced to their cultural roles and community expectations informally through day-to-day family interactions and community engagement. Such early socialization shapes their perspectives toward formal education, which may result in tension between traditional obligations and academic responsibilities, especially in rural and semi-nomadic areas like Longido District.

In numerous communities, cultural obligations such as household duties, herding livestock, or adherence to gender-specific roles particularly affecting girls often interfere with school attendance and learning outcomes. These traditions can limit educational engagement and reinforce disparities in learning access and achievement. As a result, addressing these ingrained practices is crucial in developing effective strategies to improve learning outcomes in public primary education.

Troike (1978) highlights that the transmission of cultural norms begins at home and is reinforced by broader societal interactions, meaning that children often internalize cultural ideologies before entering formal schooling. By the time they start school,

these cultural foundations are already well established. Suleiman (2011) similarly links cultural practices to reduced academic achievement among primary school pupils in Nigeria identifying early marriage, child labour, and gender-based role expectations as key hindrances. Torto (2009) also recognizes how children's responsibilities within traditional societies including domestic chores and animal care can detract from academic performance and engagement in formal education.

### **2.3.2 The School-Based Factors Affecting Academic Performance**

The surrounding environment of a school both physical and social plays a pivotal role in influencing students' academic outcomes. In rural regions such as Longido District, deficiencies in essential facilities, including well-constructed classrooms, adequate teaching materials, and staff housing, pose significant barriers to effective learning (Kulpoo, 2021). Educational institutions in underdeveloped settings frequently encounter challenges related to resource shortages, which correlate with lower academic performance, particularly in national assessments like the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). According to Zhang (2006), schools that are better equipped with instructional resources generally achieve superior academic results, underscoring the connection between school infrastructure and student performance.

Supporting this notion, Kombo (2018) argues that the availability of learning resources including textbooks, science equipment, and visual aids is closely associated with enhanced student outcomes. Court and Ghia (2021) further highlight that disparities in resource allocation among schools significantly contribute to

educational inequalities, emphasizing the need for equitable distribution of teaching materials to improve overall academic performance.

Textbooks are particularly instrumental in boosting student achievement, as they offer well-organized content that facilitates both instruction and independent learning (UNESCO, 2022). Altbach (2017) underscores their continued relevance, stating that despite the advent of new learning technologies, textbooks remain irreplaceable in many educational contexts. Gakuru (2016) also emphasizes the importance of school infrastructure, noting that secure and resource-rich classrooms foster more effective learning environments and contribute positively to academic results.

Eshiwani (2015) identifies a lack of facilities such as libraries, electricity, and recreational areas as contributing factors to poor academic performance. Inadequate classroom space, insufficient furniture, and a shortage of teaching aids hinder the proper delivery of the curriculum, leading to subpar learning outcomes. Squire (2012) affirms that improved instructional tools have a direct positive impact on the quality of teaching and student academic achievement.

Ownership of schools and the resources at their disposal are also key in shaping educational quality. Crosne, Monica, and Glen (2010) observed that private institutions often outperform their public counterparts due to better funding and access to resources, particularly in rural regions. Sparkles (2019) further suggests that the educational atmosphere, including teachers' expectations, heavily influences student motivation and success. Teachers working in poorly resourced schools may lower their expectations, which can adversely affect student performance.

Kwesiga (2018) reinforces the idea that school infrastructure significantly affects academic outcomes, as both the quantity and quality of facilities directly impact the effectiveness of educational delivery. Likewise, Darling-Hammond and Cook-Harvey (2018) assert that a school's learning environment influences how content is structured and delivered, as well as the overall performance of learners. Mainali (2024) adds that a school's social and cultural setting is fundamental in cultivating collaboration, setting high expectations, and promoting a shared commitment to academic excellence.

### **2.3.3 Teachers' Attitudes Towards Socio-Cultural Factors**

Teachers' attitudes and their interaction with students play a pivotal role in influencing academic performance. Nkrumah (2018) argue that teachers are one of the most significant factors in predicting students' performance, alongside family and individual characteristics. Allen et al, (2018) also support this by showing that close teacher-student interactions increase the likelihood of student success.

Teachers' effectiveness is linked to how well they engage students in the learning process, set challenging tasks, and provide meaningful work that is relevant to the students' lives (Chew & Cerbin, 2021). Teachers are expected to present the material in ways that emphasize its relevance and utility to students Teven and McCroskey (2016) stress that a teacher's positive attitude towards students can be a powerful motivator for academic achievement.

Nkarichia, (2021) suggests that an effective teacher does not simply focus on enforcing discipline but also facilitating learning and guiding students towards self-development. Teachers must also be aware of the different cultural contexts in which

their students live, and adapt their teaching methods accordingly. Teachers who are creative and employ a variety of teaching strategies, including the use of relevant teaching materials, tend to motivate students more effectively, improving academic performance. Research by Afe (2014) shows that teacher effectiveness is strongly correlated with students' academic achievements. Teachers, as facilitators of knowledge, are critical agents in influencing students' learning and performance. They are responsible for imparting knowledge, evaluating students' work, providing feedback, and helping students navigate their academic journey.

The attitudes of teachers and the quality of their interactions with learners are essential elements in shaping academic outcomes. According to Nkrumah (2018), teachers stand among the most influential predictors of student achievement, alongside familial background and individual traits. This viewpoint is reinforced by Allen et al. (2018), who found that strong, supportive relationships between teachers and students significantly enhance the likelihood of their academic success.

Effective teaching is closely tied to how well educators involve students in the learning process, assign meaningful and thought-provoking tasks, and relate the content to students' everyday experiences (Chew & Cerbin, 2021). When teachers contextualize lessons to show their practical value, students are more likely to remain engaged. Teven and McCroskey (2016) also emphasize that a teacher's positive disposition toward their students serves as a significant motivational factor, encouraging learners to perform at their best.

In addition, Nkarichia (2021) points out that impactful educators do more than manage classroom discipline—they actively foster growth and guide students in their

academic development. Culturally responsive teaching also plays a critical role, as teachers need to understand and reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds of their learners in their instructional methods. Educators who incorporate varied teaching approaches and utilize appropriate instructional materials tend to create stimulating environments that boost student motivation and enhance academic performance.

Research by Afe (2014) further underscores the connection between teacher effectiveness and student achievement. As central figures in the educational process, teachers fulfil multiple roles: transmitting knowledge, assessing learner progress, offering constructive feedback, and providing guidance throughout the educational journey. Their influence is fundamental in shaping students' attitudes toward learning and determining overall academic success.

#### **2.3.4 The Pupil-Based Factors Toward Social Cultural**

The current study posited that various pupil-related elements influence academic performance in public primary schools. These factors include chronic absenteeism (truancy), prevailing community perceptions, parental attitudes toward education, pupils' own motivation to learn, and the socio-economic context of their family background. Supporting this, Juma and Simatwa (2014) carried out a study in Kisumu, Kenya, investigating how cultural influences affect pupils' performance in the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). Their research utilized questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis as data collection tools and applied both correlation and descriptive survey designs. Through simple random sampling, they selected 300 female students in Form Four, while 30 headteachers and 30 class teachers were chosen using a saturated sampling method. The findings

revealed that deeply rooted cultural practices such as early marriages, the belief that a child's place is at home, female genital mutilation, and male circumcision negatively affected school participation and achievement. Additionally, family preferences often favored educating boys over girls, and parental disinterest in formal education was influenced by the belief that children would ultimately adopt pastoral lifestyles. Education was thus undervalued though it is a tool for escaping poverty, ignorance, and poor living conditions.

### **2.3.5 The Impact of Truancy in the Context of Socio-Cultural Influences**

Truancy, defined by Hornby (2016) as the act of deliberately avoiding school without official approval, is recognized as a widespread issue in many education systems. However, capturing the true magnitude of the problem is often complicated by inconsistencies in data reporting at school, local, and national levels (Heilbrunn, 2020). Research by Mac Gillivray and Erickson (2010) in Colorado revealed that only a small fraction (2%–4%) of students classified under the legal definition of truancy actually faced court proceedings. Despite its early onset, truancy has been closely linked to academic underachievement, both during a student's time in school and in their long-term educational trajectory. This suggests that underlying socio-cultural issues such as lack of parental support, poor community valuation of education, and traditional practices often contribute to persistent absenteeism, ultimately leading to reduced academic performance.

### **2.3.6 The Effect of Pupil Social cultural with Academic Performance**

Family background remains one of the most influential determinants of a pupil's academic success. Parental education levels, household income, and socio-cultural

traditions greatly impact the learning environment and support available to a child. Studies by the OECD (2020) and UNICEF (2021) highlight that children from families with limited formal education often encounter difficulties in school, largely due to restricted access to learning resources and lack of academic support at home. Well-educated parents are generally more capable of creating a conducive learning atmosphere, providing academic guidance, and encouraging consistent study habits (World Bank, 2022). Marzano (2020) emphasizes the importance of school-led interventions, such as parental counselling programs, to enhance parental involvement in education. Krashen (2019) further supports this by noting that children of literate parents consistently perform better on assessments than those from households with low educational backgrounds.

A study by Soakpa (2018) in the Democratic Republic of Congo explored the influence of cultural traditions and family expectations on students' attitudes toward learning. The findings revealed that societal values instilled at home often shape how children perceive schooling, which, in turn, affects their motivation and classroom behavior. Although schools play a key role in instruction, learners' academic outcomes are strongly tied to their home environments.

Kimani et al. (2017) affirm that academic excellence is not solely a product of teaching quality but also of the learner's personal responsibility and habits. Regardless of how well a school operates, students must remain committed, manage their study time effectively, participate in remedial classes, and respond positively to teacher feedback. Poor study routines, low self-motivation, and a lack of educational support from home all contribute to academic underperformance. In summary,

family dynamics, cognitive engagement, and socio-economic background form a powerful triad shaping pupils' success in public primary schools.

### **2.3.7 The influence of Family Background on Pupils' Academic Performance in PSLE**

A pupil's academic success is greatly shaped by their family environment. Key elements such as parental education, economic standing, and cultural orientation have a profound influence on a child's learning outcomes. Studies indicate that learners from households where parents have limited education frequently encounter academic difficulties, mainly due to the absence of sufficient learning resources and inadequate support systems at home (OECD, 2020; UNICEF, 2021).

Conversely, children with educated parents tend to perform better in school. These parents are typically more equipped to offer academic assistance, foster a positive learning atmosphere at home, and motivate their children to engage meaningfully in their studies (World Bank, 2022). Marzano (2020) underscores that schools can complement these efforts by providing counselling services aimed at equipping parents with strategies to nurture environments conducive to academic development.

Krashen (2019) supports this view, noting that students with formally educated parents generally achieve higher scores in standardized examinations than those whose parents lack formal education. This observation highlights the critical role that parental education plays in influencing pupil outcomes. Similarly, Soakpa (2018), in a study conducted in the Democratic Republic of Congo, found that socio-cultural influences within families and communities significantly shape pupils' attitudes and engagement with education.

Although schools are tasked with delivering instructional content, the learner also holds responsibility for their academic progress. Kimani et al. (2017) argued that one of the primary measures of education quality is student achievement, which is also driven by intrinsic motivation and personal initiative. The adage “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make it drink” aptly reflects this concept.

Moreover, students' learning behaviors directly impact their performance. Habits such as completing assignments consistently, engaging in extra reading, managing time effectively, attending remedial lessons, and responding constructively to teacher feedback contribute to academic success. On the other hand, lack of discipline, weak focus, and low self-drive often lead to poor performance. Additional influences include cognitive capacity, family background, and access to learning tools—all of which, when inadequate, can hinder pupils' educational attainment.

### **2.3.8 The Effects of social cultural factors toward Teaching/Learning Facilities**

Luppicini and Walabe (2021) explored the socio-cultural factors influencing e-learning implementation in Saudi Arabian higher education, focusing particularly on insights from Ministry of Education officials and university lecturers. Their qualitative study utilized 28 in-depth interviews and thematic analysis of related documents to examine both opportunities and challenges in designing culturally relevant online learning environments within Saudi universities. The research identified two key thematic areas: the influence of cultural norms and the accessibility of e-learning for women. The study offers a valuable contribution to global discourse on online education by addressing the unique socio-cultural

dynamics of digital learning in the Saudi and broader Arab contexts, advocating for the development of culturally responsive and high-quality e-learning models.

In a different context, Fajriah et al. (2019) conducted a quantitative study to examine students' perceptions of their English teachers' instructional strategies, personal competence, and the adequacy of school facilities. The study targeted alumni from three public senior secondary schools in South Aceh through an online questionnaire. Participants included 15 graduates from each school SMAN 1 Labuhanhaji, SMAN 1 Tapaktuan, and SMAN 1 Trumon who were then enrolled in various higher education institutions across Aceh and North Sumatra. The survey findings revealed that while alumni generally regarded their English teachers as competent, there was a perceived gap in the practical application of recommended instructional strategies. Additionally, respondents expressed concerns about the inadequacy of school facilities, suggesting a need for infrastructural improvement to better support teaching and learning.

In Pakistan, Young (2016) asserted that parental educational attainment and students' use of library resources significantly affect academic performance. His study highlighted a positive correlation between regular library usage and improved student achievement. Similarly, Kirman and Siddiquah (2018) emphasized that student academic success is closely associated with multiple socio-cultural factors, such as the father's education level, the student's grade level, and the quality of the surrounding neighborhood environment. These studies collectively underscore the influence of socio-cultural and infrastructural variables on educational outcomes across diverse settings.

### **2.3.9 School Guidance, Counselling and Social Cultural Factors**

Allis and Kamme (2020) conducted a cross-sectional study involving 2,170 students from secondary and preparatory schools across public institutions in Alexandria, Egypt. Their findings indicated that the majority of indiscipline cases stemmed from student-related behaviors, while a smaller portion was linked to familial backgrounds. As multifaceted institutions, schools are tasked not only with delivering academic content but also shaping students' behavior and character through effective supervision and counselling services.

In a related context, Mareza and Nugroho (2019) explored the role of counselling for learners with special needs, particularly those with hearing impairments, through psychological and socio-cultural lenses in the context of scientific and technological advancement. Their qualitative study employed documentation, interviews, and observations to assess the implementation of counselling programs within schools. The findings revealed that these students often require targeted support due to emotional instability, social isolation stemming from bullying or peer rejection, and challenges in adapting to digital communication platforms. The researchers emphasized that guidance and counselling serve not only as support mechanisms but also as tools for identifying students' talents and addressing challenges they face in adapting to a rapidly evolving society.

Additionally, Bashire (2015) carried out a study in Morogoro, Tanzania, assessing the state of school counselling and guidance services. The research revealed that many secondary schools lacked organized counselling programs, reflected in poor academic outcomes including high failure rates in the 2010 Certificate of Secondary

Education Examination (CSEE). One critical issue highlighted was the absence of trained counsellors capable of addressing academic concerns such as effective study habits and time management.

Evodia (2014) corroborated these findings through research conducted in the Moshi District, which similarly identified significant gaps in the availability of school counselling services. These shortcomings contributed to widespread students' indiscipline and poor academic performance. Complementary evidence from a survey conducted among 20 school counsellors in Malawi's central and southern regions further underlined the importance of structured guidance and counselling. The survey pinpointed various pressing issues, reinforcing the necessity for strengthening counselling services to enhance student well-being and academic success.

#### **2.4 The Research Gap**

Although numerous studies have examined the influence of socio-cultural factors on academic performance in Tanzania and elsewhere (Mlyakado, 2020), limited research has specifically addressed how these factors affect pupils in rural pastoral communities such as Longido District. While some existing literature has explored general socio-cultural dynamics, there is a lack of focused empirical evidence on how these factors interact with school-related elements, including the availability of learning resources and teacher perceptions, particularly in remote settings (Kulpoo, 2021; Nkrumah, 2018). Additionally, there is a noticeable gap in studies that assess the combined impact of learner-specific variables such as absenteeism and family

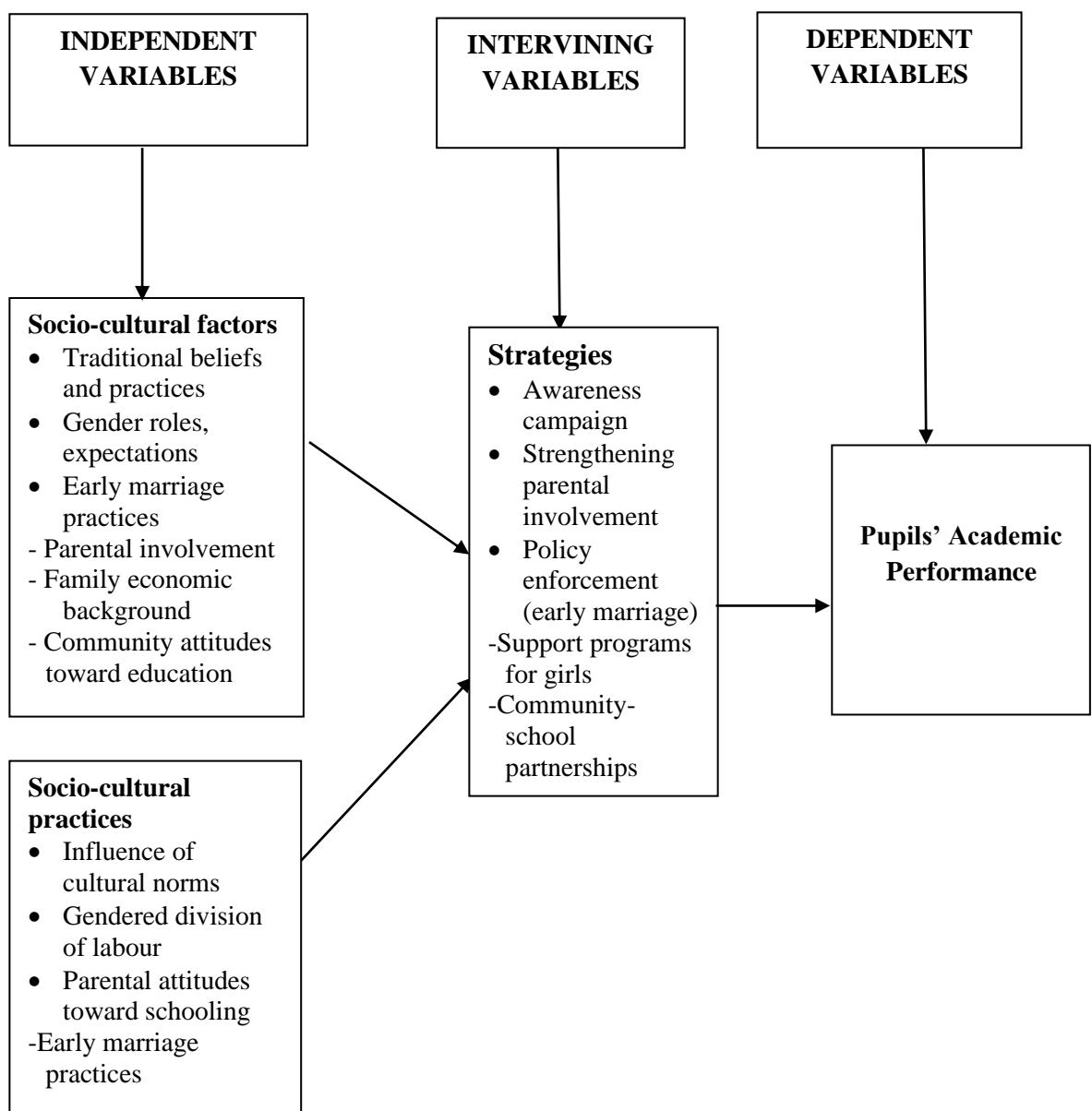
background and environmental influences on pupils' academic outcomes in rural Tanzanian primary schools (Hornby, 2016; OECD, 2020).

To address this gap, the present study investigates the socio-cultural determinants of academic achievement among primary school pupils in Longido District. The research emphasizes aspects such as pupil truancy, family circumstances, learner attitudes toward education, and the presence and effectiveness of school counselling and support systems. By doing so, this study seeks to generate contextually grounded insights that enrich the current literature and inform educational policy and intervention strategies tailored to rural Tanzanian settings.

## **2.5 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the relationship between socio-cultural factors and pupils' academic performance in public primary schools. Socio-cultural factors such as traditional beliefs, gender roles, early marriage practices, parental involvement, family economic background, and community attitudes directly influence pupils' learning outcomes. These factors may either hinder or support literacy, numeracy, class participation, attendance, and overall academic achievement measured through PSLE results, completion, and transition rates. However, the relationship can be moderated by strategies such as awareness campaigns, strengthened parental involvement, and enforcement of education policies, community-school partnerships, and support programs for vulnerable pupils, especially girls. By addressing these socio-cultural challenges, pupils' performance can be improved, ensuring better educational outcomes in Longido District.

Leadership strategies, while conflicts related to resources may need collaborative approaches. Therefore, the specific nature of conflict sources could impact how leadership skills and strategies are applied and the outcomes of conflict resolution in primary schools in Kondoa District.



**Figure 2.1:** Conceptual Framework

**Source:** The Researcher own construction (2024)

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the methodology used in conducting the study. It begins by justifying the choice of the study area, followed by a description of the research design and approach. It further elaborates the target population, sample size, and sampling procedure used to select the participants. Additionally, the chapter provides a detailed explanation of the data collection methods, tools, and techniques employed in gathering information. Finally, the chapter discusses the data analysis methods, as well as the approach to presenting the study's findings. The aim of this section is to provide a clear understanding of how the study was conducted, ensuring its reliability and validity.

#### **3.2 Research Paradigm**

This study employed a pragmatism paradigm, which supports combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to thoroughly explore the problem under investigation. Pragmatic approach is suitable because it emphasizes practical performance and allows for the use of multiple methods to address complex research problems. Quantitative data offer measurable insights into the level of influence while qualitative data provide detailed, contextual understanding of the stakeholders' experiences and views (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

#### **3.3 Research Approach**

This study employed a mixed-methods research approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques to ensure a comprehensive understanding of

the topic at hand. The rationale lies in its ability to capture both measurable patterns and in-depth contextual information, which are essential when exploring complex social and cultural dynamics.

The qualitative component enabled the exploration of participants' perceptions, experiences, and insights through interviews and focus group discussions. This provided a deeper understanding of how socio-cultural factors influence educational outcomes. Meanwhile, the quantitative component involved the use of structured questionnaires to collect numerical data that revealed trends, frequencies, and relationships among key variables. The integration of these two methods facilitated triangulation, thereby enhancing the validity, reliability, and depth of the findings. The mixed-methods approach was thus appropriate for addressing the multifaceted nature of the research problem.

### **3.4 Research Design**

This study employed an Explanatory Sequential Design to investigate the socio-cultural factors affecting pupils' academic performance. Initially, quantitative data were collected and analyzed to identify patterns and relationships between socio-cultural factors (independent variables) and pupils' academic performance (dependent variable). Subsequently, qualitative data were gathered to explain and elaborate the quantitative findings, providing deeper insights into the underlying reasons and context.

Explanatory Sequential Design allowed the study to integrate numerical data with rich, descriptive information, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of how socio-cultural influences affect academic outcomes. This approach ensured that the

research objectives were addressed holistically by combining the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods (Deterding & Waters, 2021; Darmawan et al., 2024).

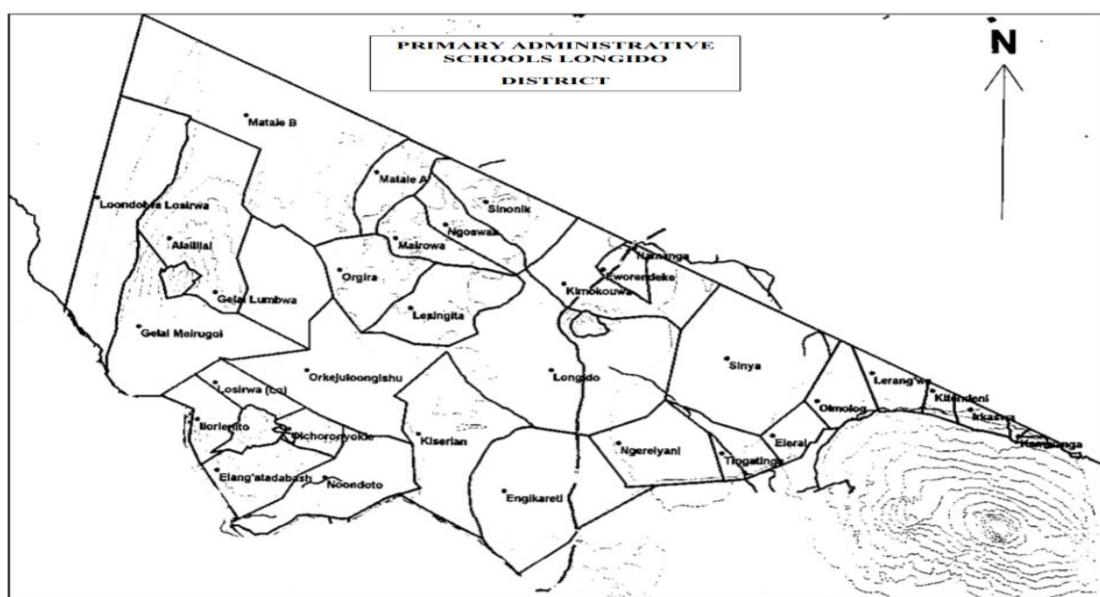
### **3.5 Study Population**

The study population included key stakeholders from public primary schools in Longido District: 20 Standard Seven pupils, 50 Class Seven teachers, 10 headteachers, 10 school committee members, 3 Ward Education Officers (WEOs), 1 District School Quality Assurance Officer (DSQAO), and 1 District Primary Education Officer (DPEO). Standard Seven pupils were the primary focus as they directly reflected the impact of socio-cultural factors on academic performance. Parents were engaged to explore the influence of family background, parental involvement, and attitudes toward education. Teachers participated because of their central role in instruction and their insights into how socio-cultural issues affect pupil outcomes. Headteachers provided perspectives on leadership and school management practices aimed at addressing these challenges. Moreover, WEOs, DSQAO, and DPEO contributed administrative and policy-level insights, offering a holistic view of the factors shaping academic achievement in the district.

### **3.6 The Study Area**

The study took place in Longido District, located in the Arusha Region, which has experienced consistently low academic results in the Standard Seven national examinations for five consecutive years. This persistent underachievement positions Longido as a suitable location for investigating the socio-cultural factors affecting pupils' academic performance. Moreover, the district's prolonged dry seasons,

lasting 10 to 11 months annually, influence the socio-cultural environment, particularly affecting parental decisions on which children to prioritize for education. These distinctive environmental and cultural challenges create a relevant context for examining how such factors interact and impact educational outcomes (Ducatius Foundation, 2014).



**Figure 3.1: A Map Showing Study Area, Longido District Council**

### **3.7 Study Population**

The study population comprised key stakeholders in public primary schools in Longido District who are directly connected to pupils' academic performance. These included Standard Seven pupils, teachers, headteachers, school committee members, Ward Education Officers (WEOs), the District School Quality Assurance Officer (DSQAO), and the District Primary Education Officer (DPEO). Standard Seven pupils were the primary focus, as they directly reflected the influence of socio-cultural factors on learning outcomes. Teachers and headteachers contributed

insights into instructional and management practices, while school committee members represented the community's role in supporting education. Furthermore, WEOs, the DSQAO, and the DPEO provided administrative and policy-level perspectives, ensuring a holistic understanding of socio-cultural factors influencing academic performance in the district. (The specific number of respondents drawn from each group is presented in Section 3.8.1, Table 3.1.)

### **3.8 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

#### **3.8.1 Sample Size**

From the study population, a total of 95 participants were purposively selected to provide relevant information for the study. This sample included Standard Seven pupils, teachers, headteachers, school committee members, Ward Education Officers (WEOs), the District School Quality Assurance Officer (DSQAO), and the District Primary Education Officer (DPEO). The sample size ensured adequate representation of different education stakeholders at both school and administrative levels, thereby enhancing the reliability and comprehensiveness of the data collected.

**Table 3.1: Sample Size**

<b>Category of Respondents</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
Standard Seven Pupils	20
Class Seven Teachers	50
Headteachers	10
School Committee Members	10
Ward Education Officers (WEOs)	3
District School Quality Assurance Officer (DSQAO)	1
District Primary Education Officer (DPEO)	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>

### **3.8.2 Sampling Techniques**

This study employed purposive sampling, a non-random technique used to deliberately select participants who possessed relevant knowledge and experience regarding the influence of socio-cultural factors on pupils' academic performance. The method was appropriate because it ensured the inclusion of key stakeholders' pupils, teachers, headteachers, school committee members, Ward Education Officers (WEOs), the District School Quality Assurance Officer (DSQAO), and the District Primary Education Officer (DPEO) who were directly involved in teaching, school management, community participation, and education administration. By targeting these groups, the study was able to obtain rich and reliable data aligned with its objectives.

### **3.9 Types and Sources of Data**

The research utilized a combination of primary and secondary data sources to provide a comprehensive perspective and enable data triangulation.

#### **3.9.1 Primary Data**

Primary information was gathered firsthand through interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires administered to the selected participants. Secondary Data. Secondary data comprised relevant existing documents and scholarly literature. This encompassed government publications, educational statistics from the Ministry of Education, school performance records, academic articles, books, and policy papers. These materials provided contextual background and reinforced the primary data, contributing to a fuller understanding and interpretation of the study findings.

### **3.10 Data Collection Methods and Instruments**

#### **3.10.1 Questionnaire Guide**

The questionnaires were crafted to enable participants respond independently, offering a consistent and efficient means to gather both qualitative and quantitative information. This approach was chosen due to its cost-effectiveness, time efficiency, and ease of administration (Ebert et al., 2018). To ensure inclusiveness and comprehension, the questionnaires were prepared in Kiswahili for pupils and school committee members. This ensured language differences did not obstruct data gathering, allowing respondents to freely express their views in a familiar language.

#### **3.10.2 Interview Guide**

Structured interviews were employed as one of the primary data collection techniques to capture in-depth insights into socio-cultural factors influencing pupils' academic performance. This method was chosen because it enabled the collection of rich, detailed information based on participants' lived experiences and professional roles in education (Rosenthal, 2016). A combination of structured and semi-structured formats was used, allowing consistency across respondents while offering flexibility to probe deeper into complex issues.

Interviews were conducted with headteachers, teachers, school committee members, Ward Education Officers (WEOs), the District School Quality Assurance Officer (DSQAO), and the District Primary Education Officer (DPEO). These groups were purposively selected because of their leadership, administrative, and instructional responsibilities, which provided diverse perspectives on how socio-cultural factors shape academic outcomes. Oral interviews were also used to accommodate

participants with limited literacy skills, ensuring inclusivity (May, 2023). All responses were carefully coded and thematically analysed to identify recurring patterns and strategies relevant to improving pupils' academic performance.

### **3.10.3 Documentary Review**

This method entailed gathering data from official records such as attendance registers, logbooks, inspection reports, PSLE examination results, and open files. Documentary analysis was preferred for providing verified, historical insights crucial for identifying trends. Utilizing these official documents helped incorporate dependable secondary data, strengthening the validity of the research through triangulation (Creswell, 2014).

### **3.10.4 Observation**

Observations were conducted both during and outside school hours to gather firsthand data related to the study's focus. This method was preferred because it reduces subjective bias and offers real-time, accurate insights into behavior and situational factors (Dávila-Monter et al., 2021). By observing participants in their natural contexts, the researcher could detect nuances and details potentially missed by other data collection tools, thereby enriching the understanding of academic performance influences.

## **3.11 Approaches to Data Analysis**

This section outlines the techniques used for processing and interpreting the collected data. Since the research employed both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, a

mixed-method approach was applied to comprehensively address the objectives related to socio-cultural impacts on PSLE results in Longido District.

### **3.11.1 Analysis of Qualitative Data**

Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2021), this approach is flexible and trustworthy for identifying and interpreting themes within qualitative datasets. The process began with immersion in the data by repeatedly reading transcripts and notes to grasp the depth of responses. Initial coding was then performed to highlight meaningful data segments. These codes were grouped into categories and expanded into overarching themes that captured socio-cultural influences on pupil achievement. Themes were interpreted in connection with the study's objectives and relevant literature, ensuring findings genuinely reflected participants' perspectives and enhanced the study's credibility (Nowell et al., 2017).

### **3.11.2 Quantitative Data Analysis**

Data gathered from structured questionnaires filled out by students, teachers, and education officials were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The data were entered into IBM SPSS (version 28) for sorting and computation. Analyses involved calculating frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to summarize response trends. The results were presented through tables, charts, and graphs to facilitate clarity. This technique was appropriate for simplifying large volumes of data and identifying patterns pertinent to the research questions (Field, 2022). The integration of both qualitative and quantitative analyses supported triangulation, thereby enhancing the study's reliability and comprehensiveness.

### **3.12 Ensuring Validity and Reliability**

#### **3.12.1 Validity**

Validity denotes the degree to which research instruments measure what they are intended to (Mohajan, 2017). In this study, content validity was ensured by designing tools that thoroughly covered the research topic. Experts in education and local stakeholders reviewed these instruments to confirm they appropriately addressed the core themes (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Construct validity was maintained by aligning instruments with the theoretical framework underpinning the study. Face validity was achieved through consultations with teachers and practitioners to ensure that the tools appeared relevant and suitable for participants (Creswell, 2012). A pilot test was conducted with a small sample from the target population to verify that the instruments effectively captured the required data and allowed for refinements before the main study (Orodho, 2012).

#### **3.12.2 Reliability**

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of data collection tools. This study assessed test-retest reliability by administering instruments twice to a small group at different times, checking for consistent results (Creswell, 2014). Inter-rater reliability was assured by training data collectors to use standardized procedures during interviews and questionnaires, with responses cross-checked by a secondary researcher to ensure uniform interpretation and recording (Kothari, 2004). Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha for questionnaire scales, verifying that item measured the same construct (Cohen et al., 2011). These steps

guaranteed dependable findings and a solid foundation for analyzing socio-cultural factors affecting academic performance.

### **3.13 Ethical Considerations**

The research was guided by strict ethical standards to maintain integrity and respect for participants throughout the study.

#### **3.13.1 Informed Consent**

Before participation, all individuals including pupils, teachers, headteachers, and education officials were fully informed about the study's aims, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Participants were made aware of their voluntary involvement and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Information was communicated clearly and accessibly, both verbally and in writing. For minors and those with limited literacy, verbal consent was obtained in the presence of guardians or school representatives to ensure proper understanding.

#### **3.13.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity**

Participants' identities and responses were protected to ensure confidentiality. Personal data were securely stored and not disclosed to unauthorized persons. Pseudonyms were used in reporting to maintain anonymity, and all identifiable information was excluded from publications (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012).

#### **3.13.3 Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw**

Participation was entirely voluntary, with no coercion involved. Individuals were informed of their right to discontinue involvement at any point without

repercussions. This principle was emphasized prior to data collection to uphold participant autonomy (Bryman, 2016).

#### **3.13.4 Minimizing Harm**

The researcher took proactive measures to avoid any physical, emotional, or psychological harm. Sensitive topics were handled carefully to prevent discomfort. When participants exhibited distress, appropriate support or referrals were provided. Respect for cultural values was maintained to avoid offense or misunderstanding (Babbie, 2010).

#### **3.13.5 Data Integrity and Reporting**

Data collection, analysis, and reporting adhered to honesty and transparency, ensuring accuracy and avoiding manipulation. Findings were presented objectively, reflecting participants' true views. Proper citations were used to maintain academic integrity, and no fabrication or distortion occurred (Creswell, 2014).

#### **3.13.6 Cultural Sensitivity**

The study was conducted with deep respect for the cultural diversity of participants. All interactions and instruments were designed to be culturally appropriate, honour local beliefs and customs. This ensured participants felt respected and valued throughout the research process (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the analysis and interpretation of data collected from the field concerning the research problem. The chapter systematically examines the data in alignment with the study's specific objectives, followed by an in-depth discussion linking the results to relevant literature and the wider socio-cultural environment. Participant viewpoints are prominently featured, with direct quotes included to enhance the credibility and clarity of the findings. The overall goal is to offer a thorough insight into how entrenched cultural norms and community customs influence pupils' academic performance within the district's public primary schools.

#### **4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

**Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Teachers (N = 50)**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	30	60%
	Female	20	40%
<b>Age</b>	21–30 years	10	20%
	31–40 years	20	40%
	41–50 years	15	30%
	51 years and above	5	10%
<b>Education Level</b>	Diploma	35	70%
	Bachelor's Degree	12	24%
	Master's Degree	3	6%
<b>Years of Experience</b>	1–5 years	12	24%
	6–10 years	18	36%
	11 years and above	20	40%

#### **4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

This part presents the demographic details of the 50 teachers involved in the study. Knowing their background helps to frame their views on the topic at hand. The

demographic variables considered include gender, age, education level, and teaching experience.

#### **4.3.1 Gender Distribution of Respondents**

As shown in Table 4.1, among the 50 teachers, 30 (60%) were male and 20 (40%) females. This reveals a gender disparity among staff in the sampled primary schools, with males constituting the majority. Such a pattern may result from cultural or logistical barriers that make it harder to recruit and retain female teachers in rural settings. This finding is consistent with Mkumbo (2012), who noted that rural areas in Tanzania typically have fewer female teachers due to cultural expectations, inadequate housing security, and limited social amenities that disproportionately impact women.

#### **4.3.2 Age Distribution of Respondents**

Respondents' ages varied from 13 years to over 50 years. The largest group, 40%, fell within the 31–40 age bracket, followed by 30% aged 41–50, 20% aged 21–30, and only 10% above 50 years old. This spread suggests a workforce dominated by mid-career and seasoned teachers, indicating considerable experience within the teaching body. This supports Sumra and Katabaro's (2014) assertion that experienced educators tend to provide richer insights into enduring socio-cultural educational challenges.

#### **4.3.3 Educational Qualifications of Respondents**

According to Table 4.1, 70% of the teachers held diplomas in education, 24% possessed bachelor's degrees, and 6% had master's degrees. This pattern reflects

national norms for teacher qualifications in Tanzanian public primary schools, where diploma training is the typical entry standard. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2019) highlights that although diploma qualifications are adequate for primary teaching, ongoing professional development is essential to elevate teaching quality and enhance engagement with the curriculum.

#### **4.3.4 Teaching Experience**

Results showed that 24% of respondents had between 1 and 5 years of teaching experience, 36% had 6 to 10 years, and the remaining 40% had over 10 years in the profession. This suggests that many teachers possess significant experience, likely improving their ability to manage and address socio-cultural challenges impacting pupils' academic success. Babyegeya (2002) supports this view, emphasizing that veteran educators are generally better prepared to understand and respond to the complex relationships among schools, communities, and student learning, particularly in settings shaped by entrenched cultural traditions.

#### **4.3.5 The Socio-Cultural Based Factors that Influence Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools**

**Table 4.2: Teachers Views on Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools (N = 50)**

Socio-Cultural Factor	Strongly Agree (n %)	Agree (n %)	Neutral (n %)	Disagree (n %)	Strongly Disagree (n %)
1. Early marriage limits pupils' academic opportunities	24 (48)	13 (26)	6 (12)	4 (8)	3 (6)
2. Traditional gender roles negatively affect girls' school performance	22 (44)	14 (28)	6 (12)	5 (10)	3 (6)
3. Parental preference for boys' education affects girls' academic participation	21 (42)	12 (24)	8 (16)	5 (10)	4 (8)
4. Community expectations for children to contribute to labour interfere with schooling	20 (40)	15 (30)	7 (14)	5 (10)	3 (6)
5. Cultural ceremonies and festivals interrupt pupils' learning consistency	18 (36)	13 (26)	9 (18)	6 (12)	4 (8)

#### **4.3.5.1 Teachers Views on Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools**

##### **4.3.5.1.1. Early Marriage Limits Pupils' Academic Opportunities**

The data in Table 4.2 shows that 24 teachers (48%) strongly agreed and 13 (26%) agreed that early marriage limits pupils' academic opportunities. A total of 6 teachers (12%) were neutral, while 4 (8%) disagreed and 3 (6%) strongly disagreed. Overall, 74% of teachers acknowledged early marriage as a major impediment to pupils' continued education.

##### **4.3.3.5.2 Traditional Gender Roles Negatively Affect Girls' School Performance**

The data in Table 4.2 indicates that 22 teachers (44%) strongly agreed and 14 (28%) agreed that traditional gender roles negatively affect girls' school performance. Six teachers (12%) remained neutral, whereas 5 (10%) disagreed and 3 (6%) strongly

disagreed. Thus, 72% of the respondents believe gender roles limit girls' academic success.

#### **4.3.3.5.3. Parental Preference for Boys' Education Affects Girls' Academic Participation**

The data in Table 4.2 reveals that 21 teachers (42%) strongly agreed and 12 (24%) agreed that parental preference for boys' education undermines girls' participation in academics. Eight teachers (16%) were neutral, while 5 (10%) disagreed and 4 (8%) strongly disagreed. Therefore, 66% of teachers perceived this cultural bias as a barrier.

#### **4.3.3.5.4. Community Expectations for Children to Contribute to Labor Interfere with Schooling**

The data in Table 4.2 shows that 20 teachers (40%) strongly agreed and 15 (30%) agreed that labor demands from the community interfere with pupils' schooling. Seven teachers (14%) held a neutral position, while 5 (10%) disagreed and 3 (6%) strongly disagreed. Overall, 70% acknowledged child labor as a challenge to academic attendance and focus.

#### **4.3.3.5.5. Cultural Ceremonies and Festivals Interrupt Pupils' Learning Consistency**

The data in Table 4.2 demonstrates that 18 teachers (36%) strongly agreed and 13 (26%) agreed that traditional ceremonies and festivals disrupt the learning calendar. Nine respondents (18%) were neutral, 6 (12%) disagreed, and 4 (8%) strongly

disagreed. This indicates that 62% of respondents believed that these cultural practices hinder learning regularity.

**Table 2.3: Pupils' Views on Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Academic Performance (N = 20)**

Socio-Cultural Factor Influencing Performance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Early marriage interrupts education	10	50
Traditional ceremonies cause absenteeism	5	25
Gender roles limit study time (e.g., house chores for girls)	3	15
Parental preference for boys' education over girls	2	10

The data presented in Table 4.3 reflects pupils' views regarding the socio-cultural factors influencing academic achievement in public primary schools. Half of the pupils (50%) pointed to early marriage as the primary issue that disrupts their education. Another 25% attributed school absenteeism to participation in traditional ceremonies. Meanwhile, 15% of respondents cited that gender-specific responsibilities, particularly domestic chores assigned to girls, reduce their study time. Lastly, 10% expressed concern that parental favouritisms toward boys' education limits learning opportunities for girls. These responses illustrate that pupils have a clear understanding of the cultural challenges that impede their academic progress, with early marriage standing out as the most pressing issue in their experience.

Insights gathered during interviews conducted in April 2025 with Head Teachers, School Committee Members, Ward Education Officers (WEOs), the District School Quality Assurance Officer (DSQAO), and the District Primary Education Officer (DPEO) further confirmed that various socio-cultural elements significantly impact on pupils' academic outcomes in Longido District.

During interview with Head Teachers, when asked about major socio-cultural barriers affecting pupil performance, many highlighted early marriages and teenage pregnancies, especially among girls, as persistent challenges that contribute to school dropout and poor academic results.

*“Early pregnancies pull many girls out of school permanently. Families in some areas still prioritize marriage over education once girls reach puberty.” (Interview with Head Teacher A, April 2025)*

Head Teacher B emphasized the long-term impact of teenage pregnancies on academic performance, noting that affected girls often do not resume their education, which disrupts both their personal learning and overall school outcomes.

*“Pregnant girls often do not return after delivery. This disrupts their education and affects the overall school performance.” (Interview with Head Teacher B, April 2025)*

Several Head Teachers also pointed out the burden of domestic duties and animal keeping, which reduce study time and attendance for both boys and girls.

*“Girls spend hours doing house chores before and after school, leaving little time for homework. Boys are expected to look after livestock, often missing classes.” (Interview with Head Teacher C, April 2025)*

Furthermore, Head Teacher D highlighted how the lack of boarding facilities forces pupils to travel long distances and manage household or pastoral duties, which negatively affects their concentration and academic performance.

*“Without dormitories, children have to travel long distances and handle responsibilities that affect their academic focus.” (Interview with Head Teacher D, April 2025)*

During interview with School Committee Members, the recurring theme was the cultural expectations tied to gender roles that limit educational engagement.

*“The community believes boys should herd cattle while girls take care of the home. This tradition makes it difficult for children to attend school regularly or concentrate fully.”* (Interview with School Committee Member 1, April 2025)

Additionally, School Committee Members 2 stated that,

*“Some parents withdraw their children during busy seasons of livestock movement, affecting academic continuity.”* (Interview with School Committee Member 2, April 2025)

They also raised concerns about low parental awareness on the value of education, which influences their decisions to prioritize cultural practices over schooling.

*“Many parents don’t understand that education can bring long-term benefits; they focus more on immediate cultural roles for their children.”* (Interview with School Committee Member 3, April 2025)

During interview with Ward Education Officers (WEOs), socio-cultural challenges such as early marriages and pastoralist migration were repeatedly identified as barriers to academic progress.

*“Children from pastoralist families move with livestock, missing critical learning periods, which leads to repetition or dropout.”* (Interview with WEO A, April 2025)

Ward Education Officer B emphasized the challenge of changing entrenched cultural practices, noting that despite continuous parental education, early marriage remains prevalent without stronger legal enforcement.

*“We constantly educate parents, but deeply rooted cultural practices like early marriage remain difficult to change without stronger legal enforcement.”* (Interview with WEO B, April 2025)

WEOS also highlighted the lack of school infrastructure like dormitories as a key factor exacerbating socio-cultural impacts.

*“If schools had boarding facilities, pupils could avoid long walks and home distractions, improving attendance and performance.” (Interview with WEO C, April 2025)*

During interview with the District School Quality Assurance Officer (DSQAO), it was emphasized that cultural practices such as early marriage, gender biases, and seasonal migrations disrupt consistent school attendance and academic monitoring.

*“Regular monitoring is vital because many socio-cultural issues arise unnoticed and affect pupils’ learning negatively.” (Interview with DSQAO, April 2025)*

The DSQAO also pointed out challenges in enforcing school attendance policies due to community resistance.

*“Communities sometimes reject external interventions, seeing them as threats to their traditions.” (Interview with DSQAO, April 2025)*

During interview with the District Primary Education Officer (DPEO), the need for stronger legislative frameworks to protect children’s right to education was stressed.

*“We must implement stricter laws against early marriages and child labour, which are deeply embedded cultural practices.” (Interview with DPEO, April 2025)*

*“Legal frameworks will help shift cultural attitudes that currently hinder children’s educational access and performance.” (Interview with DPEO, 2025)*

The DPEO further noted that educational campaigns targeting community leaders and parents are crucial to changing socio-cultural perceptions.

*“Engagement with elders and influential community members is key to gradually transforming harmful cultural norms.” (Interview with DPEO, April 2025)*

This in-depth analysis incorporates comprehensive, nuanced perspectives from all relevant stakeholders, illustrating how cultural practices such as early marriages, household responsibilities, pastoral livelihoods, entrenched gender expectations,

limited infrastructure, and weak enforcement of protective policies interact to influence academic performance among pupils in Longido District.

Document analysis included a thorough review of materials such as class attendance logs, disciplinary records, school committee meeting notes, and education reports from the district. One recurring pattern identified was a noticeable decline in school attendance, particularly among female pupils, during certain months. These periods aligned with the scheduling of traditional events like female initiation rites, which are still commonly observed in parts of Longido. Such practices, typically spanning several weeks, disrupt regular learning and often hinder girls' academic progress.

Another significant pattern emerged regarding the frequent absence or withdrawal of boys to assist with herding livestock a vital aspect of family livelihood in pastoralist communities. Records showed that these interruptions were especially common during dry seasons, when families relocated with their animals. The cultural valuation of cattle as symbols of wealth and social status justified this practice despite its educational consequences.

Additional findings from school documents and district-level reports revealed that early marriages, particularly involving adolescent girls, continued to contribute to dropout rates. School committee meeting records documented repeated instances of girls leaving school to marry, with limited or no intervention by local officials. This reflects ongoing gender-based cultural norms and inadequate community mechanisms for safeguarding girls' right to education.

Low parental involvement was another socio-cultural barrier evident in the data. Minutes from school governance meetings often recorded poor turnout by parents at

academic events, such as performance discussions or parent-teacher meetings. This suggested a prevalent mindset in which education is perceived solely as a teacher's responsibility, downplaying the vital role of parental engagement in supporting student learning.

Observations carried out in various primary schools reinforced these documentary insights. In classroom interactions, male students were generally more vocal and actively participated while many female students were quiet and reluctant to engage. Teachers, possibly influenced by broader cultural assumptions, unintentionally gave more attention and encouragement to boys, thereby perpetuating existing gender dynamics.

Outside academic settings, community engagement in school-related matters appeared minimal. School notice boards often lacked current updates, and signs of active parental involvement in daily school functions were scarce. Furthermore, infrastructure often reflected gender disparities for instance, girls' sanitation facilities were less maintained compared to those for boys. Both male and female students were commonly observed arriving late or leaving school early due to domestic chores or livestock-related duties, illustrating how traditional responsibilities compete with educational commitments.

#### **4.3.6 To Determine How Socio-Cultural Practices Affect Pupils' Academic Performance In Longido District.**

**Table 4.4: findings from Teachers on Impact of Socio-Cultural Practices on Pupils' Academic Performance (N = 50)**

Impact Statement	Strongly Agree (n %)	Agree (n %)	Neutral (n %)	Disagree (n %)	Strongly Disagree (n %)
1. Early marriages lead to school dropout among girls	25 (50)	15 (30)	5 (10)	3 (6)	2 (4)
2. Cultural events (e.g., initiation, festivals) reduce study time	20 (40)	14 (28)	8 (16)	5 (10)	3 (6)
3. Gendered domestic roles reduce time for homework, especially for girls	22 (44)	13 (26)	7 (14)	5 (10)	3 (6)
4. Community perception that education is less important than pastoral work	18 (36)	12 (24)	9 (18)	7 (14)	4 (8)
5. Pupils' absenteeism increases during cultural/traditional ceremonies	21 (42)	13 (26)	6 (12)	6 (12)	4 (8)

#### **4.3.7 Teachers on Socio-Cultural Practices Affect Pupils' Academic Performance**

##### **4.3.7.1 Community Sensitization on the Value of Education**

The data in Table 4.4 shows that the majority of respondents, 30 teachers (60%), strongly agreed and 14 (28%) agreed that community sensitization is a vital strategy to address socio-cultural barriers to education. This gives a strong 88% agreement, indicating that most teachers view community awareness as a crucial step toward changing harmful traditions and beliefs that undermine learning. Only 6% were neutral, 4% disagreed, and 2% strongly disagreed, reflecting minimal opposition.

##### **4.3.7.2 Engagement of local leaders to discourage early marriage**

According to the data in Table 4.4, 28 respondents (56%) strongly agreed and 15 (30%) agreed that involving local leaders in discouraging early marriage can help improve education performance. This yields an 86% agreement, showing high

endorsement from teachers. Only 8% were neutral, 4% disagreed, and 2% strongly disagreed, indicating limited disagreement and highlighting the potential for community leadership in influencing cultural practices.

#### **4.3.7.3 School-Based Programs to Promote Gender Equality**

The data in Table 4.4 reveals that 26 teachers (52%) strongly agreed and 13 (26%) agreed that gender equality programs in schools are necessary. This 78% overall agreement underscores the importance of equipping pupils with knowledge and values that challenge traditional gender roles. Meanwhile, 12% remained neutral, 6% disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed, showing some hesitation among a small number of teachers.

#### **4.3.7.4 Strengthening Policies that Penalize Child Labor and Absenteeism**

As per the data in Table 4.4, 24 teachers (48%) strongly agreed and 15 (30%) agreed that stronger policy enforcement against child labor and absenteeism is crucial. This 78% agreement suggests that legal and institutional frameworks are viewed as important in addressing socio-cultural barriers. However, 10% were neutral, while 8% and 4% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, indicating a small segment of uncertainty or differing opinions.

#### **4.3.7.5 Involvement of Parents in School Planning and Follow-Up**

The data in Table 4.4 shows that 27 teachers (54%) strongly agreed and 14 (28%) agreed that parental involvement in school affairs is essential to improving academic performance. With an 82% agreement level, this highlights teachers' strong belief in collaborative efforts between schools and homes. Only 8% were neutral, 6%

disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed, pointing to generally high support for this strategy.

#### **4.3.8 To Determine How Socio-Cultural Practices Affect Pupils' Academic Performance**

**Table 4.5: Pupils' Views on How Socio-Cultural Practices Affect their Academic Performance (N = 20)**

<b>Academic Impact of Socio-Cultural Practice</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Causes school dropout	9	45
Affects academic performance due to stress or distraction	6	30
Leads to low concentration and fatigue	3	15
Reduces time for homework and revision	2	10

##### **4.3.8.1 Pupils' Views on How Socio-Cultural Practices Affect Their Academic Performance**

###### **4.3.8.1.1 Causes School Dropout**

According to the data in Table 4.5, 9 out of 20 pupils (45%) indicated that socio-cultural practices cause school dropout. This high proportion demonstrates that pupils are aware of how issues like early marriage, domestic labor, and negative community attitudes directly interrupt educational continuity, particularly for girls. It reflects a significant threat to pupils' long-term academic progression.

###### **4.3.8.1.2 Affects Academic Performance Due to Stress or Distraction**

Table 4.5 shows that 6 pupils (30%) reported that socio-cultural pressures cause stress or distraction, affecting their academic performance. This response illustrates the emotional and psychological toll that cultural practices can impose, such as

expectations to perform household tasks or attend traditional ceremonies, which reduce students' focus and mental preparedness for learning.

#### **4.3.8.1.3 Leads to Low Concentration and Fatigue**

As indicated in Table 4.5, 3 pupils (15%) cited low concentration and fatigue as effects of socio-cultural practices. This may stem from waking early for chores, walking long distances to attend ceremonies, or participating in night events, which leave students physically exhausted during school hours, reducing their cognitive engagement in class.

#### **4.3.8.4 Reduces Time for Homework and Revision**

Lastly, 2 pupils (10%) indicated that cultural norms reduce the time available for completing homework and reviewing lessons. This underscores how post-school duties and social obligations curtail learners' opportunities for academic involvement, which gradually contributes to lower performance.

Data collected through interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis revealed that numerous cultural practices prevalent in Longido District negatively affect pupils' educational outcomes. Key issues include early marriage, teenage pregnancy, participation in livestock care, and heavy domestic workloads. These factors contribute to frequent absenteeism, lack of classroom concentration, and increased school dropout rates most notably among girls.

Headteachers frequently highlighted that female pupils are disproportionately affected by early marriage and pregnancy, leading to disruptions in their education and, in many cases, permanent withdrawal from school. Conversely, male pupils are

often required to tend to cattle, which interferes with both their attendance and academic focus. As one headteacher stated:

*“The battle against early pregnancies, especially for girls, heavy domestic duties to pupils, and animal keeping will not end if our schools do not construct dormitories for our pupils.”*  
 (Headteacher, School F, 28/03/2025)

Ward Education Officers also emphasized the need for dormitories as a strategy to protect children particularly girls from negative cultural influences at home and in the community. They further recommended regular parental sensitization programs to help shift community attitudes towards the value of education:

*“Educating parents about the value of education is critical. When parents are aware, they reduce the responsibilities they impose on their children and support them better in school.”*  
 (WEO, Ward A, 17/04/2025)

The District School Quality Assurance Officer (DSQAO) noted that early identification and monitoring of at-risk pupils could mitigate the negative effects of these practices:

*“Monitoring pupils consistently helps in identifying socio-cultural risks early, enabling timely interventions by schools and community leaders.”* (DSQAO, 21/04/2025)

The District Primary Education Officer (DPEO) strongly advocated for government enforcement of child protection laws to combat early marriages and ensure that pupils, particularly girls, remain in school:

*“We need strict enforcement of laws against early marriages and harmful traditional practices. Without this, many children especially girls will continue dropping out.”* (DPEO, 21/04/2025)

Parental voices also echoed similar concerns. One parent stated:

*“The battle against early pregnancies, household duties, and animal keeping for pupils will never be resolved unless our schools build dormitories.” (Parent, Ward B, 12/04/2025)*

Additionally, questionnaire responses showed that 100% of headteachers, 80% of teachers, 90% of pupils, and 50% of parents agree that educating parents on the importance of schooling is crucial to improve academic performance. Respondents also recommended establishing permanent settlement areas for pastoralists to allow for more stable school attendance:

*“If livestock keepers settle permanently, schools can plan better, and pupils will attend classes consistently without interruption.” (Headteacher, School E, 29/03/2025)*

Teachers and education officers alike stressed the need for collective efforts between schools, the community, and the government to address these challenges through legal action, infrastructure improvement, and community outreach:

*“We must work together; parents, schools, and the government to eliminate practices like early marriage and overburdening pupils with chores, so they can stay in school and succeed.” (Teacher, School G, 28/03/2025)*

### 4.3.9 The Strategies Implemented to Address Socio-Cultural Factors That Deter Performance in Public Primary Schools

**Table 4.6: Teachers suggested Strategies to Address Socio-Cultural Factors Hindering Academic Performance (N = 50)**

Proposed Strategy	Strongly Agree (n%)	Agree (n%)	Neutral (n%)	Disagree	Strongly Disagree (n%)
1. Community sensitization on the value of education	30 (60)	14 (28)	3 (6)	2 (4)	1 (2)
2. Engagement of local leaders to discourage early marriage	28 (56)	15 (30)	4 (8)	2 (4)	1 (2)
3. School-based programs to promote gender equality	26 (52)	13 (26)	6 (12)	3 (6)	2 (4)
4. Strengthening policies that penalize child labor and absenteeism	24 (48)	15 (30)	5 (10)	4 (8)	2 (4)
5. Involvement of parents in school planning and follow-up	27 (54)	14 (28)	4 (8)	3 (6)	2 (4)

#### 4.3.9.1 Teachers Suggested Strategies to Address Socio-Cultural Factors Hindering Academic Performance

##### 4.3.9.1.1 Community Sensitization on the Value of Education

These results align with the study objective of identifying strategies to address socio-cultural factors hindering pupils' academic performance. Teachers emphasized that community sensitization can help shift negative attitudes toward education and counter practices such as early marriages, excessive involvement in domestic chores, and preference for livestock keeping over schooling. Therefore, strengthening sensitization programs could play a key role in improving pupils' school attendance and academic achievement in Longido District.

#### **4.3.9.1.2 Engagement of Local Leaders to Discourage Early Marriage**

According to the data in Table 4.5, 28 teachers (56%) strongly agreed and 15 (30%) agreed with involving local leaders to combat early marriage. This totals 86% positive responses, indicating significant support for utilizing influential community figures to effect behavioral change. This strategy is widely seen as culturally appropriate and effective due to leaders' authoritative roles in enforcing and guiding traditional norms.

#### **4.3.9.1.3 School-Based Programs to Promote Gender Equality**

The data in Table 4.5 indicates that 26 teachers (52%) strongly agreed and 13 (26%) agreed on the effectiveness of school programs in promoting gender equality. This accounts for 78% of respondents supporting this strategy, showing that teachers recognize the importance of addressing gender bias within the school system. A smaller proportion were neutral (12%) or disagreed (10%), suggesting minimal resistance to such initiatives.

#### **4.3.9.1.4 Strengthening Policies that Penalize Child Labor and Absenteeism**

As presented in Table 4.5, 24 teachers (48%) strongly agreed and 15 (30%) agreed with enforcing laws and school policies that punish absenteeism and child labor. With 78% of respondents favoring this approach, it is clear that legal reinforcement is perceived as necessary to ensure consistent school attendance. However, 10% remained neutral, and 12% expressed disagreement, possibly reflecting concerns about implementation or fairness.

#### **4.3.9.1.5. Involvement of Parents in School Planning and Follow-Up**

The data in Table 4.5 reveals that 27 teachers (54%) strongly agreed and 14 (28%) agreed on the importance of involving parents in educational planning and follow-up, amounting to 82% support. Teachers acknowledge that family engagement enhances children's motivation and reduces dropouts. Only 8% were neutral and 10% disagreed, indicating a strong overall agreement on the value of parental participation in addressing socio-cultural barriers.

**Table 4.7: Pupils' Suggestions on Strategies to Address Socio-Cultural Barriers (N = 20)**

<b>Suggested Strategy</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Educate parents and community on the value of education	8	40%
Reduce household chores during school days	5	25%
Enforce laws against early marriage	4	20%
Provide role models and school clubs for motivation	3	15%

#### **4.3.9.2 Pupils' Suggestions on Strategies to Address Socio-Cultural Barriers**

##### **4.3.9.2.1 Educate parents and community on the value of education**

The data in Table 4.6 indicates that 8 out of 20 pupils (40%) suggested that educating parents and community members on the importance of education is a key strategy to overcome socio-cultural barriers. This reflects pupils' awareness that misconceptions and traditional beliefs held by adults can greatly impact on their ability to stay in school and perform well. It shows that pupils value informed communities that support education for both boys and girls equally.

#### **4.3.9.2.2 Reduce Household Chores During School Days**

According to the data in Table 4.6, 5 pupils (25%) suggested reducing household chores during school days. This response highlights the burden of domestic responsibilities, particularly for girls, which interferes with study time and school attendance. Pupils recognize that balancing household duties with academic expectations is challenging and hinders their educational progress.

#### **4.3.9.2.3 Enforce Laws Against Early Marriage**

From Table 4.6, 4 pupils (20%) recommended stronger enforcement of laws that prohibit early marriage. This suggests that pupils are aware of the legal framework surrounding child protection and understand how early marriage disrupts educational trajectories especially for girls. Their suggestion emphasizes a call for action from authorities and community leaders to protect their right to education.

#### **4.3.9.2.4 Provide Role Models and School Clubs for Motivation**

Table 4.6 shows that 3 pupils (15%) proposed the introduction of role models and school clubs as a strategy for motivation. This reflects pupils' desire for positive influences and supportive social environments within schools. Such structures can boost self-esteem especially for marginalized students, and encourage persistence in schooling despite the socio-cultural challenges. During interviews conducted in April 2025 with 5 Head Teachers, 3 School Committee Members, 2 Ward Education Officers (WEOs), 1 District School Quality Assurance Officer (DSQAO), and 1 District Primary Education Officer (DPEO), several key themes emerged regarding socio-cultural factors influencing academic performance and proposed strategies to address them.

#### **4.3.9.2.5 Community Engagement and Awareness**

Data from the interviews revealed a strong consensus on the need for enhanced community engagement and awareness-raising campaigns. When asked about how to mitigate socio-cultural barriers, headteachers emphasized the importance of educating parents about the value of education for all children, regardless of gender.

For instance, one headteacher expressed:

*"We need to work closely with the community and educate parents on the importance of educating all children, not just focusing on boys or some children over others." (Interview with Headteacher A, School A, 10/04/2025)*

This sentiment was echoed across multiple interviewees who highlighted that sustained community involvement is essential to addressing deeply ingrained cultural practices that hinder school attendance and performance.

#### **4.3.9.2.6 School Policies and Discipline**

The interviewees also discussed the necessity of reinforcing school policies to combat absenteeism and early marriages, which were identified as key socio-cultural barriers. A notable statement from a headteacher illustrated this:

*"When students are absent or involved in early marriages, we must consistently impose discipline and follow up with families." (Interview with Headteacher D, School D, 04/04/2025)*

This finding complements the quantitative data showing that a majority of headteachers (65%) and teachers (60%) support stricter enforcement of school attendance rules and discipline to improve academic performance.

#### **4.3.9.2.7 Counselling Services**

The interview data further highlighted the importance of accessible counselling services for students and parents. Counsellors were seen as vital agents in educating families about the negative impacts of socio-cultural barriers such as early marriage and gender inequality. One parent articulated this need clearly:

*"Counselling could help parents understand that investing in their children's education benefits the entire community."*  
*(Interview with Parent J, Ward B, 28/03/2025)*

This underscores the potential of counselling programs to empower families to make informed decisions that support their children's academic success.

#### **4.3.9.2.8 Government Intervention and Policy Enforcement**

Finally, the interviews pointed to a critical role for government action in enforcing laws that safeguard educational rights, particularly for girls. Teachers and headteachers strongly advocated for government policies that prohibit early marriage and ensure equal access to education. One teacher remarked:

*"The government should enforce laws that protect girls from early marriage and ensure their access to education until completion."* *(Interview with Teacher G, School G, 04/04/2025)*

This aligns with a broader call for systemic support beyond schools and communities to dismantle socio-cultural barriers to education.

### **4.4 Discussion Of Findings**

This section presents a detailed discussion of the key findings obtained from the study, focusing on how they relate to the study's objectives and the existing body of literature. The aim is to interpret the results in the context of socio-cultural factors influencing academic performance in public primary schools in Longido District. By

examining both qualitative and quantitative data, this discussion provides deeper insight into the perceptions of teachers and pupils, the prevailing cultural practices, and the strategies necessary to mitigate their negative impacts on education. The findings are compared with related studies and theoretical frameworks to highlight consistencies, discrepancies, and implications for policy and practice.

#### **4.4.1 The Socio-Cultural Based Factors Influencing Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools**

The results displayed in Table 4.2 indicate that a significant proportion of teachers (74%) acknowledged early marriage as a major barrier to academic progress among pupils. This finding suggests that child marriage is a widespread socio-cultural issue impeding educational advancement in Longido District. Teachers reported that once girls marry, they are often compelled to leave school, diminishing their chances of becoming independent contributors within their communities. This aligns with studies by UNICEF (2016) and Save the Children (2014), which emphasize that child marriage frequently ends a girl's education and entrenches poverty cycles. Therefore, it is critical to launch community sensitization efforts and strictly implement child protection laws to combat early marriages and protect girls' right to education.

Furthermore, 72% of teachers in Table 4.2 agreed or strongly agreed that traditional gender roles hinder girls' academic performance. This reflects the reality that girls often bear a disproportionate burden of household responsibilities, reducing their time for study and class participation. This view supports findings from UNESCO (2015) and Mbilinyi (2003), which found that domestic duties restrict girls' educational progress. Addressing this issue calls for community-focused education

on equitable gender roles and the integration of gender-awareness programs in schools to encourage equal participation from both sexes.

According to Table 4.2, 66% of teachers noted that parental favouritism towards boys' education continues to undermine girls' learning opportunities. This finding highlights ongoing gender disparities in educational support at home where boys are often perceived as more deserving educational investment. This observation concurs with FAWE (2005) and Sommer (2010), who identified cultural preferences as key drivers of unequal educational access. To mitigate this, efforts such as awareness programs, mentorship initiatives, and financial support schemes should be implemented to promote education for girls.

Additionally, the data reveals that 70% of respondents acknowledged that community expectations for children to contribute to the labourforce affect school attendance. In rural communities, it is common for children to be involved in herding, farming, or domestic tasks, reducing the time and energy available for learning. This finding is consistent with reports by ILO (2013) and Lynd (2007), which link child labor with diminished school performance and increased dropout rates. As a remedy, enforcing child labor regulations and introducing support programs like conditional cash transfers can reduce families' reliance on child labor and keep children in school.

Moreover, 62% of the surveyed teachers agreed that traditional events and festivals interfere with regular school attendance. These cultural activities often coincide with school terms and result in prolonged absenteeism. This supports the conclusions of Babyegeya (2002) and Nyerere (2004), who noted that in many Tanzanian

communities, cultural ceremonies often take precedence over formal education. A collaborative effort between schools and community leaders to align academic calendars with local customs, alongside supplementary learning sessions, may help address these disruptions.

Turning to pupils' views in Table 4.3, 50% identified early marriage as the most significant cultural barrier to academic achievement. This confirms the ongoing influence of this practice on school dropout rates among girls, in line with UNICEF (2016), which documented that early marriages in Sub-Saharan Africa often terminate educational opportunities for young girls. Stronger enforcement of legal frameworks and targeted awareness campaigns are essential in delaying marriage age and protecting girls' educational rights.

A further 25% of pupils highlighted cultural rituals as a reason for missing school, reinforcing previous findings by Mushi (2009) that such practices frequently cause absenteeism among students in rural Tanzania. Aligning school timetables with major traditional events could help limit the loss of instructional time.

Another 15% of pupils mentioned that household gender roles, especially assigning chores to girls, limit their academic productivity. This supports the findings by FAWE (2012), which linked domestic workloads with disparities in academic achievement between boys and girls. Promoting shared responsibilities at home and raising awareness on the importance of education for all children is key.

Lastly, 10% of students noted that their families prioritized boys' education. This reflects the findings by Mgalla and Koda (2010), who found that cultural biases often lead to boys receiving more educational support than girls. Targeted campaigns

promoting equal educational rights for boys and girls could challenge these outdated beliefs.

Interviews with school stakeholders including headteachers, school committee members, WEOs, DSQAO, and the DPEO reinforced the significance of socio-cultural factors in influencing educational outcomes. Early marriage and adolescent pregnancies were repeatedly cited as major reasons for school dropout among girls. Community norms that associate womanhood with marriage or motherhood were reported to contribute to these outcomes.

The unequal distribution of labor between boys and girls also emerged as a key challenge. While girls were burdened with household chores, boys were more likely to assist with livestock herding. Both responsibilities were found to negatively impact on attendance and academic engagement.

The DPEO emphasized that in many rural and pastoralist communities, education is not given high priority, especially for girls. Girls are often seen primarily as future wives, limiting their educational aspirations. Additionally, the DSQAO highlighted how seasonal migration among pastoralist families disrupts school continuity, particularly for boys.

These insights respond directly to Objective 4.6.1, which aimed to explore the socio-cultural influences on academic performance in Longido District. The findings clearly show that traditional customs, gender-specific responsibilities, and livelihood roles significantly impact educational outcomes.

These results are consistent with existing studies. For instance, Malekela (2012) identified cultural traditions as barriers to girls' education in rural Tanzania, while

Haki Elimu (2010) emphasized that early marriage and child labor remain major contributors to school dropout. UNESCO (2019) called for inclusive policies and grassroots initiatives to dismantle cultural obstacles in education.

To address these issues, participants recommended strengthening collaborations between education officials and community leaders. Suggested solutions including launching public awareness campaigns, introducing boarding schools to limit domestic interference, and enforcing policies against early marriage and pregnancy.

Findings from documentary reviews and field observations also confirm that cultural customs disrupt schooling. In particular, traditional female initiation ceremonies were shown to interfere with girls' education, while boys' roles in pastoralist economies reduced their school attendance and academic consistency. The seasonal migration of families in search of grazing land further complicates pupils' ability to maintain regular schooling.

Early marriage practices largely driven by traditional values continue to draw girls out of the education system, with school records showing few follow-ups or interventions. This points to weak enforcement of legal protections and a lack of local support for girls' right to education.

Parental disengagement from school activities was another key issue noted during school visits. Many parents were absent during meetings and school functions, signaling a detachment between home and school life. This lack of collaboration limits progress tracking and weakens the shared responsibility for education.

Gender dynamics within classrooms showed teachers giving more attention to boys, while girls were often less participatory. In addition, facilities for girls such as toilets

were found to be in poor condition compared to those for boys, reinforcing inequalities and discouraging school attendance for female pupils.

Therefore, the cultural environment in Longido District presents serious challenges to academic achievement. Overcoming these barriers will require a multi-pronged approach, including gender-sensitive teacher training, strict policy enforcement, better parental engagement, and widespread community education. Integrating cultural awareness into education policy will be essential for creating sustainable improvements in academic performance.

#### **4.4.2 The Cultural Practices Affecting Pupils' Academic Performance**

Table 4.4 demonstrates that the vast majority of teachers (88%) recognize the value of community sensitization programs in promoting education. This high level of agreement suggests that educators view public awareness initiatives as an effective means of reshaping longstanding beliefs that obstruct school participation such as prioritizing early marriage or livestock rearing over formal learning. This aligns with the findings of Mligo (2016), who underscored the transformative power of educating communities to challenge cultural norms that hinder educational development. The implication is that policy actors and school leadership should invest more in grassroots outreach and educational campaigns, especially in remote areas.

Similarly, 86% of teachers supported the active involvement of local leaders in efforts to prevent early marriage. This indicates that these leaders are seen as key influencers within their communities, capable of guiding shifts in cultural practices that affect schooling, particularly for girls. This observation reflects the conclusions

of Mgalla and Mwaipopo (2017), who emphasized the role of cultural custodians—such as elders and religious figures—in shaping rural social behavior. Integrating these figures into education promotion strategies could bridge the gap between cultural tradition and modern schooling priorities.

Regarding gender-focused programming, 78% of respondents affirmed that schools should take the lead in advancing gender equality. This suggests strong belief among educators that schools are critical platforms for instilling equitable values and challenging discriminatory roles. Teachers advocate for curricula that reflect gender fairness and for structured training that promotes gender sensitivity in classrooms. This view is echoed by UNESCO (2021), which recommends the adoption of gender-responsive teaching approaches to narrow learning gaps in African education systems.

Teachers also stressed the importance of legal and policy enforcement, with 78% agreeing that stronger regulations are needed to address child labor and truancy. This implies that while cultural change is necessary, it must be supported by institutional mechanisms to discourage practices that keep children out of school. These insights are in line with URT (2019), which noted that poor enforcement of education laws contributes to high dropout rates in underserved areas. Hence, collaboration between schools, local governments, and law enforcement is critical for improving pupil retention.

Parental engagement was also highly valued, with 82% of educators emphasizing the importance of involving parents in school-related planning and follow-up. This highlights the family's significant influence on pupils' school outcomes and

underscores the need for schools to work hand-in-hand with families. This conclusion aligns with Epstein's (2001) theory of overlapping spheres of influence, which holds that student success is maximized when school, family, and community work collaboratively.

Table 4.5 further emphasizes how deeply socio-cultural factors affect pupils' educational experiences. The most frequently cited issue—school dropout (45%)—reiterates concerns raised by UNESCO (2019) regarding the impact of early marriage, cultural rites, and labor demands on education in East Africa. The implication is clear: socio-cultural expectations can not only reduce performance in the short term but also lead to the permanent cessation of schooling, especially for girls and other marginalized groups.

In addition to dropout, 30% of pupils reported experiencing stress and distraction due to cultural demands, while 15% mentioned fatigue. These responses point to the emotional and physical burdens students carry as a result of their social environment, which negatively affects focus and performance. These findings are consistent with Kadzamira and Rose (2003), who linked psychosocial distress with poor classroom engagement. This suggests that psychosocial interventions such as school-based counselling and life skills sessions are urgently needed.

A further 10% of pupils reported limited time for academic work due to responsibilities at home or within the community. This reflects the principle of opportunity cost: time spent on domestic or labor duties is time lost from learning. Schools must collaborate with parents to protect academic time especially during exam periods and term time.

In summary, pupils themselves identified both direct and indirect ways that cultural norms and responsibilities impede learning. Tackling these challenges requires a combination of education reform, community awareness, and policy enforcement that balances cultural identity with academic opportunity.

The collective evidence from Longido District demonstrates a strong and persistent influence of socio-cultural norms on pupils' academic outcomes. Practices such as child marriage, domestic labor, and participation in herding responsibilities were repeatedly identified as key contributors to absenteeism, disengagement, and dropout. These insights directly respond to the research objective aimed at identifying how such practices affect educational attainment in the district.

One of the more promising interventions is the construction of school dormitories, which helps create a protective and distraction-free environment for pupils especially girls. This recommendation is supported by He and Giuliano (2018) and Haki Elimu (2010), who found that boarding facilities reduce exposure to early pregnancies and child marriage, improving retention and academic focus.

Similarly, enhancing parental awareness is crucial. According to Wildmon et al. (2024) and Adewale (2023), when parents understand the long-term benefits of education, they are more likely to support their children academically and reduce burdensome home responsibilities that hinder school performance.

The proposal to develop permanent settlements for pastoralist communities also finds support in the work of Gammino et al. (2020), who argue that nomadic lifestyles disrupt the continuity of schooling. Jawas (2017) adds that regular school monitoring can help identify and address emerging issues before they become entrenched,

thereby improving outcomes. The urgent need for legal enforcement particularly concerning child marriage is echoed by Zhange and Mohangi (2024) and Mansouri (2020), who assert that laws must be effectively implemented alongside cultural education to produce lasting improvements in school attendance and performance.

In conclusion, the study shows that deeply rooted socio-cultural dynamics in Longido District significantly affect pupils' academic progress. Without targeted interventions such as public education campaigns, supportive infrastructure, strong legal frameworks, and regular monitoring many children, particularly girls will continue to face academic disadvantages. Addressing these issues requires coordinated action across schools, families, communities, and government bodies to ensure every child has the opportunity to succeed academically.

#### **4.4.3 Strategies Implemented to Address Socio-Cultural Factors Hinder Performance in Public Primary Schools**

The findings presented in Table 4.6 demonstrate overwhelming support among teachers for community education as a foundational strategy to reduce socio-cultural hindrances to schooling. A significant 88% either agreed or strongly agreed that awareness-raising efforts within communities are essential for challenging traditional attitudes that obstruct education. This reflects similar conclusions drawn by URT (2018) and UNESCO (2015), which highlighted that public engagement is key to fostering supportive educational environments. The underlying message is clear: sustained improvement in student outcomes depends on reshaping cultural norms through collective community enlightenment.

Equal significant is the endorsement of traditional and religious leaders in the fight against early marriage, with a majority of teachers acknowledging their influential position. These findings mirror the work of Mtengeti (2017), who identified elders as cultural custodians with the capacity to lead positive change. Their integration into school and district-level initiatives could accelerate the abandonment of harmful practices and enhance community support for girls' education.

Teachers also voiced strong support (78%) for implementing school-based programs designed to promote gender equity. This suggests an increasing awareness of the importance of fostering inclusive learning environments within schools. Programs such as student clubs and gender-responsive curricula have proven effective as shown by FAWE (2012), in combating stereotypes and enhancing the academic success of female learners. These internal interventions should complement broader outreach efforts to ensure holistic support.

Furthermore, 78% of respondents emphasized the necessity of enforcing legal frameworks that penalize child labor and irregular school attendance. This supports the call from Human Rights Watch (2016) for stronger protection of children's educational rights. The implication here is that policy measures must be clearly articulated, rigorously enforced, and supported by consistent oversight at both the school and district levels to deter practices that hinder education.

Lastly, the recognition of parents as critical stakeholders in education is evident in the strong support (82%) for their inclusion in school governance and planning. This aligns with Epstein's (2001) theory, which states that collaboration between families,

schools, and communities enhances educational outcomes. Strengthening these partnerships would ensure pupils receive consistent support at both home and school. Insights drawn from Table 4.7 highlight pupils' growing awareness of the challenges they face and the strategies needed to overcome them. The most frequently cited solution was educating parents and the community on the importance of formal education. This shows pupils' understanding that transformation must begin in the household and the wider community. Komba and Nkumbi (2008) similarly emphasized that community involvement is crucial in building inclusive education systems. The implication is that schools must expand their engagement efforts to include families and local influencers in awareness campaigns.

A quarter of the pupils recommended reducing domestic responsibilities during school days, drawing attention to the impact of household chores on study time—especially for girls. This aligns with UNESCO (2015), which reported that the burden of unpaid domestic labor contributes significantly to school absenteeism among girls in rural Africa. These findings suggest a need for both policy reform and behavioral change at the household level to ensure equitable educational opportunities.

In addition, students expressed the need for stronger enforcement of child protection laws, especially those targeting early marriage. This shows a high level of legal awareness among pupils and supports the view advanced by Wils and Komba (2010), who argued that legislation alone is not enough it must be accompanied by local action and education.

The recommendation to introduce role models and peer-based support structures, such as school clubs, indicates that pupils are open to internal strategies that build resilience and motivation. According to Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, exposure to role models plays a crucial role in shaping learners' aspirations and academic engagement.

Interviews conducted between March and April 2025 echoed the survey findings, pointing to the need for a multidimensional strategy to address cultural obstacles to learning. A recurring theme was the need for robust community involvement, especially in challenging harmful traditions like early marriage and gender-based labor roles. These views are supported by Salgado (2024), who found that parent and community support significantly improve school attendance and academic performance.

Strengthening enforcement of school rules and expectations was also noted as a practical approach to reducing dropout and ensuring consistent attendance. These responses suggest that while education is critical, school accountability must also be prioritized, particularly for vulnerable groups like girls at risk of early marriage. This implies the need for closer collaboration between schools and families in following up on pupil performance and behavior.

Participants also advocated for expanded access to counselling services as a way to bridge emotional and informational gaps within families. Counselling was viewed as a means of shifting harmful beliefs, improving mental well-being, and helping students remain engaged in school. These services could serve as an important buffer against socio-cultural pressures, contributing to better focus and academic success.

Finally, respondents called for increased government involvement in addressing educational barriers. Legal and policy frameworks must support school and community-level efforts, particularly in enforcing child protection laws. This reflects findings from Akpuokwe (2024), who emphasized the role of legislation in ensuring educational access in culturally conservative regions.

The overall findings illustrate that addressing the influence of socio-cultural practices on academic performance in Longido District requires a comprehensive and coordinated response. A successful strategy must include community sensitization campaigns, inclusive school programming, improved counselling services, and firm legal enforcement. These elements working together, can create an environment where pupils, regardless of gender or background, are supported to achieve their full academic potential.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the study by summarizing the key findings and drawing conclusions based on the addressed objectives. It further outlines practical recommendations aimed at tackling the socio-cultural factors that negatively affect academic performance in public primary schools. The chapter also suggests areas for further research and emphasizes the contribution of this study to the existing body of educational knowledge.

#### **5.2 Summary of the Study**

This study assessed socio-cultural factors influencing pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Longido District, Tanzania. Guided by three specific objectives, the study sought to: identify the socio-cultural factors affecting education, determine how these practices influence pupils' learning outcomes, and explore strategies to address the challenges. A mixed-methods research approach was employed, using questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary reviews to gather data. The study involved pupils, teachers, headteachers, school committee members, parents, and education officers, ensuring both school-based and community-level perspectives. Through this approach, the research generated comprehensive insights into the socio-cultural barriers and potential solutions for improving academic performance in the district.

### **5.3 Summary of the Main Findings**

#### **5.3.1 The Socio-Cultural Based Factors that Influence Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools**

The findings demonstrated that socio-cultural factors significantly influence academic performance by shaping pupils' attitudes towards education and their ability to attend school regularly. Early marriage, preferential treatment of boys over girls, and responsibilities such as household chores and child labour were identified as major contributors to irregular attendance and low motivation, especially among girls. These cultural expectations restrict pupils' time for study and participation in school activities.

Furthermore, community perceptions and leadership play a critical role in either reinforcing or challenging these cultural barriers. In communities where education is highly valued and leaders actively discourage harmful practices, pupils tend to perform better academically compared to areas where such socio-cultural challenges are prevalent and unchecked.

#### **5.3.2 The Socio-Cultural Practices Affect Pupils' Academic Performance**

Socio-cultural practices were found to affect pupils' academic performance both directly and indirectly. Directly, early marriage and child labor result in frequent absenteeism, withdrawal from school, and increased dropout rates. Indirectly, the stress and exhaustion associated with these responsibilities reduce pupils' ability to concentrate and learn effectively, thereby lowering academic achievement. The study also highlighted gender disparities rooted in cultural practices, with girls being disproportionately affected due to societal expectations to prioritize marriage and

domestic duties over education. This contributes to unequal learning opportunities and negatively influences overall academic performance among female pupils.

### **5.3.3 Strategies that can be Implemented to Address Socio-Cultural Factors that Hinder Performance in Public Primary Schools**

Key strategies recommended include community sensitization initiatives that engage parents, religious leaders, and local authorities to raise awareness about the value of education and the harms of early marriage and child labor. These awareness programs encourage community members to support pupils' education and reject harmful cultural practices. At the school level, the adoption of gender-sensitive teaching methods, establishment of peer support networks, and provision of counseling services were suggested to help pupils overcome socio-cultural challenges. Enforcement of existing laws related to child protection and stronger collaboration between schools and families were also emphasized as essential measures to create supportive learning environments.

### **5.4 Conclusion of the Study**

This study concludes that socio-cultural factors, including early marriage, gender bias, child labor, and limited parental support, play a critical role in shaping pupils' academic performance in Longido District. These factors disrupt attendance, lower concentration, and contribute to poor performance, particularly among girls, who face additional barriers to completing primary education.

The study further establishes that socio-cultural practices affect pupils not only academically but also socially and emotionally. Household responsibilities and cultural expectations place psychological and physical burdens on learners, reducing

their ability to fully participate in school. This situation reinforces gender disparities and widens the performance gap in public primary schools.

Finally, the findings show that addressing these challenges requires joint interventions. Community sensitization, school-based support, and gender-responsive teaching are essential strategies for overcoming cultural barriers. Sustainable solutions will depend on active collaboration between schools, families, community leaders, government, and non-governmental organizations. Such partnerships are necessary to create an enabling learning environment and improve pupils' academic outcomes.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

This section provides targeted recommendations aimed at addressing the socio-cultural factors that hinder academic performance among pupils in public primary schools. These recommendations are based on the study's findings and are directed toward key education stakeholders including schools, local government authorities, non-governmental organizations, school management teams, and policymakers. Implementing these actions will help create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for pupils, particularly those affected by cultural norms and practices such as early marriage, gender discrimination, and child labor.

### **5.5.1 Recommendations for Action**

Based on the findings, schools should actively involve parents, guardians, and community leaders in regular sensitization forums to address the socio-cultural challenges that were shown to negatively affect pupils' academic performance. For instance, since teachers strongly emphasized that community sensitization helps

challenge harmful practices such as early marriage, child labor, and gender bias, these forums should be organized during school meetings, community gatherings, and religious events to reach a wider audience. Collaboration between educators, administrators, and local leaders is crucial in raising awareness about the long-term benefits of education while discouraging practices that hinder school attendance and participation.

Furthermore, findings revealed that gender-related socio-cultural factors influence performance. In response, schools should implement gender-sensitive teaching approaches that promote equal participation of boys and girls in classroom activities. Establishing guidance and counselling units can provide direct support for pupils facing socio-cultural pressures, helping them to build resilience, self-esteem, and academic focus. Schools should also strengthen monitoring systems to track attendance, behavior, and academic progress, enabling early interventions to prevent disengagement and dropout, which were noted as consequences of socio-cultural barriers.

### **5.5.2 Local Authorities and Non-Governmental Organizations**

Local government authorities should play a more proactive role in supporting educational institutions to address harmful socio-cultural practices. This can be achieved through the formulation and implementation of local bylaws that discourage early marriage and child labor. They should also facilitate regular outreach programs that advocate for children's rights and the importance of education in local languages and culturally relevant formats. In doing so, local authorities can

help bridge the gap between national education policies and the realities of community life.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should partner with both local government and schools to introduce sustainable initiatives such as girls' education programs, scholarship schemes, and safe spaces for vulnerable pupils. NGOs can also render technical expertise in training teachers and community facilitators on child protection and gender equality. Moreover, they can assist in building community education centers and supporting advocacy campaigns that challenge harmful traditions. Strengthening the collaboration between schools, NGOs, and authorities is key to creating a unified front against the socio-cultural barriers that hinder pupils' academic progress.

### **5.5.3 Recommendations for Headteachers and School Management**

Headteachers and school management teams are in a strategic position to foster inclusive and supportive learning environments. They should adopt leadership practices that prioritize the well-being of all pupils, particularly those facing cultural discrimination or domestic burdens. This can include forming pupil welfare committees, establishing mentorship programs, and creating peer support groups that encourage positive academic and social behaviors. School leaders should also ensure that all staff are trained to identify and respond appropriately to signs of abuse, neglect, or socio-cultural pressure affecting pupils.

Moreover, school management should strengthen parental involvement by organizing regular meetings and home visits aimed at building strong school-community partnerships. Parents should be educated on their responsibilities in supporting their

children's education, including discouraging absenteeism and early withdrawals. Monitoring systems for attendance and academic performance should be put in place to quickly detect pupils who are at risk of dropping out. These efforts will help build a school culture that is responsive, inclusive, and capable of adapting to pupils' socio-cultural contexts.

#### **5.5.4 Recommendations for Policy Review**

Education policymakers should undertake comprehensive reviews of existing policies to ensure they adequately address the socio-cultural barriers affecting pupils. This review should consider including specific strategies to counter practices such as early marriage, child labor, and gender-based violence within the education system. Policies should also provide clear guidelines for schools on how to engage communities, offer psychosocial support, and promote inclusive education. Integrating these aspects into national education frameworks can ensure that interventions are consistent and scalable across all regions.

In addition, there should be a deliberate effort to harmonize educational policies with child protection and social welfare policies to foster a multi-sectoral response. Policymakers should advocate for the allocation of more resources toward teacher training, community outreach, and the establishment of school counselling units. Periodic evaluations and data collection on the impact of these policies would also help to inform future strategies. Strengthening the policy environment will ensure that schools are well-equipped to respond effectively to socio-cultural challenges.

## **5.6 Recommendations for Further Research**

While this study focused on public primary schools, further research is needed to explore the long-term effects of socio-cultural practices on learners' educational paths beyond primary education. Investigating how early marriage, gender norms, and child labor influence secondary school retention and transition to tertiary education would provide a broader understanding of the cumulative impact of these issues. Such research would offer valuable insights into the interventions needed at different educational stages.

Future studies could also examine effective models of community engagement and gender-responsive programming across diverse cultural settings in Tanzania. A comparative analysis of regions with varying socio-cultural dynamics would help identify best practices and innovative approaches to address these challenges. Researchers may also investigate the role of digital technologies and media in shifting cultural perceptions and promoting education. These findings would be instrumental in shaping future policies and programming for inclusive education.

## **5.7 Contribution of the Study to the Body of Knowledge**

This study contributes significantly to the existing literature on socio-cultural influences in education by providing empirical evidence on how cultural beliefs and practices affect academic performance in Tanzanian public primary schools. It offers a comprehensive analysis of the direct and indirect effects of early marriage, child labor, and gender discrimination on pupils' educational experiences. The study enriches scholarly understanding of how deeply embedded socio-cultural norms can

act as barriers to quality education, particularly for girls and children from marginalized communities.

Furthermore, the study proposes practical, context-sensitive strategies for addressing these challenges, thereby informing the development of responsive education policies and community-based interventions. It underscores the importance of engaging community stakeholders, strengthening school-community partnerships, and promoting inclusive learning environments. By highlighting the intersection of culture and education, this research serves as a foundation for future studies and policy reforms aimed at achieving educational equity and improving learning outcomes for all pupils.

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## APPENDICES

### **Appendix I: Structured Questionnaire for Teachers**

#### **Section A: Demographic Information**

1. Gender:  Male  Female
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Teaching Experience (in years): \_\_\_\_\_
4. Educational Qualification:  Certificate  Diploma  Degree  Other (Specify):  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Section B: Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Academic Performance**

*(Relates to Objective i: To identify the socio-cultural based factors that influence academic performance in public primary schools in Longido District)*

**Instructions:** Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by ticking the appropriate box.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Early marriages negatively affect pupils' academic performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. Traditional initiation ceremonies cause prolonged absenteeism.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. Gender roles assigned by the community affect classroom participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. Herding livestock limits pupils' study time and class attendance.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. Cultural beliefs discourage parents from valuing formal education.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

### Section C: How Socio-Cultural Practices Affect Pupils' Academic Outcomes

(Relates to Objective ii: To determine how socio-cultural factors practices affect pupils' academic performance in Longido District)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6. Pupils who engage in cultural duties regularly perform poorly in exams.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7. Pupils' academic performance drops after missing school for cultural events.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8. Girls are more academically affected by cultural practices than boys.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9. PSLE results are often linked to the impact of socio-cultural practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10. Cultural influence is stronger in rural schools than urban ones.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

### Section D: Strategies to Address Socio-Cultural Challenges

(Relates to Objective iii: To establish strategies that can be implemented to address socio-cultural factors that hinder performance in public primary schools in Longido District)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11. Community sensitization can reduce the impact of cultural barriers.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
12. Schools should align calendars with major cultural events.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
13. Teachers need training on managing pupils affected by cultural issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
14. Government laws against child marriage should be strictly enforced.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
15. Partnering with local leaders can improve school-community relations.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

## Appendix II: Structured Questionnaire for Standard Seven Pupils

### Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender:

Male       Female

2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ years

3. Name of your school: \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many years have you been in this school? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Who do you stay with at home?

Both parents     Only mother     Only father     Guardian     Others (specify):  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Section B: Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Academic Performance

*(Objective i: To identify the socio-cultural based factors that influence academic performance)*

1. Do your parents/guardians encourage you to attend school every day?

Yes       No

2. Are there times when family duties (like herding animals or doing chores) stop you from going to school?

Yes       No

3. Have you or someone you know missed school because of cultural events (like initiation or traditional ceremonies)?

Yes       No

4. Do your family members believe school is important for both boys and girls equally?

Yes       No

### **Section C: How Socio-Cultural Practices Affect Pupils' Learning**

*(Objective ii: To determine how socio-cultural factor practices affect pupils' academic performance)*

1. Do you sometimes miss school to attend family or community events?  
 Yes       No
2. Have you ever been told not to go to school because of your gender?  
 Yes       No
3. Do your family or community expect you to get married before finishing school?  
 Yes       No
4. Do you think girls and boys are treated the same when it comes to learning at school or at home?  
 Yes       No

### **Section D: Ideas for Improving School Attendance and Performance**

*(Objective iii: To establish strategies that can be implemented to address socio-cultural factors that hinder performance)*

1. What can the school do to help pupils who miss school because of culture or home duties?
2. Do you think community leaders should help children stay in school?  
 Yes       No
3. What advice would you give to other pupils so they can do well in school?
4. What help do you wish to get so that you can attend school regularly?

### **Appendix III: Interview Guide for Headteachers**

1. What socio-cultural factors have you observed that affect pupils' academic performance in your school?
2. How do family roles and responsibilities influence pupils' attendance and participation in class?
3. Are there specific traditional or cultural events that interfere with pupils' schooling?

4. What are your views on gender-related expectations in the community and their effect on pupils' performance?
5. How do early marriages or initiation rites impact schooling, especially for girls?
6. What strategies has your school employed to deal with socio-cultural challenges affecting education?
7. In your opinion, what support is needed from the government or community to address these challenges?

#### **Appendix IV: Interview Guide for Parents**

1. How important is education to you and your family?
2. Are there any cultural traditions or family responsibilities that affect your child's school attendance?
3. Do you believe boys and girls should receive equal education? Why or why not?
4. Have cultural ceremonies like initiation or marriage ever caused your child to miss school?
5. What difficulties do you face in helping your child succeed in school?
6. What can the school or government do to help children perform better in school?

#### **Appendix V: Interview Guide for District School Quality Assurance Officer (DSQAO)**

1. What major socio-cultural factors have been reported to affect pupils' performance in Longido District?
2. How do cultural beliefs or traditions influence educational access and performance?
3. Have you encountered cases where early marriages or cultural responsibilities hinder schooling?
4. What programs or policies exist to address socio-cultural issues in education?
5. What improvements can be made to enhance the academic outcomes of pupils affected by socio-cultural challenges?

### **Appendix VI: Interview Guide for Ward Education Officers (WEOs)**

1. What socio-cultural issues do you face in your ward that influence pupils' performance?
2. How does the community respond to educational programs and initiatives?
3. Are there known traditional practices that interrupt the school calendar?
4. What roles do local leaders and parents play in supporting or hindering education?
5. What measures have been taken at the ward level to mitigate socio-cultural barriers to education?
6. What further actions do you think should be implemented to improve pupil performance?

### **Appendix VII: Interview Guide for School Committee Members**

1. What are your observations about cultural practices that affect pupils' learning in this community?
2. How do household duties affect school attendance, especially among girls?
3. Are there efforts from the school committee to raise awareness about harmful socio-cultural practices?
4. What support do you think is needed to improve community-school relationships?
5. How can the committee influence better pupil attendance and academic performance?

### **Appendix VIII: Observation Guide**

1. Are there noticeable patterns of absenteeism during specific cultural events?
2. Do girls and boys participate equally in classroom activities?
3. Are there signs of pupils being withdrawn or distracted due to outside responsibilities?
4. How do teachers handle absenteeism and socio-cultural disruptions?
5. Are there any visible messages (posters, signs) promoting equality and education?

**Appendix IX: Interview Guide for District Primary Education Officer (DPEO)**

1. What key socio-cultural challenges have been observed across the district's primary schools?
2. Are there gender-based disparities in educational outcomes?
3. How has the district addressed issues like early marriages or cultural interference with schooling?
4. What partnerships exist with NGOs or community leaders to promote education?
5. What future plans or policies are being considered to tackle socio-cultural barriers?

**Appendix X: Document Review Guide**

1. Review school attendance registers for trends in absenteeism around cultural periods.
2. Examine academic performance records to identify gender-based performance differences.
3. Analyze school policies on absenteeism, cultural engagements, and early marriages.
4. Review community sensitization records or outreach activities conducted.
5. Check school committee meeting minutes for discussions on cultural and academic issues.

## APPENDIX I: Research Clearance Letter

### THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA



Ref. No OUT/ PG201610254

24<sup>th</sup> November, 2022

Regional Administrative Secretary,  
Arusha Region,  
P.O Box 3050,  
**ARUSHA.**

Dear Regional Administrative Secretary,

**RE: RESEARCH CLEARANCE FOR MS BASILISA R KAWISHE, REG NO:  
PG201610254**

2. The Open University of Tanzania was established by an Act of Parliament No. 17 of 1992, which became operational on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1993 by public notice No.55 in the official Gazette. The Act was however replaced by the Open University of Tanzania Charter of 2005, which became operational on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007. In line with the Charter, the Open University of Tanzania mission is to generate and apply knowledge through research.

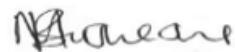
3. To facilitate and to simplify research process therefore, the act empowers the Vice Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania to issue research clearance, on behalf of the Government of Tanzania and Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, to both its staff and students who are doing research in Tanzania. With this brief background, the purpose of this letter is to introduce to you **Ms. Basilisa R Kawishe, Reg. No: PG201610254** pursuing **Master of Education in Administration Planning and Policy Studies (MEDAPPS)**. We here by grant this clearance to conduct a research titled **“Analysis on Social Cultural Factors Affecting Academic Performance on Public Primary Schools: A Case of Longido District”**. She will collect her data at

Longido District Primary Schools in Arusha Region from 25<sup>th</sup> November to 27<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

4. In case you need any further information, kindly do not hesitate to contact the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) of the Open University of Tanzania, P.O.Box 23409, Dar es Salaam. Tel: 022-2-2668820. We lastly thank you in advance for your assumed cooperation and facilitation of this research academic activity.

Yours sincerely,

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA



Prof. Magreth S. Bushesha

**For: VICE CHANCELLOR**

## APPENDIX II: Research Permission Letter

**UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA**  
**PRESIDENT'S OFFICE**  
**REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Telegrams: "REGCOM"  
 Telephone: 2545608/2544950/2544802  
 Fax No. 2545239/254486  
 E-Mail: [ras@arusha.go.tz](mailto:ras@arusha.go.tz)  
 E-Mail: [ras.arusha@tamsem.go.tz](mailto:ras.arusha@tamsem.go.tz)  
 Website: [www.arusha.go.tz](http://www.arusha.go.tz)  
 In reply please quote:



REGIONAL COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,  
 ARUSHA REGION,  
 2 Makongoro Road  
 P.O. Box 3050,  
 233101 Sekel  
 ARUSHA.

**Ref. No. FA.132/195/01'R'/286**

**20 January, 2022**

District Administrative Secretary,  
 P. O. Box 2,  
LONGIDO.

**RE: RESEARCH PERMIT**

Reference is hereby made to the letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2022 with Ref. No. OUT/PG 201610254 from "**The open University of Tanzania**" concerning the above underlined subject.

I hereby take this opportunity to introduce to you **Ms. Basilisa R. Kawishe**, from "**The open University of Tanzania**"; At the moment he is conducting a research study concerning the: "*Analysis on Social Cultural Factor Affecting Academic Performance on Public Primary School": A case of Longido District.*

Permission is granted to conduct her research at **in Longido District** from **25<sup>th</sup> November, 2022 to 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2022**.

Due to this, you are requested to render administrative assistance to enable her to accomplish the intended objective of her research.

Thank you for your cooperation.

*Muhsin Kassim*  
 For: **REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY**  
ARUSHA

**REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE  
SECRETARY ARUSHA**

**Copy to:**  
**Ms. Basilisa R. Kawishe**  
RESEARCHER