



Comparison between Teachers' and Pupils' Perceptions on Factors Affecting Boy-Child Retention in Primary Schools in Nzega District Council, Tanzania

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Abstract: *This study compares teachers' and pupils' perceptions on factors affecting boy-child retention in public primary schools in Nzega District Council, Tanzania. The study targeted all 12 schools with low retention rate below 70%. Respondents included 94 teachers and 221 standard seven boys. Comparative research design was employed. Questionnaires were used to collect data. Means and Standard deviations were used to analyse descriptive data. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to establish whether there was a significant difference between the perceptions of teachers and pupils on school-based and house hold factors on boy-child retention in school. The findings indicate that school-based and household factors had both positive and negative effects on boy-child retention in school. Mann-Whitney U test yielded p- value of 0.595, which is greater than 0.05 ($0.595 > 0.05$). The null hypothesis was accepted because there was no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of teachers and pupils on school-based and household factors affecting boy-child retention. It was recommended that Tanzania Social Action Fund programs should review on how to assist the boy-child, especially those from poor families. Additionally, the government of the United Republic of Tanzania should formulate and enforce laws that protect the boy-child and improve physical facilities in public primary schools and that school lunches be provided and excessive punishments be reduced.*

Keywords: *Boy-child, Retention, Public Primary schools, Nzega District Council, Tanzania.*

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1. Introduction

The retention of boys in primary school refers to their admission, progression, and completion of that level of education (Miller, 2023). About 132 million boys globally do not attend primary education to completion (UNESCO, 2022). In the United States of America, schools are increasingly using various positive behavioral interventions to address various challenges that tend to disproportionately affect boys' primary education. Despite the interventions, low retention remains a persistent issue, especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds who face economic hardships and have limited access to support services

(Miller, 2023; Smith & Jones, 2023). In the United Kingdom challenges such as socio-economic inequality and the stigma surrounding boys' emotional expression continue to hinder the retention of boys from lower-income backgrounds (Baker, 2023). In Finland, only 93% of boy-pupils complete primary education as boys in some regions still face challenges with retention, which is influenced by socio-economic factors (National Institute for Educational Policy, 2023).

The Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) report of 2022 reveals that about 15.6% of boys leave before completing primary education in India mainly due to poverty. Cultural expectations also contribute as boys are often viewed as future providers,

creating additional pressure to prioritize work over education. Additionally, such school-based factors as poor infrastructure in rural schools and overcrowded classrooms often lead to disinterest in education, causing many boys to drop out early.

UNICEF (2018a) reports that in sub-Saharan Africa, boys are less likely, than girls, to be retained in school due to economic pressures, cultural expectations that prioritize immediate labor, and lack of school resources. In Uganda, the retention rate for boys decreased from 77% in 2019 to 72% in 2023 as they are often pulled out of school to help in family businesses, thereby lowering their retention (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Rwanda experiences similar challenges with retaining boys in school, particularly those from low-income backgrounds who struggle with the indirect costs of education such as uniforms, school materials, and transportation (UNICEF, 2024).

In Tanzania, the national retention rate for boys in rural primary schools was about 70% in 2019, which decreased to 68% in 2020 and further dropped to 65% in 2021 with key causes for these dropouts being economic pressures, family responsibilities, and cultural expectations that prioritize work over education (UNICEF, 2021a). Retention of the boy-child in public primary schools in Tanzania has become a pressing concern in recent years. While efforts to achieve gender parity have traditionally focused on girls, boys are increasingly at risk of dropping out due to a range of school-based and household factors, which include inadequate school infrastructure, poverty, domestic responsibilities, and peer pressure (UNESCO, 2020; URT, 2021). Understanding these factors is crucial for developing inclusive policies that promote equitable education for all. Education Development Trust (2023) equally report that poor school infrastructure, financial limitations, and cultural expectations related to gender roles continue to affect boys' retention in school in Nzega District Council.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The Constitution of Tanzania guarantees the right to education for all children, ensuring equal access to educational opportunities for both girls and boys (Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, 2005). Despite national efforts to ensure universal primary education, the retention of the boy-child in Tanzanian public schools remains a challenge. Reports indicate that school-based factors such as corporal punishment, teacher bias, and lack of male role models, coupled with household factors like poverty, child labor, and family instability, contribute to low retention rates among boys (MoEVT, 2022; UNICEF, 2021b). The District Education Director (Primary Education) statistics of 2024 reveal that the boy-child retention in Nzega District Council had a consistent downward trend of 80% (2021), 73% (2022), 72% (2023) and 66% (2024). Hence, this study sought to analyse school-based and household

factors affecting the boy-child retention in public primary schools as perceived by teachers and pupils.

1.2 Justification of the Study

Mussa and Kileo (2023) examined the impact of corporal punishment on school attendance among primary school pupils in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania and revealed that excessive disciplinary measures contribute to increased absenteeism and dropout. Said and Nyanda (2023) conducted a case study in Morogoro, Tanzania in which they analysed how inadequate physical infrastructure poses a significant threat to the provision of quality education, particularly in rural areas. Kimaro and Mwandambo (2024) investigated household economic factors influencing student dropout in public secondary schools in Simiyu Region of Tanzania. Additionally, Kessy and Shayo's (2019) study revealed that socio-economic factors influenced education practices in Nzega District Council.

However, this current study is not a replication of any of the cited studies above. While the cited studies have explored various aspects of education, none has specifically analysed perceptions of teachers and pupils on school-based and household factors affecting boy-child retention in public primary schools in Nzega District Council. There remains a significant research gap regarding the combined effect of school-based and household factors on boy-child retention in public primary schools, which this current study sought to fill.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the school-based and household factors affecting boy-child retention in public primary schools in Nzega District Council as perceived by teachers and pupils?
2. Is there a significant difference between teachers and pupils' perceptions on school-based and household factors affecting boy-child retention in public primary schools in Nzega District Council?

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant difference between teachers' and pupils' perceptions on school-based and household factors affecting boy-child retention in public primary schools in the in Nzega District Council.

2. Literature Review

2.1 School-Based Factors and Boy-child Retention

School-based factors that affect the retention of boys in public primary schools include teacher-student

relationships, quality of education, physical facilities, and physical violence.

2.1.1 Teacher-Pupil Relationship

Positive teacher-pupil relationship is a key factor in promoting learning in schools as it boosts a student's self-esteem, increases their engagement in classroom activities, and improves attendance. On the other hand, negative teacher-pupil relationships may lead to lower students' retention in school (Agyekum, 2019). Positive teacher-pupil relationships are especially important for children at risk due to their backgrounds. Li, Bergin and Olsen (2022) posit that when students have good relationships with their teachers, they are more likely to remain in school and progress through their grades. A poor relationship with teachers negatively impacts the retention of the boy-child, as they may feel unsafe in the school environment.

A study by Wainaina (2021) also found out that strong teacher-pupil relationships positively influence retention, as they create an environment where pupils feel comfortable sharing educational and socio-economic challenges, which might otherwise contribute to low retention rates. On the other hand, poor relationships in school reduce the opportunities for teachers to guide and support students in adapting to the school environment (Hess, Magnuson & Beeler, 2022).

A study conducted by Msuya and Mligo (2020) found out that teacher-pupil relationships significantly affect pupils' school attendance and completion. The study revealed that boys who experienced neglect or verbal abuse from teachers were more likely to disengage from school activities and eventually drop out. On the contrary, where teachers showed empathy, fairness, and encouragement, boys demonstrated improved attendance and higher retention rates.

2.1.2 Quality Education

For quality education to happen there must be quality learning environments that will stimulate pupils to stay in school until they complete the primary cycle. Lack of physical teaching and learning resources, tend to devalue the provision of quality education, which may also affect the retention rate in school (Sakibu & Buna, 2022). The study by Shukia (2021) revealed that failure to apply proper teaching methods, which uphold pupils' attention, may negatively affect their retention in primary education and that the fee-free basic education policy had resulted in overcrowded classrooms, a scenario that resulted in some dropping out of school. On quality education, OECD (2022) observed that class repetition was the most powerful predictor of school dropouts in public primary schools.

Distance to school is another element that determines quality education. According to Kipkemboi (2021) the location of the institution from the child's home has an

effect on his retention. Due to the limited number of schools and the widely distributed rural population, pupils must walk across difficult terrains to get to school. Barrett (2019) and URT (2021) maintain that long distances have been associated with lower retention rates particularly in basic education level because daily tiresome walking gives learners cause to drop out.

2.1.3 Physical Facilities

School physical facilities include classrooms, play grounds, laboratories, toilets, drinking water tanks, desks, and offices. Adequate physical facilities have been recognized as a factor that increases school attendance and retention among children (Mwoma, Begi & Murungi, 2018). Akuoko-Nyantakyi, Francis and Ojwan'g (2023) equally observed a significant relationship between physical facilities and academic performance, which culminates into student retention.

Low pupil retention may be caused by poorly equipped schools and inadequate or lack of physical facilities (Wambua, Murungi & Mutwiri, 2019). Muthanje, Khatete, and Riech (2019) argues that classrooms with earthen floor, lacking windows, doors, and with cracked walls are a risk to pupils, who may fear to attend school and finally drop out. Keengwe (2023) equally asserts that classrooms with cluttered floors, poor ventilation and poor/ or lack desks negatively affect boy-child retention in schools.

2.1.4 Physical Violence

Physical violence refers to a measure which imposes any degree of physical harm to a learner (WHO, 2020). Corporal punishment is an example of physical violence in schools. Most corporal punishment involves hitting pupils with the hand or with an object such as a whip, stick, belt, shoe, pulling a child's hair, ears and forcing them to stay in uncomfortable positions. WHO (2021) observes that using corporal punishment to maintain discipline results in dropout of boys from primary school. Alistides and Mwila (2021) also report the negative effects of corporal punishment in primary schools as being truancy and dropout. In a study by Wiafe (2022) in Ghana rural primary schools, pupils cited corporal punishment as a factor in their decision to leave school.

Mussa and Kileo (2023) similarly, examined the impact of corporal punishment on school attendance among primary school pupils in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania and found out that it derailed student retention, particularly among male pupils. Magere, Allida and Ojwan'g (2023) also revealed that teachers' use of corporal punishment is a hindrance in their attempts to offer guidance and counseling services to students who are emotionally and psychologically wounded already.

2.3 Household Factors and Boy-child Retention

The household factors affecting boy-child retention in public primary schools include role model, parenting, gender roles, parental level of education, and poverty.

2.3.1 Role Model

The influence of role models such as parents, guardians, family members, unrelated adults, classmates, and other influential figures can be significant in children's social learning as they also become mentors to them (Kearney & Levine, 2020). According to Ruxton (2015), a boy-child with a positive role model at home participates highly in education and may remain in school until completion of the intended program as they provide with skills on how to face challenges from an early age. However, the boy-child with no positive role model often drops from school. Smith (2015) concurs by stating that lack of positive role models is a key reason for poor retention among boys in school. Such boys lack someone who would take time to sit and discuss with them their challenges.

Kiruki and Kendagor's (2021) study in Kenya revealed that most boys who dropped out of school were raised by irresponsible parents who did not provide the required role modelling. Such boys were left without guidance which accelerated their absenteeism from school and final dropout. According to UNICEF (2022), a role model can help to address the problem of boys' lack of motivation and help in designing effective interventions to improve boy-child retention in school.

2.3.2 Parenting

Single parenting involves either of the parents taking the responsibilities of both mother and father concurrently, which may negatively affect the boy-child retention in primary school because when a child needs close supervision and guidance at an early stage of life, either mother or father may not be available to take charge of their caring role (Muhle, 2020). According to UNICEF (2018b), children of single-parent families are more vulnerable to dropping out of school as compared to those living with both parents who are active in their education activities. Similarly, a study in Kenya by Wainaina (2021) observed that a majority of boys who dropped from primary school were either living in single parent households, with grandparents or relatives. In the Tanzania, Mwansasu and Komba's (2022) study, which examined the impact of parental marital status on school retention in Morogoro, reported that boys from single-parent families were vulnerable to dropping out due to economic hardships and insufficient emotional support.

2.3.3 Gender Roles

Gender roles are the behaviours that a society deems 'appropriate' for either gender. (Çuhadaroğlu, 2021). Koskei, Itegi and Muchanje (2020a) in a study conducted in Kenya revealed that parental treatment of children was influenced by their gender. In poor families, parents/guardians consider boys as more helpful in operating outdoor home chores, specifically agricultural activities, due to their masculinity, which pressurizes them to drop from school, especially those from pastoral societies. Some values inculcated during this period were contrary to school values and boys emerged from seclusion unwilling to take instruction from teachers. Moreover, in such societies, boys inherit family wealth such as cattle at an early age. This scenario negatively affects their school retention

Msuya and Ngowi's (2023) study in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania found out that prevailing gender norms in rural communities pressured boys to prioritize herding and farming over schooling. They highlighted that during peak agricultural seasons, boys were often withdrawn from school to support family livelihoods, resulting in irregular attendance and ultimately increasing dropout.

Similarly, Mwakyusa and Lema (2024) explored gender expectations in the Dodoma region, Tanzania and reported that cultural beliefs emphasizing male independence and need for manual labor contributed to boys' disengagement from education. They noted that boys were socialized from an early age to assume adult responsibilities, such as herding livestock, which diverted their focus away from school.

2.3.4 Parental Level of Education

Parental level of education affects school retention of their children. Pupils whose parents have lower levels of education may not perform as well as those of highly educated parents because parents with higher levels of education seem to support their children's education more than parents with lower levels of education. Similarly, children of highly educated parents often feel more at ease in their learning process, leading to greater academic performance and retention in school (Chemagosi, 2020).

Ujudi's (2018) study on parental level of education revealed that such positive outcomes as better school attendance and completion are due to parental involvement in a child's school life. Additionally, Mwihia and Ongek (2019) assert that uneducated parents do not see the advantage of education because they did not go to school themselves and have no direct experience of school challenges. Boys from such homes would drop out of school because their parents are unable to counsel and guide them on the importance of education.

Idris, Hussain and Nasir (2020) also report that while parents with low level of education have high expectations from their children even though they invest very little, if at all, in them, those with higher level of education invest highly in their children's schooling and are more systematic in planning the educational targets for their children and creating a good learning environment at home, which motivates them and enhances their retention in school.

A study by Nsimba and Mtonga (2023) in the Mwanza region of Tanzania revealed that children whose parents had higher level of education were more likely to receive consistent academic support and motivation at home, which resulted in better school attendance and lower dropout rates. Conversely, boys from households where parents had lower levels of education faced challenges such as lack of supervision at homework and less encouragement, leading to high rates of absenteeism and dropout from school.

2.3.5 Poverty

Parents in low-income brackets often fail to provide learning resources for their children, which include textbooks, exercise books, pens, pencils, schoolbags and school uniforms (Koskei, Itegi & Muchanje, 2020b; Christensen, 2023), which may result in pupils quitting school. Mwihia and Ongek (2019) affirm that boys whose parents are poor drop out from school so as to assist their parents in manual work so as to provide food for the family, hence they become drop outs. Boys from well-to-do families are likely to be retained in school because their parents can afford the indirect costs of education such as lunch, school uniform, and transportation, which positively affect their retention in school.

A study by Kimaro and Mwandambo (2024) investigated the economic factors influencing dropout rates in secondary schools in Simiyu Region of Tanzania and found out that financial constraints and parental unemployment often forced boys to leave school so as to engage in income-generating activities so as to contribute to family income.

3. Methodology

3.1 Design

This study employed a descriptive-comparative research design.

3.2 Samples and Sampling

The targeted population for this study consisted of 123 government-employed teachers and 600 standard seven boy-pupils from the selected twelve mixed primary schools that had boy-child retention rate of less than 75% as per the Statistics Logistic Office records in the

Department of Education of 2023 in Nzega District Council. Purposive sampling was used to select the public primary schools, while simple random sampling was employed to select teachers and pupils. Ninety-four (94) teachers and 240 pupils participated in this study.

3.3 Data Gathering Instrument

Self-constructed questionnaires for teachers and pupils, whose reliability yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82 for school-based factors and 0.90 for household factors were used. There was an overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.94, indicating excellent reliability. Questionnaires were developed in English and translated into Kiswahili to ensure language familiarity and comprehension, cultural relevance, and data quality and authenticity.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

3.4.1 Introductory Letter

An introductory letter was obtained from the Director of Graduate Studies and Research at the University of Eastern Africa to facilitate the process of securing a research permit from the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH).

3.4.2 Official Endorsement

After obtaining the research permit from COSTECH, the researcher presented it to the Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS) in Tabora, Tanzania, to seek official endorsement for conducting research in the region. Subsequently, the researcher presented the permit to the District Administrative Secretary (DAS) in Nzega District Council so as to obtain further endorsement and authorization. Upon receiving these official approvals, the researcher delivered the letters to the head teachers of the twelve selected primary schools.

3.4.3 Questionnaires

Before collecting data, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and the significance to the respondents. Participants were instructed not to write their names on the questionnaires to ensure anonymity and were encouraged to provide honest responses. The questionnaires were distributed to teachers and pupils with the assistance of the deputy head teachers. After completion, the filled questionnaires were collected by the researcher for data analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data was coded and analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations were used to analyse perceptions of teachers and pupils on school-based and household factors affecting boy-child retention in school. Mann-Whitney U test was used to establish whether there was a significant difference

between the perceptions of teachers and pupils in this regard.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study and discussion, which compares teachers' and pupils' perceptions on school-based and household factors affecting boy-child retention in public primary schools in Nzega District Council, Tanzania.

Research Question 1: *What are the school-based and household factors affecting boy-child retention in public primary schools in Nzega District Council as perceived by teachers and pupils?*

Interpretation Scale

The interpretation scale used is indicated as follows: 1.00 -1.49 =Disagree; 1.50 - 2.49=Tend to disagree; 2.50 - 3.49=Tend to Agree; and 3.50 - 4.00=Agree

4.1 Teachers' perceptions on school-based factors affecting boy-child retention

Table 1: Teachers' perceptions on school-based factors

Descriptive Statistics (n=94)	Mean	SD
Teacher-Pupil Relationships		
There is a caring and fully supportive environment in schools	2.04	0.33
There is good relationship between teachers and pupil	2.04	0.41
There is availability of guidance and counselling service at school	2.81	0.68
The pupils fail to express their educational and economic challenges to their teachers	3.24	0.56
There is existence of peer groups in schools	3.03	0.47
Average	2.63	0.33
Descriptive Statistics (n=94)	Mean	SD
Quality Education		
There are strong teaching strategies in schools	2.23	0.71
There is availability of teaching and learning resources	3.16	0.75
There are long distances from home to schools	3.20	0.70
Poor academic reports	2.96	0.59
Repeating classes	3.02	0.67
Average	2.91	0.68
Descriptive Statistics (n=94)	Mean	SD
Physical Facilities		
There is availability of classrooms with windows, doors and good roofs	2.85	0.78
There is availability of water and standard toilets	3.12	0.65
There are spacious classrooms	2.97	0.65
Unavailability of school fence encourage pupils to sneak from school	2.89	0.81
Inadequate desks in the classrooms	3.07	0.63
Average	2.98	0.70
Descriptive Statistics (n=94)	Mean	SD
Physical Violence		
Excessive punishment in school.	1.96	0.51
Bullying and oppression among pupils.	2.05	0.56

Corporal punishment in school	1.90	0.44
Severe punishment from teachers	1.79	0.53
Average	1.54	0.41

Table 1 shows teachers' perceptions on school-based factors affecting boy-child retention in public primary schools in Nzega District Council in Tanzania. There was disagreement on the existence of a good relationship between teachers and pupils (M=2.04; SD=0.41) and a caring and fully supportive environment in schools (M=2.04; SD=0.33), which seem to negatively affect the boy-child retention. However, there was agreement on the availability of guidance and counselling services (M=2.81; SD=0.68) and the existence of peer groups in schools (3.03; SD=0.47), which seem to positively affect the boy-child retention in school.

The finding that pupils fail to express their educational and economic challenges to teachers (M=3.24; SD=0.56) seems to negatively affect their retention in school. Teachers tended to agree that there is availability of teaching-learning resources (M=3.16; SD=0.75), which positively affects retention. However, their disagreement on strong teaching strategies in schools (M=2.23; SD=0.71), agreement on long distances from home to school (M=3.20; SD =0.70), poor academic reports

(M=2.96; SD= 0.59), and repeating classes (M=3.02; SD= 0.67), negatively affect the boy-child retention in school.

The unavailability of school fence (M=2.89; SD=0.81) and inadequate desks in the classrooms (M=3.07; SD=0.63), seem to negatively affect the boy-child retention in school. However, the availability of classrooms with windows, doors, and good roofs (M=2.85; SD=0.78), the availability of water and standard toilets (M=3.12; SD=0.65), and spacious classrooms (M=2.97; SD=0.65) seem to positively affect the boy-child retention in school. In addition, teachers disagreed on the existence of physical violence in school (M=1.54; SD=0.41), which seems to positively affect the boy-child retention in school.

4.2 Pupils' perceptions on school-based factors affecting boy-child retention

Table 2: Pupils' perceptions on school-based factors

Descriptive Statistics (n=221)	Mean	SD
Teacher-Pupil Relationships		
There is a caring and fully supportive environment in schools	2.95	0.78
There is a good relationship between teachers and pupils	3.06	0.86
There is availability of guidance and counselling service at school	3.10	0.69
The pupils fail to express their educational and economic challenges to their teachers	3.20	0.77
There is existence of peer groups	3.19	0.76
Average	3.10	0.77
Descriptive Statistics (n=221)	Mean	SD
Quality Education		
There are strong teaching strategies in schools	2.82	0.91
There is availability of teaching aids	2.87	0.89
There is long distance from home to school	3.15	0.86
Poor academic reports	2.93	0.86
Repeating Classes	3.21	0.90
Average	3.10	0.77
Descriptive Statistics (n=221)	Mean	SD
Physical Facilities		
There is availability of classrooms with windows, doors and good roofs	2.81	0.87
There is availability of clean and safe water and standard toilets at school	3.11	0.82
There are spacious classrooms	2.92	0.83
Unavailability of school fence encourage pupils to sneak from school	3.09	0.87

Inadequate desks in classroom		2.88	0.92
Average		3.10	0.77
Descriptive Statistics (n=221)		Mean	SD
Physical Violence			
Excessive punishment in school.	3.32	0.81	
Bullying and oppression among pupils.	3.24	0.78	
Corporal punishment in school	3.36	0.71	
Severe punishment from teachers.	3.30	0.71	
Average	3.30	0.75	

Table 2 shows pupils' perceptions on school-based factors affecting boy-child retention in public primary schools in Nzega District Council in Tanzania. They tended to agree that there is a caring and fully supportive environment in schools (M=2.95; SD=0.78), a good relationship between teachers and pupils (M=3.06; SD=0.86), availability of guidance and counseling services in school (M=3.10; SD=0.69), and the existence of peer groups (M=3.19; SD=0.76), all of which seem to positively affect their retention. However, there was agreement that pupils' failure to express their educational and economic challenges to their teachers (M=3.20; SD=0.77) seems to negatively affect their retention in school.

There are strong teaching strategies in schools (M=2.82; SD=0.91) and the availability of teaching aids (M=2.87; SD=0.89), which seem to positively affect the boy-child retention in school. However, the long distances from home to school (M=3.15; SD=0.86), poor academic reports (M=2.93; SD=0.86), and repeating classes

(M=3.21; SD=0.90), all seem to negatively affect the boy-child retention.

The availability of classrooms with windows, doors and good roofs (M=2.81; SD=0.87), clean and safe water and standard toilets at school (M=3.11; SD=0.82), and spacious classrooms (M=2.92; SD=0.83), seem to positively affect the boy-child retention in school. However, the unavailability of school fences that encourages pupils to sneak from school (M=3.09; SD=0.87) and inadequate desks in classrooms (M=2.88; SD=0.92) seem to negatively affect the boy-child retention in school. Furthermore, the existence of physical violence in schools (M=3.30; SD=0.75) seems to negatively affect the boy-child retention.

4.3 Teachers' Perceptions on Household Factors affecting Boy-child retention

Table 3: Teachers' Perceptions on Household factors

Descriptive Statistics (n=94)	Mean	SD
Role Model		
Lack of role models at home	3.18	0.62
Lack of supervision and encouragement from parents	3.26	0.64
Lack of guidance and instruction	3.23	0.58
Strife in the family	3.21	0.65
Separation of parents	3.20	0.62
Average	3.22	0.62
Descriptive Statistics (n=94)	Mean	SD
Parenting		
Absence of a father or mother in the family	2.91	0.74
Single parenting	3.16	0.64
Severe homelessness	3.10	0.62
Raising children without direction	2.86	0.78
Average	3.00	0.69
Descriptive Statistics (n=94)	Mean	SD
Gender Role		
Boys are given priority in the family	3.16	0.72
Boys can get jobs easily regardless of their education status	3.06	0.67
Parents are not taking disciplinary measures on boys	3.14	0.65
Male children can take care of themselves	3.06	0.69

Male children have more support at home	3.17	0.54
Male children are assured of inheritance of family property	3.21	0.57
Average	3.13	0.64
Descriptive Statistics (n=94)	Mean	SD
Parental Level of Education		
Parents have little understanding of schoolwork	3.15	0.55
Poor moral support and learning materials from parents	3.03	0.73
Low level of parental education	3.20	0.65
Poor parental involvement in school activities	3.07	0.68
Average	3.11	0.65
Descriptive Statistics (n=94)	Mean	SD
Poverty		
Boys do most of the income-earning activities in the family	3.11	0.68
Boys are more involved in animal breeding and farming activities	3.32	0.61
Parents meet the indirect costs of the school	3.27	0.71
Boys are involved in child labour	3.35	0.56
Boys buy their own school supplies	3.15	0.84
Average	3.24	0.68

Table 3 shows teachers' perceptions on household factors affecting boy-child retention in public primary schools in Nzega District Council in Tanzania. They tended to agree on lack of role modelling at home (M=3.22; SD= 0.62), detached parenting (M=3.00; SD=0.69), and gender roles (M=3.13; SD=0.64), all of which seem to negatively affect the boy-child retention in school. However, the agreement that male children have more support at home (M=3.17; SD=0.54) seems to have a positive effect on their retention. There was agreement that parental level

of education affects the boy-child retention, either positively or negatively (M=3.11; SD=0.65). There was agreement that poverty (M=3.24; SD=0.68) is a factor that seems to negatively affect the boy-child retention in school.

4.4 Pupils' Perceptions on House-hold Factors affecting Boy-child retention

Table 4: Pupils' Perceptions on House-hold Factors

Descriptive Statistics (n=221)	Mean	SD
Role Model		
Lack of role models at home	3.17	0.76
Lack of supervision and encouragement from parents	3.16	0.73
Lack of guidance and instruction	3.23	0.69
Strife in the family	3.19	0.77
Separation of parents	3.32	0.74
Average	3.17	0.75
Descriptive Statistics (n=221)	Mean	SD
Parenting		
Absence of a father or mother in the family	3.24	0.78
Single parenting	3.00	0.82
Homelessness	3.16	0.74
Raising children without direction	3.09	0.75
Average	3.12	0.77
Descriptive Statistics (n=221)	Mean	SD
Gender Role		
Boys are given priority in the family	2.98	0.92
Boys can get jobs easily regardless of their education status	3.03	0.97
Parents are not taking disciplinary measures on boys	3.05	0.81
Male children can take care of themselves	2.86	0.87
Male children have more support at home	3.14	0.81
Male children are assured of inheritance of the family	3.23	0.81
Average	3.04	0.86
Descriptive Statistics (n=221)	Mean	SD
Parental Level of Education		
Parents have little understanding of schoolwork	3.51	0.67

Poor moral support and learning materials from parents	3.09	0.73
Low level of parental education	3.29	0.73
Poor parental involvement in school affairs	3.09	0.76
Average	3.25	0.72
Descriptive Statistics (n=221)	Mean	SD
Poverty		
Boys do most of the income-generating activities in the family	3.30	0.64
Boys are more involved in animal breeding and farming activities	3.43	0.66
Parents meet the indirect costs of the school	3.32	0.64
Boys are involved in child labor	3.27	0.77
Boys buy their own school supplies	3.27	0.69
Average	3.31	0.68

Pupil's perceptions on household factors affecting boy-child retention in public primary schools in Nzega District Council are shown on Table 4 above. Pupils tended to agree that lack of role modelling at home (M=3.17; SD=0.75), detached parenting (M=3.12; SD=0.77), and gender roles (M=3.04; SD=0.86) seem to negatively affect the boy-child retention in school. However, the agreement that male children have more support at home (M=3.14; SD=0.81) seems to have a positive effect on their retention. Pupils tended to agree on parental level of education (M=3.25; SD=0.72) as a factor that seems to affect their retention in school either positively or negatively and that poverty (M=3.31; SD=0.68) is a factor that seems to negatively affect the boy-child retention in school.

Research Question 2: *Is there a significant difference between teachers' and pupils' perceptions on school-based and household factors affecting boy-child*

retention in public primary schools in Nzega District Council?

This research question called for testing the null hypothesis that stated:

H₀: There is no significant difference between teachers' and pupils' perceptions on school-based and household factors affecting boy-child retention in public primary schools the in Nzega District Council.

Mann-Whitney U test was used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between teachers' and pupils' perceptions on school-based and household factors affecting boy-child retention in public primary schools in Nzega District Council. Confidence level was set at 95% with a p-value of 0.05.

Table 5: Group Statistics

Factors	Type of Respondents	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
School-based	Pupils	3.08	221	0.82
	Teachers	2.65	94	0.60
House-hold	Pupils	3.18	221	0.76
	Teachers	3.15	94	0.66

As shown in Table 5, although the mean score for pupils' perceptions regarding school-based factors (M=3.08; SD=0.82) seemed to be higher compared to that of teachers (M=2.65; SD=0.60) and perceptions on household factors for pupils (M=3.18; SD=0.76) seemed

to be equally higher as compared to that for teachers (M = 3.15; SD = 0.66), the Group statistics results indicate that both teachers and pupils tended to agree on the factors affecting boy-child retention in public primary schools in Nzega District Council.

Table 6: Mann-Whitney: Ranks for the Perceptions of Teachers and Pupils

Factors	Type of Respondents	Mean Rank	N	Sum of Rank
School-based	Teachers	168.74	94	47906.5
	Pupils	178.31	221	10106.6
House-hold	Teachers	169.09	94	47748.9
	Pupils	188.48	221	11971.7

The Mann-Whitney U test was used to identify which group had the highest mean rank in the scores. Findings in Table 6 show that pupils had the highest Mean rank (178.31) for school-based factors while that of teachers was 168.74. Similarly, for household factors, pupils had

the highest Mean rank (188.48) while teachers had 169.09. Although the pupils had the highest mean for both school-based and household factors the findings revealed no statistically significant difference between pupils' and teachers' perceptions.

Table 7: Test Statistics of the Perceptions of Teachers and Pupils

Test statistics	
Mann-Whitney U	7833.500
Wilcoxon W	49143.500
Z	-.531
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.595

Grouping Variable: Type of Respondents

Table 7 shows the Mann-Whitney U test that yielded p-value of 0.595 which is greater than 0.05 ($0.595 > 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. There was no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of teachers and pupils on school-based and household factors affecting the boy-child retention in public primary schools in Nzega District Council.

4.2 Discussion

It is worth noting that all data had low standard deviations, which means that there was homogeneity in responses. Both teachers ($M=2.63$; $SD=0.33$) and pupils (3.10 ; $SD=0.77$) tended to disagree that there was a good relationship between them. Msuya and Mligo (2020) posit that teacher-pupil relationships significantly affect pupils' school attendance and completion. Li, Bergin and Olsen (2022) similarly postulate that when learners have good relationships with their teachers, they are more likely to remain in school and progress through their grades. On the other hand, poor teacher-pupil relationships may lead to lower students' retention in school (Agyekum, 2019). This implies that good teacher-pupil relationships should be sustained in order to realize high retention of the boy-child in public primary schools.

Both teachers ($M=2.91$; $SD=0.68$) and pupils ($M=3.10$; $SD=0.77$) tended to disagree on the existence of quality education in public primary schools in Nzega District Council. According to Sakibu and Buna (2022), lack of teaching and learning resources tend to devalue the provision of quality education, which may negatively affect the boy-child retention in school. Shukia (2021) revealed that failure to apply proper teaching-learning methods so as to uphold pupils' attention, may negatively affect their retention in primary school. Additionally, Shukia (2021) revealed that the fee-free basic education policy had resulted in overcrowded classrooms, a scenario that led to some pupils' dropping out of school. OECD (2022) observes that class repetition was a key predictor of school dropouts in public primary schools. Kipkemboi (2021) equally postulates that the distance of school from the child's home has an effect on his retention. Due to the limited number of schools and the widely distributed rural population, pupils must walk across difficult terrains to get to school. A study by Fulmes, Mwila, and Onyango (2024) revealed that the equitable distribution of educational resources, trained teaching staff, and nutrition programs played a significant role in improving students' attendance and retention. When boys were assured of meals, learning materials, and a supportive environment, their school attendance became more regular and their likelihood of

completing the primary cycle increased. This implies that when quality education is provided, the boy-child retention in primary school is enhanced.

Both teachers ($M=2.98$; $SD=0.70$) and pupils ($M=3.10$; $SD=0.77$) tended to agree on the availability of physical facilities in public primary schools in Nzega District Council. Adequate physical facilities have been recognized as a factor that increases school attendance and retention among children (Mwoma, Begi & Murungi, 2018). Akuoko-Nyantakyi, Francis and Ojwan'g (2023) equally report a significant relationship between physical facilities and academic performance, which culminates into student retention. However, low retention in schools may be caused by poorly equipped schools and inadequate or lack of physical facilities (Wambua, Murungi & Mutwiri, 2019). Keengwe (2023) equally asserts that classrooms with cluttered floors, poor ventilation and poor or lack desks negatively affect boy-child retention in schools. The implication here is that high retention of the boy-child in primary schools calls for adequate physical facilities.

While teachers tended to disagree ($M=1.54$; $SD=0.41$) pupils tended to agree ($M= 3.30$; $SD=0.75$) on the existence of physical violence in public primary schools in Nzega District Council. The former may have concealed the existence of physical violence in schools because they would be implicated. Alistides and Mwila (2021) report the negative effects of corporal punishment in primary schools as truancy and dropout. Wiafe (2022) identified corporal punishment as a factor in pupils' decision to leave school. Mussa and Kileo (2023) found out that corporal punishment derailed student retention, particularly among male pupils. Magere, Allida and Ojwan'g (2023) also revealed that teachers' use of corporal punishment is a hindrance in their attempts to offer guidance and counseling services to learners who are emotionally and psychologically wounded already. From pupils' responses, it seems that the existence of physical violence in schools undermines the boy-child retention in primary schools.

Both teachers ($M=3.22$; $SD=0.62$) and pupils ($M=3.17$; $SD=0.75$) tended to agree that the presence of role models at home affects the boy-child retention in school. According to Ruxton (2015), a boy-child with a positive role model at home participates highly in education and may remain in school until completion of the intended program. However, the boy-child with no positive role model often drops from school. Boys' positive role models especially their male parents or guardians provide ways on how to face challenges from an early age, which enhances their school retention. Kiruki and Kendagor (2021) revealed that most boys who dropped out of school were raised by irresponsible parents who did not provide the required role modelling. Such boys were left without guidance which accelerated their absenteeism from school and final dropout. This implies

that the boy-child requires positive role modelling so as to boost their retention in primary school.

Both teachers ($M=3.00$; $SD=0.69$) and pupils ($M=3.12$; $SD=0.77$) tended to agree that parenting affects the boy-child retention in school. Single parenting may negatively affect boy-child retention in primary school because when a child needs close supervision and guidance, either mother or father may not be available to take charge of their caring role (Muhle, 2020). Wainaina (2021) observed that a majority of boys who dropped from primary school were either living in single parent households, with grandparents or relatives. Additionally, Mwansasu and Komba (2022) reported that boys from single-parent families were more vulnerable to dropping from school due to insufficient emotional support. This implies that detached parenting hinders the boy-child retention in primary school.

Both teachers ($M=3.13$; $SD=0.64$) and pupils ($M=3.04$; $SD=0.86$) tended to agree that gender roles affect the boy-child retention in public primary schools in Nzega District Council. Koskei, Itegi and Muchanje (2020a) observed that parental treatment of children was influenced by their gender and that in poor families, parents/guardians consider boys as more helpful in agricultural activities due to their masculinity, which pressurizes them to drop from school, especially those from pastoral societies. Additionally, some values inculcated in boys during rites of passage were contrary to school values as some emerged from seclusion unwilling to take instruction from teachers. Moreover, in pastoral societies, boys inherit family wealth such as cattle at an early age. This scenario negatively affects their school retention. Msuya and Ngowi (2023) found out that prevailing gender norms in rural communities pressured boys to prioritize herding and farming over schooling, which is glaring during peak agricultural seasons when boys were often withdrawn from school to support family livelihoods. This resulted in irregular attendance, which culminated into dropping out. Similarly, Mwakyusa and Lema (2024) reported that cultural beliefs that emphasize male independence and need for manual labor contributed to boys' disengagement from education as boys were socialized from an early age to assume adult responsibilities, such as herding livestock, which diverted their focus away from school. The implication is that some deep-rooted cultural gender roles may be adhered to at the expense of the boy-child retention in school.

Both teachers ($M=3.11$; $SD=0.65$) and pupils ($M=3.25$; $SD=0.72$) tended to agree that parental level of education affects the boy-child retention in public primary schools in Nzega District Council. Pupils whose parents have lower levels of education may not perform as well as those of highly educated parents because parents with higher levels of education seem to support their children's education more than parents with lower levels of education. Similarly, children of highly educated

parents often feel more at ease in their learning process, leading to greater academic performance and retention in school (Chemagosi, 2020). Nsimba and Mtonga (2023) revealed that children whose parents had higher level of education were more likely to receive consistent academic support and motivation at home, which resulted in better school attendance and lower dropout rates. Conversely, boys from households where parents had lower levels of education faced challenges such as lack of supervision at homework and less encouragement, leading to high rates of absenteeism and dropout from school. This implies that higher parental level of education may lead to the boy-child retention in primary education.

Both teachers (M=3.24; SD= 0.68) and pupils (M=3.31; SD=0.68) tended to agree that poverty negatively affects the boy-child retention in public primary schools in Nzega District Council. Parents in low-income brackets often fail to provide learning resources for their children, which include textbooks, exercise books, pens, pencils, schoolbags and school uniforms (Koskei, Itegi & Muchanje, 2020b; Christensen, 2023). Kimaro and Mwandambo (2024) found out that financial constraints and parental unemployment often forced boys to leave school so as to engage in income-generating activities so as to contribute to family income. This implies that affirmative action regarding the boy-child from disadvantaged economic backgrounds may enhance their retention in primary school.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Both school-based and household factors affect the boy-child retention in public primary schools in Nzega District Council. There was no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of teachers and pupils on factors that affect the boy-child retention in school.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Tanzania Social Action Fund programs should review on how to assist the boy-child especially those from poor families.
2. The government of the United Republic of Tanzania should formulate and enforce laws that protect the boy-child and improve physical facilities in public primary schools.
3. School lunches should be provided to pupils.
4. Excessive punishments should be reduced.

5.3 Further Research

1. This study should be replicated in other district councils in Tanzania with high dropout rates for a comparative analysis.
2. An in-depth qualitative study should be conducted focusing on boys' experiences and perceptions on personal and psychological factors affecting their retention in primary school.

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