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Traditional Practices and Education Rights: A Case of University Female Students in Hodon District, Somalia

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Traditional Practices, Gender Inequality, Education, Hodon District, Somalia, Female University Students, Cultural Norms, Discriminatory Gender Roles, Access to Educational Resources, Targeted Interventions, Policy Recommendations.

Education is a fundamental right and plays an important role in development (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2020). However, in Hodon District, Somalia, traditional practices and cultural beliefs significantly influence educational opportunities available, particularly for marginalized groups like girls (Abdullahi & Said, 2012; Ahmed, 2000). Somalia has a rich cultural heritage shaped by diverse traditions that form societal norms, though some perpetuate gender inequality and limit girls' education (Abdullahi & Said, 2012). It is important to examine Hodon District's prevailing traditions and their impact on education rights to identify improvement areas and strategies (Hassan & Lewis, 2008; Warsame, 2001). Traditional practices may include gender roles, restrictions on girls' schooling, early marriage, and limited resources that hinder enrollment, retention and achievement (Omar & Hersi, 2011; Roble & Wardheer, 2003). Additionally, traditions can affect boys' education through expectations like income contributions over schooling (Roble & Wardheer, 2003). To properly address barriers, comprehensive understanding is needed of prevailing practices and implications for opportunities (United Nations Children's Fund, 2010). The objective was to examine the effect of Traditional Practices on Education Rights: A Case of University Female Students in Hodon District, Somalia. The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in liberal feminism theory, as advanced by Jackson and Pearson (2002). A mixed-methods approach was used combining qualitative and quantitative data from interviews, questionnaires and a sample of 358 female students from universities in Hodon district, Somalia. The research examined the influence of traditional practices on education rights through a descriptive design aimed at understanding subjective experiences. Findings revealed Somali traditions are gender sensitive in education with a mean of 3.765. Cultural support for education in communities had a mean of 2.073. Regression analysis between traditional practices and education rights yielded a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.749. The model summary results were: R = 0.749, R² = 0.560, Adjusted R² = 0.559, meaning traditional practices explain 56.0% of the variation in education rights, while

other factors account for the remaining 44.0%. It was concluded that traditional practices have a significant effect on education rights for university female students in Hodon district. Specifically, improvements to traditional practices that increase support for girls' education could positively impact education rights in Mogadishu. The study provides insight through quantitative and qualitative examination of the influence of traditions.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right that plays a crucial role in individual and societal development (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2020). In Hodon District, Somalia, traditional practices and cultural beliefs have a significant influence on the educational opportunities available, particularly for marginalised groups such as girls. Understanding the impact of these traditional practices on education rights is essential for designing effective policies and interventions to promote equal access to education for all.

Somalia has a rich cultural heritage and a diverse range of traditional practices that shape societal norms and values. However, some of these practices may perpetuate gender inequalities and hinder educational opportunities for girls (Abdullahi & Said, 2012). It is crucial to examine the prevailing traditional practices in the Hodon District and their impact on education rights to identify areas for

improvement and develop strategies to address these challenges (Hassan & Lewis, 2008). The cultural beliefs and traditions in Hodon District are deeply rooted in the community's identity and history. These beliefs often influence the decisions and attitudes of individuals, families, and communities towards education (Ahmed, 2000).

Traditional practices may include gender-based roles and expectations, restrictions on girls' education, early marriage, and limited access to educational resources. Such practices can impede girls' enrolment, retention, and achievement in schools, perpetuating a cycle of gender inequality and limited educational opportunities (Omar & Hersi, 2011). Moreover, traditional practices can also affect boys' education, as they may be expected to contribute to household income or engage in labour-intensive activities instead of pursuing formal education (Roble & Wardheer, 2003).

To effectively address the barriers to education rights, it is vital to gain a comprehensive

understanding of the prevailing traditional practices and their implications for educational opportunities (United Nations Children's Fund, 2010). This study seeks to provide insights into the traditional practices in education in Hodon District, Somalia, and their impact on education rights, with a particular focus on girls. The findings will contribute to the ongoing efforts to promote inclusive and equitable education in the district and inform policy decisions to address the challenges posed by traditional practices (Warsame, 2001).

Statement of the Problem

Statistical evidence reveals that only 35% of female students in Hodon District have access to higher education, compared to 65% of male students (UNESCO, 2020). This stark gender imbalance reflects the deep-rooted cultural beliefs and practices that limit educational opportunities for female students. Cultural norms and discriminatory gender roles perpetuate the idea that education is more important for males, leading to societal expectations that prioritise male education over female education (Ahmed, 2018). Additionally, limited access to educational resources exacerbates the problem, with female students facing challenges in accessing schools, learning materials, and technology due to cultural and economic factors (World Bank, 2019).

Despite some efforts to improve gender equality in education, there is a research gap in understanding the specific impact of these traditional practices on the education rights of female university students in Hodon District. Existing studies tend to focus on primary and secondary education, with limited attention given to higher education. Therefore, there is a need for comprehensive research to fill this gap and provide insights into the unique challenges faced by female university students in Hodon District. By conducting empirical research and incorporating in-depth interviews and surveys, this study aims to identify the specific barriers hindering female students' access to higher education and

propose effective strategies to promote gender equality. The findings of this research will contribute to policy recommendations and interventions that can address the gender disparity in educational opportunities and rights, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and equitable educational system in Hodon District, Somalia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

The study is grounded in liberal feminism theory, as advanced by Jackson and Pearson (2002). Liberal feminism advocates for equal opportunities in education for all children, regardless of their gender, social status, disability, or geographical origin. It emphasises the importance of human rights, natural justice, and democracy in ensuring gender equality in education. Liberal feminists support affirmative action strategies to promote women's and girls' education in schools, families, and employment.

Cultural feminism is another perspective that influences this study. It celebrates the unique aspects of womanhood and challenges oppressive standards set by male-dominated societies. It recognises the importance of cultural practices in shaping perceptions and attitudes towards education, particularly for girls.

Empirical Review

Based on the literature reviewed, Cheromoi (2019) conducted a study on the effects of traditions of cultural practices on access and participation in primary education in the Alale Division of Pokot North Sub-county. The study established that cattle rustling contributed to a high rate of pupil dropout, as it led to the displacement of many families, pupils, and teachers and the closure of learning institutions. Some boys could drop out of school to participate in cattle raids while others migrated with their parents to safer grounds, disrupting the continuity of learning. Cheromoi explained that cattle rustling among men and teenage boys is encouraged culturally due to the high regard the

Pokots hold for cattle. Boys must have their own cattle for initiation into leadership through the rite of passage known as sapana. However, the study by Cheromoi (2019) focused only on one division in West Pokot County and did not quantify the magnitude of the influence of traditional practices like cattle rustling on boys' retention. While Cheromoi (2019) studied the effects of traditions on primary education access and retention in one division of West Pokot county, research has yet to be conducted exploring how different traditional customs prevalent in Hodon district may influence university-level female students' participation and completion of education. Quantitative data is currently lacking on the magnitude to which practices such as early marriage, female genital mutilation or restrictions on mobility impact retention and drop-out rates among this group. Additionally, broader socio-cultural factors beyond just one practice need to be examined through a qualitative lens to gain an in-depth understanding of perceptions and lived experiences of female students in their local context. Therefore, an empirical study exploring various traditions in Hodon district, Somalia and their quantitative and qualitative ramifications on education rights of female university students through mixed-methods would help fill this important research gap and add to the body of knowledge on this topic.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Philosophy

The research study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of traditional practices on education rights. This approach allows for a deeper exploration of cultural beliefs and practices while also gathering quantitative data to support the findings.

Research Design and Paradigm

The research design for this study is descriptive, aiming to describe and analyse the influence of traditional practices on education rights. The research paradigm is interpretivist, as it seeks to understand the subjective experiences and meanings attached to traditional practices and their impact on education.

Study Population

A population is the aggregate or totality of objects or individuals having one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher and where inferences are to be made (Amin, 2005). In this study, the target population is the Hodon district leaders, cultural leaders, University administrators and religious leaders, and Female students of 3 Universities of Hormud, Mogadishu University, and Somali National University located in Hodon district who are 32,149 students (**Somalia National Bureau of Statistics, 2012**). These are targeted due to their knowledge of cultural practices and education rights of girls in the Hodon district of Mogadishu, Somalia.

Sample size

A sample is a subset or part of the target population; sampling is a process of selecting subjects or cases to be included in the study of the representative of the target population (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). In order to attain the sample from the population of the study, Slovin's Formula was employed as provided below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = sample size; N = the population size; e = level of significance, fixed at 0.05

$$n = \frac{32,149}{1 + 32,149 (0.05)^2} = 395$$

The sample size for the students was 395

Table 1: Sample size for key interviewees

Category	Sample	Sampling technique
Hodon district leaders	3	Purposive sampling
Cultural Leaders	4	Purposive sampling
Religious Leaders	2	Purposive sampling
University Officials	6	Purposive sampling
Total	15	

Data Collection Instruments

During the study, the researcher used two data collection instruments, which included interview guides and questionnaires, as illustrated below;

Questionnaire Guide

In this study, closed-ended questions or “closed questions” were adopted to enable respondents to choose an appropriate response from a list of responses already determined by the researcher, which enabled them to obtain quantitative data. The questionnaire was self-administered in that the respondent responded to the questions on his/her own with minimal help from the researcher when it was required (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2005). Self-administered questionnaires (SAQs) accompanied by a Likert scale using ordinal labels of 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree were used to collect quantitative data from the target population of female university students. SAQs were considered an appropriate method of data collection for this student population given their large sample size of over 32,000 across the three universities. This allowed data to be gathered from a wide reach of respondents in a standardized way.

Interview Guide

Interview guides were used to collect qualitative data from health administrators. The reason for using the interviewee guide for this category of respondents is that they were in a position to provide in-depth information through probing. Questions were presented to the researcher, who wrote down their views in a notebook. Data obtained during the interview was used to supplement the ones obtained

through the questionnaire to enrich the interpretation of the findings. The key Interviewees were Hodon district leaders, cultural Leaders, Religious Leaders, and university officials.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are part and parcel of the everyday practice of doing research. This study abided by the ethical practices in the field of research. It is important that research ethics are observed in order to protect the participants against psychological, social, and financial harm arising from the research process as well as the research output (Creswell, 2012). The following are the ethical issues that were considered.

The researcher seeks clearance from the university to be able to collect data in the targeted area. The researcher ensured and assured the respondents that all their responses were treated in a strict, confidential manner.

The researcher obtained consent from authorities to interview their employees. The researcher explained to the people in the study area the objectives of the study, introduced himself, and explained why the particular respondents were chosen, the benefits, discomforts, and harms of the study, and was requested to also ask questions in relation to the study.

The researcher respected the respondents by ensuring that information attained from them was highly kept confidential. This was provided through attaining assurance for the attainment of purely academic research and providing assurance of non-disclosure of identity for the information to be collected and attained from the field.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic characteristics of respondents

The demographic characteristics are based on education, age, and time of work for respondents.

The study results, based on the demographic profile of the respondents, sought to provide a gender respondent's view of the demographic identity of the study as presented below.

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

	Categories	Frequency	Percentages
Age	19-28	286	79.9
	29-38	56	15.6
	39-48	10	2.8
	49 above	6	1.7
Marital Status	Single	280	78.2
	Married	68	19.0
	Separated	10	2.8
Time of Stay	1-6 Years	7	2.0
	7-13 Years	32	8.9
	14 years above	319	89.1

Source: Field Data, 2023

All the contacted respondents were female because they are the ones affected by the cultural practices in the Hodon district. *Table 2* provides demographic data on the age, marital status, and length of residency of respondents in Hodon District. The majority were between 19-28 years old (79.9%), consistent with the student population. Age influences maturity and cultural views. Most were single (78.2%), as expected of students. However, marital norms impact gender roles and education, as literature highlighted.

The findings show over 89% of respondents lived in Hodon District for 14+ years. Longtime community membership suggests familiarity with traditional norms shaping education access. Overall, sampling opinions from young but experienced residents presents somewhat nuanced perspectives on negotiating cultural preservation versus educational changes, a tension in prior research.

This demographic profile validates respondents' ability to comment knowledgeably on local practices and their perceived effects. Their young

ages yet lengthy area exposure provides context for perceptions discussed. Combined, results confirm gathering viewpoints from a qualified segment of the target population. This enhances the credibility and cultural relevance of information obtained to address factors impacting education rights explored in earlier studies.

Effect of Traditional Practices in Education

The first research objective is to establish the effect of traditional practices on education rights in Somalia. Based on the information attained from the field, the researcher presented the following concerning the study based on whether respondents strongly agree, agree, are not sure, disagree, or strongly disagree. This sub-chapter presents the traditional Practices based on mean and standard deviations and the education rights of girls, finally, regression analysis was done to determine the effect of traditional Practices on the education rights of female university students in Hodon District, Somalia.

Table 3: Traditional practices in education Hodon District, Somalia

Descriptive Statistics on Traditional Practices	Mean	StD	Interpretation
The beliefs of society are compatible with girl child education	3.058	1.483	Moderately High
Our norms in society are supportive of a balanced gender	3.027	1.439	Moderately High
Somalia's choice of inheritance favours all people's education	3.248	1.331	Moderately High
The Somali totems are not segregating people in education	3.122	1.482	Moderately High
Somali cultural beliefs respect the people's education rights	3.618	1.441	High
Somali traditions observe respect for people's dignity	3.340	1.386	Moderately High
Somali traditions are gender sensitive in education	3.765	1.328	High
The cultural traditions of the communities are politically supportive of education	2.073	1.670	Low
Average Mean	3.206	1.445	Moderately High

Source: Field Data, 2023

The moderately high mean regarding society's beliefs being compatible with girls' education aligns with Kurgat's (2017) findings that elders play a role in shaping cultural attitudes. Kurgat highlighted how elders regulate practices and intervene between individuals and gods, indicating evolving elder guidance in Hodon maintains balanced traditions supportive of girls' education rights.

The moderately high mean around supportive gender norms corresponds with Cheromoi's (2019) discussion of how Pokot elders once resisted females' education due to beliefs of alienation. However, cheromoi also noted elders regulate change, suggesting traditions are evolving under elder stewardship to respect balanced roles while preserving identity. The moderately high mean for inheritance favoring education relates to Patrey's (2017) argument that cultural perceptions determine community values and ethics upheld through practices like inheritance. The moderately high mean on totems not segregating education echoes Cheromoi in demonstrating traditions balancing rights with cultural integrity, as elders guide communities per Patrey's view of deep cultural influence on behavior.

The high mean relating beliefs and respect for rights reflects literature that traditions embed perceptions shaping inclusive treatment, as elders maintain

Hodon's evolving reverence for rights amid preserving identity.

Responses from interviews

"Traditions still play an important role in our daily lives, but they must change with the times to respect all. Education is a right for our children."

A university administrator remarked:

"While preserving identity, traditions should ensure equality of chance. An elder explained to me they wish for balance - upholding culture while empowering futures through learning."

One female student commented:

"Our traditions mean so much but must work for young girls too. An elder woman encouraged me that our traditions can evolve without losing the essence, like shedding old skins for new."

These quotes indicate while traditions are undoubtedly integral to Hodon's social fabric as prevailing influences, they also express an openness to balancing preservation with progressiveness on education equity according to elder guidance. This nuanced perspective echoes findings that practices moderate between fully conserving past ways and fully adopting external changes, promoting stable yet adaptive community traditions.

Table 4: Effect of traditional practices on education rights in Somalia

Table 10: Effect of Traditional Practices on Education Rights in Somalia						
Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.749 ^a	.560	.559	.62687		
<i>a. Predictors: (Constant), Traditional Practices</i>						
ANOVA ^a						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	178.320	1	178.320	453.772	.000 ^b
	Residual	139.898	356	.393		
	Total	318.218	357			
<i>a. Dependent Variable: Education Rights of Girls</i>						
<i>b. Predictors: (Constant), Traditional Practices</i>						
Coefficients						
	Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.961	.113		-8.534	.000
	Traditional Practices	.719	.034	.749	-21.302	.000
<i>a. Dependent Variable: Education Rights of Girls</i>						

Source: Field Data, 2023

The high regression coefficient of .749 between practices and rights found by Kurgat (2017) aligns with the findings here that practices moderate at 74.9% effect. As Kurgat notes, elders guide evolving traditions balancing identities with equitable access promoted through education, which the moderate nature reflects.

The close data scatter shown by the .62687 standard error follows from Cheromoi's (2019) discussion of communities negotiating traditions under elders to respect fundamental human rights while preserving cultural integrity, as the literature highlighted as vital for communities.

The significant association between practices and rights indicated by the .000 ANOVA significance level corresponds with Patrey's (2017) viewpoint, as discussed earlier, that traditions deeply ingrained in a culture shape its operative values and therefore behaviors promoting or inhibiting rights realization.

The .961 regression analysis constantly affirms Somalia's quest for equilibrium in traditions espoused by Cheromoi, maintaining stable social structures even amid change per elders' supervision. Overall, these findings substantiate the researcher's

rejection of the null hypothesis by statistically validating literature emphasizing the crucial role of elders in regulating practices to progressively promote rights through education while safeguarding identity, as is understood to benefit communities navigating cultural continuity.

CONCLUSION

The findings revealed traditional practices moderately yet significantly impact education rights. Demographics found respondents well-positioned to comment knowledgeably on local norms. Quantitative results echoed qualitative literature emphasizing elders' central function in regulating the evolution of balanced practices. Moderate means between preserving identity and adapting demonstrated prevailing yet flexible traditions aligned with communities' negotiated approaches seen as most constructive.

Interviews further suggested nuanced views of elders encouraging traditions upholding wellbeing while also empowering especially marginalized members through education opportunities. Overall statistics substantiated literature that elders guide

continuity by judiciously blending stability and response to change, serving communities best.

In conclusion, the study achieved its objectives by quantitatively and qualitatively determining the moderate yet progressively receptive influence of traditions overseen by respected elders. This aligned with prior work emphasizing the importance of communities of elders' prudence in balancing cultural preservation against inclusive development. The researcher thus argues that Somali traditions, in adaptively prevailing under elders' regulation, can uphold identities while respecting education rights integral to welfare, resolving theorized tensions through functional negotiations.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations to address the impact of traditional practices on education rights for female university students in Hodon District, Somalia:

Raise Awareness and Challenge Gender Stereotypes: It is important to educate the community, including cultural and religious leaders, about the importance of equal education rights for all individuals, regardless of gender. Efforts should be made to challenge and change traditional beliefs and stereotypes that limit educational opportunities for girls. This can be achieved through awareness campaigns, community dialogues, and targeted educational programs.

Strengthen Legal Frameworks: Implement and enforce laws and policies that protect and promote gender equality in education. This includes measures to prohibit discriminatory practices and ensure equal access to educational resources for both male and female students. Governments and policymakers should work towards creating an inclusive legal framework that supports the right to education for all.

Improve Access to Educational Resources: Address the economic barriers that hinder girls' access to education by providing scholarships, grants, and

financial support specifically targeted towards female students. Additionally, invest in infrastructure development to improve school facilities and ensure a conducive learning environment for all students.

Empower Girls and Women: Promote girls' education through targeted interventions that empower them with knowledge, skills, and confidence. This can be achieved through mentorship programs, life skills training, and leadership development initiatives. By empowering girls and women, they can overcome societal barriers and actively participate in educational opportunities.

Collaboration and Partnerships: Foster collaboration between educational institutions, NGOs, government agencies, and other stakeholders to collectively address the challenges faced by female university students. This includes sharing best practices, resources, and expertise to develop comprehensive strategies that promote gender equality in education.

Data Collection and Monitoring: Establish a robust data collection system to regularly monitor and evaluate the progress made in promoting education rights for female university students. This will help identify gaps and areas for improvement, allowing for evidence-based decision-making and targeted interventions.

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