

ETHNICITY AND EDUCATION ACCESS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LAIKIPIA COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This research examined the connection between ethnicity and education access in secondary schools within Laikipia County, Kenya. The theoretical framework was based on the tenets of Socio-identity Theory. A mixed-methods approach was utilized to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The study's target population was identified through the stratified random sampling method, which categorized participants into distinct groups, including school principals, heads of households, security personnel, and representatives from teachers' unions. The sample size was determined to be approximately 236 respondents, with data gathered via semi-structured questionnaires that featured both open-ended and Likert scale items. Data analysis employed descriptive statistics and regression models for quantitative data, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. The information was systematically coded and organized into themes. The results indicated that over 75% of respondents acknowledged that factors such as ethnicity adversely affect education access in secondary schools within Laikipia County, Kenya. This study concludes that ethnic clashes have indeed impacted students' ability to access education in secondary schools in Laikipia County. The research suggests that the Ministry of Education ought to extend necessary support to regions impacted by ethnic conflicts.

Key Words: Ethnicity, Inter-ethnic clashes, Education Access

INTRODUCTION

Ethnicity is a term rooted in Greek terminology *ἔθνος* (ethnos), and it's understood as 'people or nation'. The discourse surrounding ethnicity emerged in the US and Europe in the early 1940s. By the 1960s, it had gained immense traction. The terms revolve around the idea of social belonging, which is founded on mutual recognition of shared origins, cultural practices, and also political understandings of the community (Stein & Shneiderman, 2022). An aspect of ethnicity widely regarded is social inclusion since it cements unity and is the foundation of positive prosocial behaviors. In doing so, humanization, collective action, and intergroup attitudes are enhanced. Despite the myriads of positivity when it comes to social inclusions in an ethnic setup, it is a source of bias and a threat to others with distinct identities (Borinca et al., 2024).

Globally, societies are grouped into different ethnicities, and in fact, this has been the bleeding group for discrimination and unfair advantages. In Latin America, there are more than 133 million afro-descendants living in countries such as Cuba, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, and Venezuela. Out of the total, 34 million cannot access education due to increased inequalities in school. They perform poorly and are more likely to drop out of school as compared to their non-Afro descendant. In the United States, there is an increased education gap between African American and Latino students. Even though many years have passed since slavery, the majority of public schools in the US are still heavily racially and ethnically isolated (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2024). Moreover, in Asia, the caste-based discrimination of the Dalit-Adivasi students is largely alienated and excluded due to their ethnic identity. The rate of secondary school completion among the ethnic group will be below 34% by 2020 (Chalaune, 2020)

In the African continent, ethnic favoritism and patronage politics are quite common and, thus, have a bigger say when it comes to the distribution of educational resources. In South Africa, despite the end of the Apartheid system, 90% of South African poor people are black. The latest data shows that only 7.4% of black students complete secondary school compared to other ethnic groups. Besides, children who attend historically disadvantaged schools face learning hindrances as compared to those studying in better schools (Muyambi & Ahiaku, 2024). On the other hand, Ethiopia has more than 83 ethnic groups. During the 2018-19 period, campuses underwent temporary closures, a considerable number of students left universities, and there were reports of student fatalities. In early 2020, universities faced considerable disruption from escalating ethnic conflicts, leading government officials to propose the potential closure of these institutions to manage the situation. The politicization of ethnicity has intensified to a point where regional states, alongside community members and students and faculty from the predominant ethnic group linked to the university, perceive the institution as "their university." Conversely, other students and faculty view themselves as members of a university that is controlled by external entities (Adamu, 2023).

Kenya is home to over 40 different ethnic groups. Even though the constitution promotes fairness for all, the unequal access to public goods, such as education, is a result of historical inequalities built long ago under colonialism. The Ndung'u Land Report (2004) talks about how post-independence leaders took advantage of policies on land and education to strengthen their own group's role (Southall, 2005). Because political patronage is involved, the distribution of public resources, even the Constituency Development Fund, tends to favor the main ethnic groups that have been in power (Harris, 2016). Despite improvements in national secondary enrollment rates, big differences remain for various ethnic groups and regions. School attendance and success among minority communities such as the Samburu and Turkana in dry and semi-dry regions is still below the average for Kenya. According to a 2020 report by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), less than half (43%) of children in pastoralist-dominated counties complete secondary school, but those in central Kenya do much better, with more than 70% finishing school.

In Laikipia County, and especially Laikipia West, the severity of the ethnic conflict started many years ago. From the 1904–1911 Anglo-Maasai agreement, which saw the Maasai community move to reserves, to Kenyan Independence in 1963, which saw the subdivision of land to government agencies, elites, and farming

communities. This left no room to address historical injustices related to land issues. The creation of wildlife conservancies has further deteriorated the issues, exacerbating existing resources and promoting ethnicity between pastoralists and owners (Mwangi & Muniu, 2022). The consequences of ethnicity in education are indeed immense; without stability, armed conflict results in the deaths of teachers and students, and consequently, teachers are always reluctant to engage in employment opportunities in the regions, learner enrollment can be affected, and displacement of communities may further affect student and their studies.

Access to education is a critical right for Kenyan students, regardless of location. The Constitution of Kenya, in Article 53 (1) (b), asserts that every child is entitled to receive free and compulsory basic education. It goes ahead in Article 55 (a), which points out that the government will do all it can, including affirmative action programs, to ensure that young people get the education and training they need (CoK, 2010). Besides, access to education has seen increased changes, especially with the government's establishment of free primary education (FPE) in 2003. The World Bank (2018) indicated that this policy has a positive impact on education access as it increased the enrolment rate from 59% in 2003 to 83% in 2018. Various stakeholders have provided numerous inputs; however, challenges such as geographical inequalities and ethnicity, particularly in arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) in Kenya, along with gender disparities and socio-economic obstacles, persistently hinder access to education.

This research, therefore, is based on the need to bridge the existing literature gap on ethnicity and education access in Laikipia County to understand the key aspects of ethnicity that continue to widen the gap in access to education in the country. Through this study, particular elements of ethnicity will be analyzed, paving the way for the presentation of effective strategies and solutions to address the menace of ethnicity in Laikipia County and, above all, address the existing gaps in education access.

Statement of the Problem

Laikipia West Constituency is a cosmopolitan region that has been home to many communities. The Kikuyu community is composed of 60% of the population, while the rest is shared among the Maasai, Samburu, and Meru. While Kenya promises fair education for all under its constitution, inequity in Laikipia County creates hurdles for young people to access good secondary education. The area has experienced inequality in education owing to its socio-economic conditions, past marginalization, and various conflicts. Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) has boosted general school enrollment, but it has not eliminated the structural and cultural issues that strike ethnic minority learners.

Furthermore, the county has faced significant barriers in regard to equitable access to education. Despite numerous efforts by the government, the unique socio-economic and geographical contexts still contribute to uneven education outcomes. The pastoralist lifestyle, which is characterized by frequent mobility, economic constraints, and cultural practices, further weakens consistent school attendance and retention of learners. Besides, the competition for resources further makes schools unsafe, and hence, disruptions of educational activities are often witnessed. In 2019 census data, Laikipia West showed that 49% of the total population is illiterate, with one out of 3 people having difficulties in reading and writing (KNBS, 2019). This intersection between ethnicity and education access presents a greater problem that indeed warrants thorough research.

Lastly, secondary school education is an important issue to focus on due to the challenges that are experienced at this level of learning. Basic Education Act of 2013 noted that basic education was both mandatory and a fundamental right for every child. In 2020, the government argued that it would enforce a 100% transition from primary to secondary schools without exceptions. However, with the introduction of free primary education in 2003, the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) rose to 92.4% in 2018; the outcome was a rise in the number of students pursuing high school education, accompanied by a lack of corresponding growth in educational facilities. (Ochieng & Murungi, 2019). If the government is to attain a 100% transition rate, then it means addressing even the core issues facing society at the community level, such as ethnicity.

Objective of the Study

The study examined the effect of ethnicity on education access in secondary schools in Laikipia County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical Review

Education Access

A study by Hanon (2022) indicated that education is significantly affected by conflict situations. International organizations have increased the implementation of Education in Emergencies (EiE) interventions to enhance educational access. The impacts of these interventions in armed conflict settings are not well understood. Previous studies on the effectiveness of education in emergency (EiE) interventions have mainly focused on stable low- and middle-income countries. The literature has primarily highlighted the physical barriers to educational access caused by conflicts. This study addressed the gap by exploring the impact of EiE interventions on education access during conflict crises. It will begin by examining the non-physical 'opportunity costs' of conflict that hinder educational access. This study subsequently aimed to illustrate the importance of specific elements within EiE interventions that may hold and address these specific conflict obstacles. A qualitative comparative analysis of two multinational organizations that carry out EiE programs in Colombia is used to test the argument. The empirical results show how important a range of EiE intervention components are in enhancing educational access in conflict situations, with many of them addressing "opportunity costs." However, this study restricted itself to access to education intervention strategies, while the current study sought to establish how ethnicity affect education access in Laikipia County, Kenya.

Ethnicity and Education Access

Wang (2022) conducted a study examining the impact of ethnic identity on the academic performance of Chinese college students, utilizing verifiable data sourced from a university's administrative records. The initiative aimed at advancing ethnic equality and unity endeavors to diminish inequalities among various ethnic groups and encourage cooperative progress. In regard to higher education, it is essential to advance the equity of ethnic education. This research analyzes administrative data from undergraduate students enrolled between 2008 and 2015 at a liberal arts university located in southwest China, focusing on the variations, underlying factors, and evolving trends in the academic scores of students from diverse nationalities. The findings indicate that in comparison to Han students, ethnic minority students have an average GPA that is 0.13 points lower, which corresponds to 0.23 and 0.3 standard deviations of the scores for ethnic minority and Han students, respectively. This disparity is particularly pronounced in the western region, notably in provinces such as Xinjiang, Yunnan, and Hubei, where ethnic minorities reside. Among the various ethnic groups, Kazak and Uygur students exhibit the largest gap in performance relative to Han students. Furthermore, the difference in academic performance is more pronounced among girls than among boys. A deeper examination reveals that while the ethnic variations in academic performance are progressively widening, the rate of this growth appears to be stabilizing. The current study was conducted in Kenya, a developing nation, whereas this study was conducted in China, a developed nation.

Jerono, Ferej and Kipkoech (2019) conducted a study on Ethnic Conflicts and Secondary School Student Participation in Baringo County, Kenya's Lowland Areas. This study assessed how the violence occurring in the area, specifically in Baringo South, Tiaty, and Baringo North, has influenced students' engagement in secondary education. Participants in this survey included students, school principals, and the Board of Management from twenty-two public secondary schools. For this study, a descriptive research methodology was adopted. Questionnaires and structured interviews were used to help collect the data. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed to analyze data. The results revealed that cattle rustling serves

as the primary catalyst for ethnic tensions. Moreover, the study found that schools experienced increased rates of absenteeism and dropout, attributed to conflicts. In some areas, parents were unable to allow their children to attend school, rendering educational institutions inaccessible. Additionally, students' motivation to attend classes regularly diminished due to prevailing uncertainties. Correlation statistics indicated a significant negative impact of ethnic conflict on student participation in secondary education. This study filled methodological gaps by investigating the effect of ethnicity on education access in Laikipia County, Kenya.

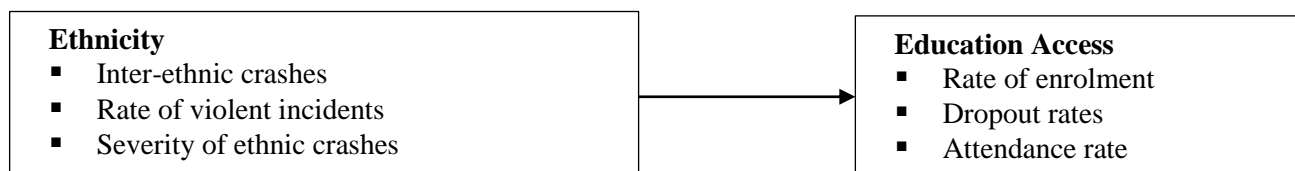
Theoretical Review

Social Identity Theory (SIT)

This theory was developed in the 1970s by British psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner. It argues that people derive their sense of identity and self-esteem from being a member of a social or ethnic group. It is in these group memberships that a sense of identity is established through the processes of social categorization, social comparison, and social identification. According to this theory, social behaviour is founded on the character and motivation of a person as an individual and also as the group to which they belong. It is this need for belonging that makes people inclined to maintain positive images in the groups to which they belong. However, the proponent argues that the inclination may sometimes result in focusing on less favourable characteristics of out-groups or disregarding the positive characteristics that exist in out-groups. This tendency to favour the in-groups often leads to favouritism when it comes to the distribution of resources and discrimination (Harwood, 2020)

The theory will be critical in understanding why ethnicity fuels resource-based conflicts and how this affects education access. It is true that the theory of in-group favoritism and out-group prejudice is crucial to comprehending how resources are distributed in Laikipia West as a result of ethnicity, particularly with regard to educational advancement. Besides, the theory contends that social categorizations exist, and in Laikipia West, multiple ethnic groups such as Kikuyu, Samburu, Pokot, Maasai, and other communities exist. This categorization can lead to the notion of us versus them, further fueling ethnicity.

Conceptual Framework



Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

(Source: Author, 2024)

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed was a mixed-methods design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data. The study took place in Laikipia West within Laikipia County, Kenya. The target population for this research includes secondary school heads, security personnel, teacher's unions, and household heads in Laikipia West. There are 23 public secondary schools in Laikipia West, which will represent 23 school heads. The county has two divisions, 9 locations, and 16 sub-locations, according to County Statistical Abstract (2023). In order to get local information on ethnicity, this study will utilize the chiefs under each location in the constituency. The number of households in this constituency is 23,713. For each household, the head will be responsible for answering the interview questions.

Since the target population isn't homogenous, this research employed a stratified random sampling technique where different subgroups were categorized into strata. The study utilized a census of the area for the teacher's union, security personnel, and secondary school heads since the population is within a manageable size. As for the households, the study utilized Yamane Taro's Formula. Therefore, the household sample size will be 202.

The researcher employed semi-structured questionnaires that incorporated both closed and open-ended questions to gather qualitative data, as well as Likert scale questions to collect quantitative data. In order to ensure the validity, the questionnaire prepared was presented to the supervisor for review and corrections as this was an effective way. To reduce the error from occurring, the researcher engaged in test-retest methods in order to confirm the consistency of the instrument. To prevent any impact on the sample size, the researcher carried out the pilot study in the adjacent Baringo County.

The study was defined as descriptive, prompting the researcher to collect both qualitative and quantitative information. The study employed SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) to handle quantitative data, which included descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Data obtained was presented in tables. On the qualitative component of the research data, thematic analysis was utilized in order to discern and analyze the patterns, themes, and underlying meanings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Response Rate

The Research Return Rate, a critical aspect of the study, gauged the responsiveness and engagement of the target population Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). The study's participants were given a total of 336 questionnaires, 283 of which were completed and returned. This study is based on a sample size of 236 participants. A semi-structured research questionnaire was distributed to 34 respondents, which comprised the school heads, teacher union representatives, and security officials. The researcher realized 100 percent response. An interview schedule was used to gather data from 202 participants, out of which 180 heads of household were interviewed, yielding an 89 percent response rate. Finchman (2008) asserts that a response rate of 60 % and above should be every researcher's target. A 90% return rate was achieved between the 236 targeted respondents, of whom 214 successfully completed the questionnaire or were interviewed. In order to achieve the intended result, the actual response rate thus satisfies the analysis threshold.

Descriptive Analysis

The researcher asked people living in Laikipia County, Kenya, to use a 5-point Likert scale to answer questions

about ethnicity affecting access to education. The replies ranged from Strongly Disagree (SD) [1] to Strongly Agree (SA) [5]. The replies' weighted average and standard deviations were used for the study. A weighted average between 3.50 and 5.00 suggests agreement with a statement, whereas a range between 1.00 and 2.49 shows disagreement. In particular, the weighted average of 1.50–2.49 indicates neutrality, 3.50–4.49 indicates agreement, 4.50–5.00 indicates strong agreement, 1.50–2.49 indicates strongly disagree, and 1.50–2.49 indicates disagree. (Joshi, Kale, Chandel, & Pal 2015).

Education Access

The study's dependent variable, education access in secondary schools in Laikipia County, Kenya, was evaluated by employing a questionnaire to gather and examine opinions from diverse staff members on a range of themes, aspects, and indicators. As a result, a range of responses from the respondents about their access to education were displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Responses on Education Access

Statements	1		2		3		4		5		Mean	Std.
Is the current rate of student enrolment in the secondary schools in Laikipia West encouraging?	13	38.2%	15	44.1%	2	5.9%	3	8.8%	1	2.9%	2.000	0.724
Dropout rates have been a result of increased security concerns in the region.	0	0.0%	4	11.8%	2	5.9%	10	29.4%	18	52.9%	4.235	0.706
Despite the challenges of conflict in the region, secondary school attendance rates continue to be stable.	12	35.3%	9	26.5%	5	14.7%	6	17.6%	4	11.8%	2.618	0.769
The quality of infrastructure has encouraged students to attend schools more often.	6	14.7%	7	20.6%	3	8.8%	8	23.5%	10	29.4%	3.265	0.744

Source: Research Data (2024)

The descriptive results of the replies on secondary school education access in Laikipia County, Kenya, are displayed in Table 1. The first item stated that the current rate of student enrolment in the secondary schools in Laikipia West is encouraging as follows: 13 (38.9%), 15 (44.1%), 2(5.9%), 3(8.8%), and 1 (2.9%) respondents strongly disagreed, disagreed, were neutral, agreed and strongly agreed respectively. This statement had a mean and standard deviation of 2.000 and 0.72, respectively. While the mean of 2.000 indicated that respondents disagreed that the current rate of enrollment in secondary school was encouraging, the standard deviation of 0.72 suggested that most respondents` opinions had low variation about the mean. The respondents` opinion on the second item, which stated that Dropout rates had been a result of increased security concerns in the region, was responded as follows: 0(0.0%), 4(11.8%), 2(5.9%), 10(29.4%) and 18(52.9%) implying strongly disagreement, disagreement, neutrality, agreement and strong agreement that dropout rates have been as a result of increased security in the region respectively. The mean score and standard deviation for this statement were 4.235 and 0.74, respectively. This implies that more than three-quarters of the respondents agreed that the dropout rate at secondary school is a result of increased security in Laikipia County.

The third item stated that despite the challenges of conflict in the region, secondary school attendance rates continue to be stable was answered as follows: 12(35.3%), 9(26.5%), 5(14.7%), 6(17.6%) and 4(11.8%) indicating that respondents strongly disagreed, disagreed, were neutral, agreed and strongly agreed that despite the challenges of conflict in the region, secondary school attendance rates continue to be stable respectively. The mean score was 2.618, which suggested that more than half of the respondents disagreed with the statement. This indicates that the conflicts in Laikipia County have destabilized the secondary school attendance rates. The fourth statement focused on the quality of infrastructures have encouraged students to attend schools more often; it was responded as follows: 6(14.7%), 7(20.6%), 3(8.8%), 8(23.5%), and 10(29.4%) respondents strongly disagreed, disagreed, were neutral, agreed and strongly agree to the statement that despite the challenges of conflict in the region, secondary school attendance rates continue to be stable respectively. The mean score and standard deviation for this statement were 3.265 and 0.74, respectively. This

shows that more than half of the respondents were neutral, indicating that despite the improvement in infrastructure in Laikipia County, the secondary school attendance rate is still low.

The qualitative findings from the household head collected using an interview guide agreed with the quantitative results. For example, when asked to explain how access to education in secondary schools in Laikipia County has been affected by ethnicity, most of them had this to say:

There is low translation late of pupils from primary to secondary school; some of the reasons attributed to this are ethnicity conflicts, which give rise to conflicts among the communities that lead to some of the people migrating to other places where they think there is peace, this migration of time to time make student loose interest in school because most of the time they are out of school. The high rate of insecurity has led to a high dropout rate among secondary school students in Laikipia County. This is also attributed to the increase in conflicts from time to time, which is evident among the communities. The highest number of elders disagreed that secondary school attendance has been stable despite the development in infrastructure, which includes the building of school facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, washrooms, and others. The rate of student attendance in these schools has not improved.

Lusenaka & Matisi's (2024) study findings were in line with the study's quantitative and qualitative findings. They observed that Secondary education continued to lag behind, with a staggering 53%, against 85%, in primary education. This study also noted the need for the government to expand infrastructure at schools to address the challenges that out-of-school children face, such as poverty and cultural barriers, and ensure that good collaboration between communities exists to ensure a conducive learning environment.

Ethnicity on Education Access

The first objective was to ascertain how ethnicity affected secondary school students' access to education in Laikipia County, Kenya. To achieve this objective, the researcher administered questionnaires to teachers' unions, secondary school heads, and security personnel. In addition, the researcher interviewed household heads. Table 2 summarizes the findings from educational officers, heads of schools, and security officers.

Table 2: Responses on ethnicity on education access

Statements	1		2		3		4		5		Mean	Std.
Inter-ethnic clashes in Laikipia West have indeed impacted students' ability to access education	2	5.9%	1	2.9%	3	8.8%	11	32.4%	15	44.1%	3.882	0.724
The rate of violence due to ethnic tensions has indeed affected the rate of school attendance in the region	5	14.7%	2	5.9%	5	14.7%	9	26.5%	13	38.2%	3.676	0.706
The severity of ethnic crashes in Laikipia West has resulted in some instances of school closure.	1	2.9%	5	14.7%	3	8.8%	16	47.1%	9	26.5%	3.794	0.769
Increased cases of violence in the community may have resulted in a disturbance in school attendance	4	11.8%	2	5.9%	1	2.9%	15	44.1%	12	35.3%	3.853	0.744

Source: Research Data (2024)

Descriptive results in Table 2 display the replies regarding ethnicity and secondary school educational access in Laikipia County, Kenya. The first item stated that Inter-ethnic clashes in Laikipia West have indeed impacted students' ability to access education as follows: 2 (5.9%), 1 (2.9%), 3(8.8%), 11(32.4%), and 15 (44.1%) respondents strongly disagreed, disagreed, were neutral, agreed and strongly agreed respectively. This statement had a mean and standard deviation of 3.882 and 0.72, respectively. The mean of 3.882 indicated that almost three-quarters of the respondents agreed that inter-ethnic clashes have impacted students' ability to access education in Laikipia County. The respondents' opinion on the second item, which stated that the rate of violence due to ethnic tensions has indeed affected the rate of school attendance in the region was responded as follows: 5(14.7%), 2(5.9%), 5(14.7%), 9(26.5%) and 13(38.2%) implying strongly disagreement, disagreement, neutrality, agreement and strong agreement that dropout rates have been as a result of increased security in the region respectively. The mean score and standard deviation for this statement were 3.676 and 0.74, respectively. This implies that the rate of violence due to ethnic tensions has indeed affected the rate of school attendance in Laikipia County.

The third item stated that the severity of ethnic crashes in Laikipia West has resulted in some instances of school closure was answered as follows: 1(2.9%), 5(14.7%), 3(8.8%), 16(47.1%) and 9(26.5%) indicating that respondents strongly disagreed, disagreed, were neutral, agreed and strongly agreed that severity of ethnic crashes resulted in some instances of school closure respectively. The mean score of 3.794 is a strong indication that respondents agreed that the severity of ethnic crashes in Laikipia West has resulted in school closure. The fourth statement focused on increased cases of violence among the community that may have resulted in disturbance of school attendance; it was responded to as follows: 4(11.8%), 2(5.9%), 1(2.9%), 15(44.1%) and 12(35.3%) respondents strongly disagreed, disagreed, were neutral, agreed and strongly agree to the statement that despite the challenges of conflict in the region, secondary school attendance rates continue to be stable respectively. The mean score and standard deviation for this statement were 3.853 and 0.74, respectively. This suggested that increased cases of violence in the community resulted in a disturbance in school attendance.

The qualitative findings from the household head collected using an interview guide agreed with the quantitative results. For example, when asked to explain how access to education in secondary schools in Laikipia County has been affected by ethnic conflicts, most of them had this to say:

Students' access to school has been adversely affected by interethnic conflicts in Laikipia County because pastoralist populations feel excluded and denigrated by the agricultural communities. Inevitably, this leads to interethnic disputes. Some students take care of their parents who are injured during ethnic conflicts, using school time to care for their ailing parents. However, some parents are unable to make ends meet after these conflicts, so they are unable to pay for their children's education. As a result, some students choose to drop out of school and seek out paying jobs to support their families. The household heads reported that in some areas, the intensity of ethnic crashes has resulted in the closure of secondary schools completely because, in some instances, the schools are burnt or become the hiding area of all the communities in fear of attack; therefore, stay as a group in the nearby schools so that in case of attacks they will put effort together and protect themselves from attacks, therefore this leads to disturbance of school attendance. When house heads were asked whether increased cases of violence in the community may have resulted in a disturbance in school attendance, the respondents indicated that some secondary school students became hostile to other students in the same school or nearby schools. As a result, this conflict often led to disruptions and hostility in the community. This resulted in community members finding no meaningful value in their livelihoods. Also, Laikipia County has been experiencing perennial conflicts that have worsened over time. The conflicts have often led to the disruption of social and economic activities and people migrating from their residential areas in search of safer places to settle in. Additionally, during inter-

ethnic conflicts, the poor and economically marginalized form a pool of recruits for rebel movements; the young men in secondary school are the main groups in these movements, and therefore, this is one reason why we experience high rates of dropouts in secondary schools in Laikipia County

The study's quantitative and qualitative results aligned with the literature reviewed by Wangare (2021), who investigated the impact of ethnic conflict on children's access and participation in primary education and contended that ethnic conflicts frequently present numerous difficulties for students. The study focused on understanding a broad set of policies that would be critical in addressing poverty in communities, which may accelerate the rate of ethnicity and subsequently affect the quality of education. The finding noted that ethnic conflicts emerge as a result of the rivalry over scarce and dwindling resources, as well as partiality, prejudice, tribal hostility, historical land inequities, ethnically-driven voting in national elections, exclusionary politics, and unequal allocation of resources among diverse communities. Ethnic conflicts have had adverse impacts on educational activities and initiatives. In addition, schools have been compelled to shut down, resulting in elevated rates of non-attendance and low enrollment and attendance rates.

The findings from this study are supported by social identity theory, which states that social behaviour is founded on the character and motivation of a person as an individual and also as the group to which they belong. It is this need for belonging that makes people inclined to maintain positive images in the groups to which they belong. However, the proponent argues that the inclination may sometimes result in focusing on less favourable characteristics of out-groups or disregarding the positive characteristics that exist in out-groups. This tendency to favour the in-groups often leads to favouritism when it comes to the distribution of resources and discrimination (Harwood, 2020)

Inferential Statistics

The study utilized linear regression to assess the influence of ethnicity on access to education in secondary schools located in Laikipia County, Kenya.

Regression Analysis

This study employed regression analysis to address the research question, "What is the effect of ethnicity on education access in secondary schools in Laikipia County, Kenya?" In an effort to address this query, data on ethnicity, agro-pastoral, cattle rustling, proliferation of small arms, and education access were collected from educational officers, heads of schools, and security personnel. The results are shown in Tables 3–5.

A multivariate regression analysis was performed to investigate how independent variables and dependent variables are related. R was the correlation coefficient, and it demonstrates the nature and strength of the link between resources-based conflicts and education access in Laikipia County, Kenya. R^2 was the coefficient of determination, which explained the variability of the outcome variable when independent variables had changed.

Table 3: Model Summary of Regression Statistics on Ethnicity and Education Access

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.767 ^a	.588	.531	.31644

a. Predictors: (Constant), ethnicity

b. Dependent variable: educational access

Source: Research Data (2024)

Table 3, R-square represents the rate of the outcome variable variation as shown in the model above. The model designated the correlation at 0.767, showcasing that the nexus between the study variables was significant and positive. The R^2 at 0.588 and the adjusted $R^2 = 0.531$ shows that 53.1% of changes in education access can be explained by changes in the predictor variables of the research.

The model summary table shows that ethnicity can explain 53.1% of the change in education access implying that the remaining 46.9% of the variation in education access could be accounted for by other variables not involved in the current research. This shows that the variables are very significant and hence need to be considered in any effort to improve education access in secondary schools in Laikipia County, Kenya.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Table 4: ANOVA Results Table on Ethnicity and education access

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5.510	4	2.160	5.382	.001 ^b
Residual	76.900	30	.389		
Total	82.410	34			

a. Dependent Variable: Education Access

b. Predictors: (Constant), ethnicity.

Source: Research Data (2024)

Table 4 displays the findings of ANOVA statistics, which assessed the significance of the variability between the variables. The ANOVA results established that the independent variables, in this case, ethnicity, agro-pastoral tension, cattle rustling, and proliferation of small arms, had a significant effect on empowerment of education access ($0.00 < 0.05$), which is lower than the prior set threshold value of 0.05, which was used to determine whether the predictor variables had a significant influence on the outcome variable. Furthermore, the suggested model is significant in explaining the relationships, as indicated by the p-value ($0.00 < 0.05$), which suggested that the variance was significant. As a result, the chosen Multiple Linear Regression model accurately modeled the data and predicted the outcome variable.

Table 5: Regression Co-efficient Table on Ethnicity and Education Access

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	19.301	1.843		9.930	.000
Ethnicity	1.398	.108	.540	12.976	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Education access $p < .05$

Source: Research Data (2024)

Table 5 shows the number of changes in secondary school education access in Laikipia County, which is predicted by a unit change in ethnicity, agro-pastoral tension, cattle rustling, and proliferation of small arms. Accordingly, results show that the "Constant," which shows the predicted value of education access when ethnicity is zero, is 19.301

As regards each predictor variable, the study findings indicated that for ethnicity (E), the Beta is .540, indicating that for every unit increment in (E), it is anticipated that access to education will increase by 540 units.

The results also show if each predictor variable is contributing to the model at a significance level that is statistically significant of $p < .05$. Thus, E ($B = .540$, $p = .000 < .05$). According to these findings, the p-values are below the significance level (0.05). According to the findings, ethnicity have a statistically significant impact on secondary school education access in Laikipia County, Kenya.

Thus, the researcher improved the regression model by substituting the regression analysis's coefficient for the beta values as follows:

$$EA = 19.301 + 0.540(E) + e.$$

Where EA= Education Access, E= Ethnicity, and e = Error Term.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the established results, the current research reached the following conclusions. The objective, which assessed the effect of ethnicity on education access, the study revealed that Inter-ethnic clashes have indeed impacted students' ability to access education. Besides, the rate of violence due to ethnic tensions has affected the rate of school attendance in secondary schools in Laikipia County; in addition, the severity of ethnic crashes has resulted in school closure, and increased cases of violence among the community may have resulted in disturbance of secondary school attendance. According to the study findings, more than two-thirds of the respondents agreed that ethnicity, which is the result of inter-ethnic clashes, rate of violence, and ethnic tension, has adversely affected access to education in Laikipia County, Kenya. This stipulates that ethnicity has significantly affected access to education, according to inferential statistics.

The Ministry of Education should provide the required support in such areas affected by ethnicity as a result of inter-ethnic clashes so that the schools will have the recommended ratio of students and teachers at all times, furthermore enhancing security within school premises, along with the promotion of peace education and awareness, is recommended for fostering behavioral change among conflicting groups.

The government should establish the necessary institutions and resources to maintain peace and order and bolster law enforcement authorities, including the police and judiciary, to guarantee that ethnic conflicts among communities are dealt with legally in Laikipia County.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study focused on ethnicity and education access in secondary schools in Laikipia County; the study only covered four variables. Future research should cover the study variables that were left out in this study and find out how they affect education access.

Further research should be carried out to find out how ethnicity affects education access in other areas that are prone to cattle rustling, such as Baringo, West Pokot, or Tana River.

The current study focused on secondary schools; further studies should focus on other forms of education, such as primary schools or tertiary education.

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