

Retaining Teenage Girls in Kenya: The Effect of Provision of Sanitary Pads in Ainamoi Sub-County Primary Schools, Kericho County

Viviline Ngeno

University of Kabianga, Kenya

ARTICLE INFO

Article No.: 101319184

Type: Research

DOI: 10.15580/GJER.2019.2.101319184

Submitted: 13/10/2019

Accepted: 22/10/2019

Published: 31/10/2019

***Corresponding Author**

Viviline Ngeno

E-mail: vivilinengeno@yahoo.com

Keywords: Provision of sanitary pads; Teenage Girls Retention; primary schools

ABSTRACT

Teenage years of every child are challenging emotionally, physically and psychological especially for the girl child. Studies have indicated that one out of ten girls miss school in Africa during their menstruation periods and eventually drop out as a result. This is due to lack of sanitary towels which the Kenyan Government started providing since 2011. This study sought to determine the effects of provision of sanitary pads on retention of teenage girls before and after the provision of sanitary pads in primary schools. This study adopted liberal feminist theory. A conceptual framework was also formulated. The independent variable was provision of sanitary pads while the dependent variable was retention of teenage girls in primary schools in Ainamoi Sub County, Kericho County. Comparative and ex-post facto research design was adopted. Study population was 99 head teachers and 686 teenage girls. The sample size was 20 head teachers and 140 teenage girls. Data was collected in the form of focus group discussion, questionnaires' and document analysis to get data on girls' attendance. Quantitative data was analyzed in the form of descriptive and inferential statistics. While qualitative data was analyzed using themes and sub themes. The study established that there was a strong negative relationship between the provision of sanitary pads and retention of girls in school with a coefficient of -0.724 accounted for 52.42% of the variation. The study concluded that provision of sanitary pads has reduced absenteeism among the girls in primary schools in Ainamoi sub-County, Kericho Count, hence improving teenage girls' retention in schools. The study recommended that sanitary pads be provided to all teenage girls both in primary schools and secondary to improve on girl child retention in school. The findings of this study are significant to stakeholders in education guiding them on ways of improving teenage girls' retention in the school.

INTRODUCTION

Teenage years are the most difficult time in the life of child and more difficult for the girl child as they are full of psychological and emotional challenges. Sommer, (2009) states that there is an increase in girl dropout rates around menarche because menarche marks the transition to womanhood, which comes with bigger responsibilities and restrictions as well as the possibility of becoming pregnant and married. It is also a very uncomfortable time for the girls. A school going girl misses 5 school days a month totaling to 60 days in a year. These are many days in terms of syllabus coverage. This has an effect on the girls' education leading to repetition among them and eventually dropout from school. According to United Nations (2010), menstruation is an integral and normal part of human life, indeed of human existence. Menstrual hygiene is fundamental to the dignity and wellbeing of women and girls and an important part of the basic hygiene, sanitation and reproductive health services to which every woman and girl has a right. It further gives the statistics that globally, approximately 52% of the female population (26% of the total population) is of reproductive age. Most of these women and girls will menstruate each month for between two and seven days.

As per the United Nations(2010), The subject of menstruation, however, is too often taboo, and has many negative cultural attitudes associated with it, including the idea that menstruating women and girls are 'contaminated', 'dirty' and 'impure'. This mainly affects women and girls in rural settings and in particular girls. Some of the problems they face are: inadequate preparations for young girls not yet experiencing menstrual hygiene, lack of or inadequate water to clean and wash the body, lack of materials for managing menstrual hygiene, no private space and wash rooms and inappropriate facilities for disposal of materials for those who have used pads. This affects psychologically and emotionally since it leaves them in a bad state.

The basic education Act (2016) placed the responsibility of providing free, sufficient and quality sanitary towels on the government in order to reduce the number of girls missing school during their menstrual cycle. Due to the challenges the girls are facing the Kenyan government funded and supplied to schools' sanitary pads since 2011 to boost girls' access to education. In 2017/2018 financial year the government budgeted 5 million to purchase sanitary pads by the government.

Research Objective

The objective of the present research was to determine the effect of provision of sanitary pads on retaining teenage girls in the schools of Ainamoi Sub County, Kericho County

Synthesis off the Literature on Students' Academic Achievement

Education is very important and the learners should be very comfortable so that they are able to pursue without any interaction. sUNICEF (2011), indicated that in southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu culturally as in many other parts of India, menstruation is considered dirty and impure and during periods girls are discouraged to attend school and stay at homes. This is majorly because of unavailability of sanitary pads, inadequate sanitation and absence of separate toilet for girls in schools, compounds the problem and has a huge impact on girls' school attendance and is a major reason for dropout. World Bank, (2017) in the article education for global development estimates that one in ten girls in Sub-Saharan Africa misses school during their menstrual cycle. By some estimates, this equals as much as twenty percent of a given school year.

In a study done in Malawi, one-third of female students reported missing at least one day of school during their previous menstrual period, the data suggested that menstruation accounts only for a small proportion of all female absenteeism and does not create a gender gap in absenteeism. (Population Council, 2017). Oster & Thornton, (2010) estimated that girls miss about 0.4 days of school in a 180-day school year due to their period. Moreover, using a randomized evaluation we argue that providing better sanitary products has no impact on closing this small attendance gap in developing countries. A Pilot Study on Sanitary Pad Interventions for Girls' Education in Ghana proved that after 3 months, providing pads with education significantly improved attendance and in five months it improved performance among participants (Montgomery et al, 2012).

Study done on menstrual management in Uganda by (UN, 2010) revealed that currently the means of coping for girl pupils is the use of old cloth, dirty napkins and other un-hygienic materials. While some schools have provided sanitary pads ranging from sophisticated imported pads to locally manufactured pads by AfriPads and/or Makapads. In some cases, parents provide the pads to the girls.

Kimondo (2007) noted that the Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) for boys and girls is 93.01%; however, 55% of boys and 54.6% of girls reach primary four, while 31.2% of the boys and 27.7% of girls reach primary seven. Arguably, the problem of pupil dropout is quite unsettling especially to policy makers. This is partly because it reflects on the inadequacy of a schooling system in terms of either school quality or quantity. In effect, school dropouts are usually associated with high unemployment levels, low earnings, and poor health outcomes and persistent poverty.

A study done in Kenya by Ngayila, L and Zani, A. (2014) revealed that lack of sanitary towels contributes to class absenteeism among adolescent girls, there are other menstruation related concerns that force adolescents stay out of class. Major authorities on the subject think that lack of sanitary towels among school going girls is a major cause of poor performance in schools due to abdominal and/or back pain, bad smell from menstruation, and fear of

ridicule from others after soiling clothes can also contribute to poor performance. Girls attending mixed with feared to be mocked by boys were also leading to school absenteeism. The study also found out that the students have a general understanding of what menstruation entails, but their attitudes differ depending on their social interpretation of menstruation derived from their environments.

A qualitative study done on teachers and students in Kisumu district by Jewitt and Ryley, (2014) on "It's a girl thing: Menstruation, School Attendance, Spatial Mobility and Wider Gender Inequalities" in Kenya revealed that improved access could address some key emotional and practical problems underlying girls' absenteeism. Especially important is their role in reducing the risk of shame/embarrassment from visible menstrual leaks, which in turn helps girls to concentrate better and feel more confident as well as allowing them greater spatial mobility within and outside school. This study further indicated that girl's absenteeism was due menstrual periods. Although the term 'sickness' was used it soon became apparent in our FGs that many girls also used it as a euphemism for menstrual cramps and menstruation more generally.

According to Zana Africa the girls in Kenya use very unhygienic ways during their menstrual periods. They used old blankets, rugs and other materials. This proves to be a problem to the girls' health. Zana Africa was founded to respond to the reality that nearly one million girls in Kenya do not go to school because they lack access to sanitary pads and corresponding reproductive health education. Zana Africa takes a three-pronged programmatic approach to supporting girls: creating health education, delivering pads and education through local partners, and leading policy and advocacy. There is sufficient evidence indicating that primary school dropout has escalated from up to 6.1% in 2012. This requires intervention from all stakeholders. Philip, P et al (2015), did a study in Kenya that involved 3000 women. The study revealed that 1 in 10 girls were having sex to pay for sanitary ware. This is risky on the part of the girls because of pregnancies and diseases such sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. The girls are disadvantaged especially if they cannot afford the basic needs like sanitary pads. Men take advantage of them when they are in need.

Wang'anya A, (2018) in the study entitled "The effects of provision of sanitary towels on performance of adolescent girls' in primary schools in Kenya: A case of Matungu Sub-County, Kaka mega County" found that 87% and 81% of the girls are always in school during their menses and always present in school respectively and 40% absent from school for various reasons with only 9% attributed to lack of sanitary towels. There was a progressive increase in transition rates from lower to upper classes with 88% agreeing to concentrate on their study activities. Happiness (43%) and shyness (56%) was also reported by them. Self-confidence and being confident was at 61% and 78% while 81% were comfortable in class during their menses. Majority of the girls (85%) could freely participate in class while

82% relate well with the peers and 68% mingle freely with their classmates both boys and girls. Overall 72% admitted that there is adequate provision of sanitary towels.

Theoretical framework

Liberal Feminism Theory

Liberal feminism is a conventional perspective of the three gender theories. It stems from the idea that women must obtain equal opportunities and equal rights in society (Acker 1987, Stromquist 1990a, Phillips 1987, and others). Stereotyping and discrimination have created a situation where women have less chance of education, fewer career opportunities, and other social dimensions in society. It argues for better allocation of resources so that women can obtain a fair share of educational opportunities. Three major points of focus in the discourse of liberal feminism are 1) equal opportunities; 2) socialization and sexual stereotyping; and 3) sexual discrimination (Acker 1987:423). This functionalist view enforces the idea that schooling is meritocratic and that success in it depends primarily on the motivation and the intellectual ability of the individual. Therefore, this view of feminism does not aspire to change society; rather it aims at improving the situation within the present system, i.e. Western industrialized society (Stromquist 1990a). School and education are considered to be positive and good, and improvements are to be made within the existing system. Strategies include attempts to increase access, such as promotion of 'good practice', e.g. The Equal Opportunities Commission (Acker 1987) and training to change attitudes of teachers and pupils/students (Weiner 1986). Liberal feminism is based on the assumption that schooling is positive and improves women's welfare. Social evolution is assumed and the state is perceived as a benevolent actor which provides services and goods for the benefit of the people (Stromquist 1990a). Gordon (1996) argues that the state has perpetuated the educational inequality by legislation and educational policy and practice both during the colonial and independent Zimbabwe. Liberal feminisms criticized for ignoring patriarchy, power and the systematic subordination of women (O'Brien 1983, Weiner 1986, Acker 1987) as well as the effects of race and class (Arnot 1982, Acker 1987). Socialist feminism attempts to address some of these problems. This study found the theory relevant since it was focusing on the provision of sanitary pads in Kenyan primary schools to retain the girl child in school. By providing the sanitary pads it is a way of liberating the girls to access education without distractions like the boys.

Conceptual Framework

Education is a form of investment in human capital that yields economic benefits and contributes to a country's future wealth by increasing the productivity capacity of its people (Woodhall, 2004). Retaining the girl child in school is very important because they will be able to

be better leaders, workers and mothers. For these to be achieved the government came up with an intervention by providing sanitary pads to reduce absenteeism and dropout. Therefore, the conceptual framework was based on the concept of investment

choices advanced by Psacharopolous and Woodhall (1985). Thus, the study adapted the concept to make it suitable for this study. The independent variable was provision of sanitary pads while the dependent variable is retention in school.

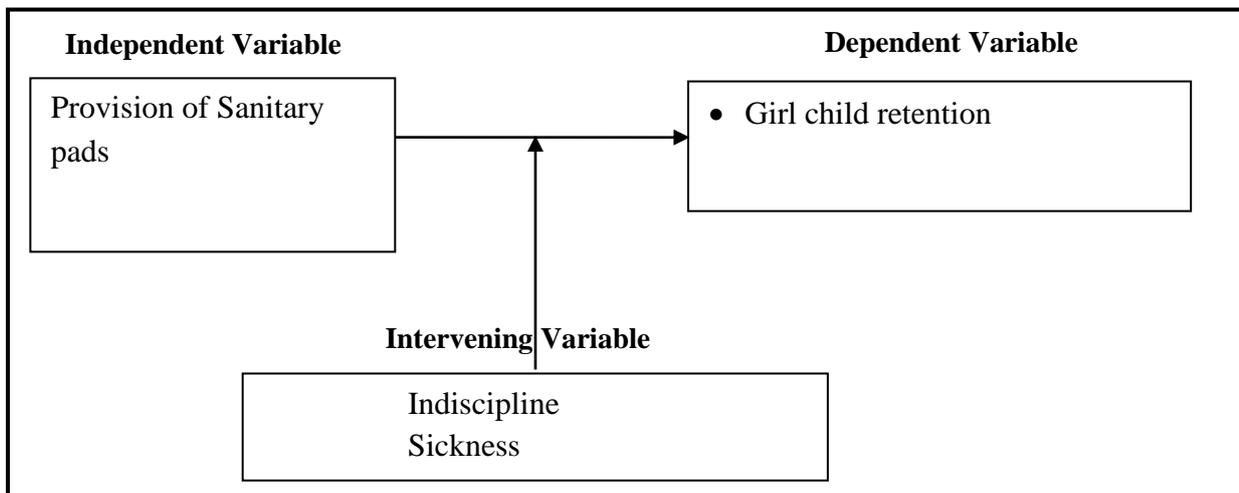


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework showing the sanitary pad as an independent variable and girl child retention as dependent variable in Kericho County, Kenya.

This conceptual framework helped to focus on independent variables and dependent variables. The independent variable was sanitary pads while the dependent is retention of girl child. The students before provision of sanitary towels were used as a control group. The girl child absenteeism determined before and after provision of sanitary towels.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Ex post facto, descriptive survey and comparative research designs were used in this study. *Ex post facto* research design seeks to discover possible causes of behaviour, which has already occurred and cannot be manipulated (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). For the purpose of this study *ex-post facto* research design allowed the researcher to get all the relevant information on absenteeism among the primary girls in class eight before and after provision of sanitary pads in Ainamoi sub county, Kericho County. This was done through use of relevant documents like school registers. Comparative Research design is used together with historical research to compare people's experience of different societies, either between times in the past or in parallel situations in the present (Creswell, J.W, 2009). This was also adopted in the study. Descriptive survey research design involves careful description of education phenomena and reports the way things are. The descriptive survey is able to explore the relationship between variables in their natural setting as they occur (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The design was appropriate because it allowed the use of questionnaires and interviews schedules as research instruments for collecting data at a given point in time.

The study was done in Ainamoi sub- county, Kericho County. It is situated in the southern part of the Rift Valley province. It lies between longitude 35°E and 35°50'E and latitude 0° and 0°30'S. It borders the following counties; Nandi to the North, Uasin Gishu and Baringo to the North East, Nakuru to the East and South East, Bomet to the south, Nyamira and Homa-Bay to the South West and Kisumu County to the West and North West. It covers an area of 2,479km²; the capital of the County is Kericho town. Kericho County consists of five sub counties Ainamoi, Belgut, Bureti, Londiani and Kipkelion. The study was conducted in Ainamoi sub-county and it has 99 primary schools.

The study population consisted of 99 primary school head teachers and 99 class 686 girls were used in the study. According Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003) a sample size of 10% - 30% is a good representation of the study population. Therefore .this study adopted 20% of the population. The number of the head teacher and girls Sampled were 19.8 and 137.2. The numbers were then rounded to 20 head teachers and 140 girls. The closed and open-ended questionnaire was administered to each school head teachers from the selected 20 schools. The girls took part in focus group discussion. Twenty percent for each school were selected so that they all have equally opportunities depending on the school enrolment.

The instruments that were in the study was questionnaire, and Document Analysis Guide. The instruments were validated. Validity of a measurement instrument is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Reliability of a measurement instrument is the extent to which it yields consistent results when the characteristic being measured has not changed. Like validity, reliability

takes different forms in different situations (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Reliability of the instrument was 0.8 at a set p-value of 0.05. This means the instrument was reliable as the calculated coefficient was greater than 0.7. (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Qualitative data was analyzed using themes and sub themes. While quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive in form of percentages while inferential statistic was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation. It was then interpreted using the guide given by Elfison, Runyon and Haber (1990) as given in table 1.

PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENCY

Correlation coefficients (r) were therefore interpreted to determine the influence of FSE policy on the dependent variables in terms of direction and strength of relationship Elfison, Runyon and Haber (1990) interpretation guideline was adopted (Table 1).

Table 1: Interpretation of Pearson Correlation Coefficients (r)

Strength of the relationship	Positive (+)	Negative (-)
Weak/low/small	0.01 – 0.30	0.01 – 0.30
Moderate/ medium	0.31 – 0.70	0.31 – 0.70
Strong/high	0.71 – 0.99	0.71 – 0.99
Perfect relationship	1.00	1.00
No relationship	0.00	0.00

From Table 1 it can be observed that Pearson (r) between + or - 0.01 – 0.30 is a weak/low/small relationship, between + or - 0.31 – 0.70 is a moderate/medium, while relationship between + or - 0.71 – 0.99 is a strong/high relationship. Perfect relationship is where it is positive or negative 1.00 while 0.00 means there is no relationship. Coefficient of determination R^2 is the square of the Pearson r which tells how much of the variance is accounted for by the correlation which is expressed in percentages while the other remaining percentage could be due to other factors (Leedy & Ormond, 2005). This was adopted in the interpretation of Pearson (r) and coefficient of determination R^2 in this study.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Return Rate of the Questionnaire

The respondents in this study included primary school head teachers and class (8) eight girls' prefects.

The return rate of principals' questionnaire was as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Return Rate of the head teachers Questionnaire used for Data Collection

Respondents	Issued	Number Returned	Percentage (%)
Head teachers	20	20	100
Totals	20	20	100

From Table 2 it can be observed that all school head teachers returned the questionnaire as was required. The rate of return for the questionnaires was 100%. This data on return rates helps to justify the validity of the data that was used in this study and the new knowledge generated.

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The respondents in this study included primary school head teachers and class eight girls' prefects. Their demographic characteristics were as shown in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3: Head teachers Gender and Headship Experience (n=20)

Demographic characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	12	60
Female	8	40
Total	20	100
Headship Experience in years		
5	1	5
6-10	5	25
11-15	9	45
16-20	5	25
Total	20	100.00

Table 3 indicates that out of all the 20 (100%) school head teachers involved in the study 12 (60%) were male while 8 (40%) were female. This shows fewer female teachers are appointed as school head teachers in Ainamoi sub county, Kericho County. This is in agreement with the study carried out in a sampled number of schools in Kenya by Bosire *et al* (2009) where it was indicated that out of the 30 sampled school principals, 22(79%) were male while 6 (21%) were female. The school principals' leadership experience was also indicated and one (5%) had headship experience between 5 years, 5 (25%) had an experience of 6-10years, 9 (45%) had an experience of 11-15 years while 5 (25 %) had an experience of 16-20 years.

From the findings most school head teachers had headship experience of 6 years and above. This shows that they had enough experience in school management and they were able to give the relevant information on influence of provision of sanitary pads on girls' retention in school. They were also better placed given that the data required dated back to the year 2012 that required experience in school administration.

Absenteeism Rates among the Primary School Girls before Provision of Sanitary Pads

The research question responded to was: What is effect of provision of sanitary pads on girl child retention in Primary School?

The head teachers through questionnaires were asked to indicate enrolments. Data obtained and used to determine absenteeism for class eight was 2017. The cost of the sanitary pads given by the school head teacher was 50/= Kenyan shilling per packet. The cost of a packet of sanitary pads was

multiplied by the number of girls who were in class eight (2017 per school) to get the total cost incurred per child. The cost was computed and correlated with the absenteeism rates to determine the effect of provision of sanitary pads on retention. The results are presented in the tables below.

Table 4: Absenteeism rates per school before and after provision of sanitary pads in Ainamoi Sub-County, Kericho County (n=20)

Absenteeism Rate	Before provision		After provision	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Below 0.20	1	5	17	85
0.21-0.40	5	25	2	10
0.41-0.60	6	30	1	5
0.61-0.80	5	25	0	0
Above 0.81	3	15	0	0
Total	20	100	20	100

Table 4 indicates the girls' absenteeism rates per schools before and after the provision of sanitary pads in 2011. Before the sanitary pads were provided by the Kenyan government the percentage of the girls who were absent from school was high as compared to after. One (5%) school, had absenteeism rate below 0.20, 5(25%) of the schools had the rates between 0.21 and 0.40, 6(30%) had the absenteeism rates from 0.41 to 0.60. While 5(25%) of the schools had the

absenteeism rates ranging from 0.61 to 0.80. Three (15%) schools had the rates above 0.81.

After the provision of sanitary pads absenteeism rates reduced in all the schools. The school that had the rates below 20 were 17(85%), two (10) had the rates from 0.21 to 0.40 while one (5%) school had the rate from 0.41 to 0.60. this indicates that sanitary pads played a big role in reducing absenteeism rates in schools.

Table 5: Girls Absenteeism Rates before and after the Provision of Sanitary Pads in Kenya (n=20)

	Before provision of sanitary pads		After provision of sanitary pads	
	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
Present	308	57.57	600	87.46
Absent	295	42.43	86	12.54
Total	603	100	686	100

Table 5 indicates the girls' absenteeism before and after the provision of sanitary pads in 2013 for all the 20 schools in Ainamoi Sub-County, Kericho County. The class eight girls were used in this study. Before the sanitary pads were provided the girls, who remained in school were 308 (57.57%) while those who were absent from school because of lack of sanitary pads were 295 (42.43 %). After the sanitary pads were provided the girls who were retained in school were 600 (87.46%) while those who were absent were 86 (12.54%).

The finding reveals that after the provision of sanitary pads absenteeism among the girls reduced by 29.89 %. This is a big improvement on the girls' education. This does not agree with the study by Oster & Thornton, (2010) that indicated that girls miss about 0.4 days of school in a 180-day school year due to their period. Further evaluation indicated that providing better sanitary products has no impact on closing this small attendance gap in developing countries. But this concurs with a Pilot Study on Sanitary Pad Interventions for Girls' Education in Ghana by Montgomery et al, (2012) proved that after 3 months, providing pads with education significantly improved attendance and in five months it improved performance among participants.

This is also in agreement with World Bank, (2017) article on education for global development estimates that one in ten girls in Sub-Saharan Africa missed school during their menstrual cycle. By some estimates, this equals as much as twenty percent of a given school year. This is a very high percentage in terms of syllabus coverage, but does concur with the study done in Malawi. One-third of female students reported missing at least 1 day of school during their previous menstrual period. The data suggested that menstruation accounts only for a small proportion of all female absenteeism and does not create a gender gap in absenteeism. (Population Council, 2017). This is in agreement with the study done by Wang'anya A, (2018) on the effects of provision of sanitary towels on performance of adolescent girls' in primary schools in Matungu Sub-County, Kakamega County. The study findings revealed that 87% and 81% of the girls were always in school during their menses and always present in school respectively and 40% were absent from school for various reasons with only 9% attributed to lack of sanitary towels. This is an indication that sanitary pads can improve girl child retention in school.

Table 6: Cost Incurred by the Government per School in Ainamoi Sub-County, Kericho County (n=20)

Costs of sanitary pads Kenya Shillings (KSH)	Schools	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
501-1000	2	10
1001-1500	9	45
1501-2000	4	20
2001-2500	3	15
2501-3000	2	10
Total	20	100

Table 6 indicates the cost incurred by the government per school for all the class 8 girls' that were used for the study. The cost per packet used was KSH50 as given by school head teachers. The costs were multiplied by the number of girls to get the total cost incurred by the government per school. The cost was high for schools with more girls. The schools that the government incurred cost from 501 to 1000 were 2(10%), from 1001 to 1500 were 9(45%) for a range of

1501 to 2000 were 4(20%). While between 2001 to 2500 and 2501 and 3000 were 3(15%) and 2(10%) respectively.

The finding in table 4 on the absenteeism rate and the costs incurred per school in Table 6 were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to get the effect of sanitary pads on absenteeism and retention. The correlation matrix is presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) sanitary pads and Absenteeism among the girls in Ainamoi Sub County (n=20)

		Funds	Absenteeism rates
Funds	Pearson Correlation	1	-.724**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	20	20
Absenteeism Rate	Pearson Correlation	-.724**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	20	20

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7 indicates that there is a negative strong significant relationship with a coefficient of -0.724 between the amounts incurred on sanitary pads and absenteeism rates. According to Elfison, Runyon and Haber (1990); Leedy and Ormrod (2005), guideline Correlation coefficients (r) interpretation. Coefficient of determination R^2 is the square of the Pearson's r which tells how much of the variance is accounted for by the correlation which is expressed in percentages (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). To account for the effect of sanitary pads on absenteeism Pearson's r was squared. The coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.524$ which meant that sanitary pads influenced absenteeism negatively. It accounted for 52.42% of the variation in absenteeism.

DISCUSSION

Causes of Absenteeism

The girls gave further information on what affects their attendance. It was in agreement with what was revealed by the quantitative data.

House hold chores and other family problems was indicated by the majority of the girl that it has an influence on their attendance. Since most of the primary schools are day schools the girls face problems related to family. This concurs with the studies done by Ngeno et al (2013) which revealed that family problems have an effect on the girls schooling.

Lack of sanitary pads was given by all the girls as one of the reasons their class mates avoid coming to school. This is because the girls feel embarrassed when they soil their clothes. In fact, one of the girls started that some girls are even embarrassed by their classmates' especially the boys. This makes them avoid school for a while. This is in agreement with the studies done by Sommer, (2009) that states there is an increase in girl dropout rates around. it further revealed that a school going girl misses 5 school days a month totaling to 60 days in a year. This is a very high percentage in terms of syllabus coverage. This has an effect on the girls' education leading to repetition among them and eventually dropout from school. It also concurs with the study done by UNICEF, (2011) in southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. This revealed that culturally in many other parts of India, menstruation is considered dirty and impure and during periods girls are discouraged to attend school and asked to stay at homes. Studies done by Population Council, (2017) and Oster & Thornton, (2010) in Malawi and Ghana respectively found that one-third of female students reported missing school while in Ghana the girls missed 0.4 days of school in a 180-day school year due to their period. It also concurs with studies done in Kenya by Ngayila, L and Zani, A. (2014) in their findings that indicate that lack of sanitary towels contributes to class absenteeism among adolescent girls. There are other menstruation related concerns that force adolescents to stay out of class.

Sickness was also one of the factors the girls mentioned as the factor that influence absenteeism

among the girls in primary schools. Though sickness among the girls can be related to monthly periods. When a child is sick it difficult for them to concentrate so most of them stay at home until they are well. This is in agreement with study by Kimondo (2007) in which he found that school dropouts are usually associated with high unemployment levels, low earnings, and poor health outcomes, persistent poverty. This is in agreement with the study done on teachers and students in Kisumu district by Jewitt and Ryley, (2014) on it's a girl thing: This study further indicated that girl's absenteeism was due to menstrual periods. Although the term 'sickness' was used it soon became apparent in our FGs that many girls also used it as a euphemism for menstrual cramps and menstruation more generally.

What the Girls used before Provision of Sanitary Pads

The girls were further asked to give information on what they used when sanitary pads were not available.

All the girls mentioned that they used blankets and old rugs during their menstrual cycle. They were used as they could be recycled next time. This could solve their problem though in terms of hygiene it may not be good. This is in agreement with the study done by Zana Africa that revealed that the girls in Kenya used very unhygienic ways during their menstrual periods use of old blankets, rugs and other materials are used. This proves to be a problem to the girls' health.

Sanitary pads were used by very few girls bought by the parents. This is because majority of the girls could not afford. Some of the girls rely on their boyfriend to purchase for them but after engaging in sexually activity. This could also be risking their lives because of pregnancies and diseases like HIV/AIDS. Some of the stated the way their friends are lured into sexually activities because of desperation. This concurs with the study done in Kenya by Philip, (2015), that involved 3000 women. The study revealed that 1 in 10 girls were having sex to pay for sanitary ware. This is risky on the part of the girls because of pregnancies and diseases such sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.

Some of the young and innocent girls used nothing, especially those who have not been informed about the monthly periods and it's their first time. This leaves the girls in shock since it's the first time they are experiencing such. This is due to lack of information. These findings are in agreement with the study done in Uganda by UN, (2010) revealed that some of the problem facing young girls in rural settings is inadequate preparations for young girls not yet experiencing menstrual hygiene. This led to these girls using nothing hence soiling their clothes. This affects the girls psychologically and emotional because of embarrassment and the feeling that the other children are laughing at them.

Tissue paper and other papers were used by a few students who manage to get it. These girls would reach a desperate state to an extent that they try to use anything to stop or absorb the menstrual flow. This

is in agreement with the study done in Uganda by (UN, 2010) where the girls used, dirty napkins and other unhygienic materials.

Effects of Provision of Sanitary Pads

The girls were further asked to give their opinion on how provision of sanitary pads have influenced absenteeism

Most of the girls explained that class attendance has really improved. This is in agreement with the basic education Act (2016) when it placed the responsibility of providing free, sufficient and quality sanitary towels on the government in order to reduce the number of girls missing school during their menstrual cycle. This is in agreement with the study done in by Wang'anya A, (2018) on the effects of provision of sanitary towels on performance of adolescent girls' in primary schools in Kenya: a case of Matungu Sub-County, Kaka mega County. The study findings revealed girls attended school has normalized now after the provision of sanitary pads. This is because the girls are always in school during their menses and always present in class. That has led them to be at par with the rest in terms of syllabus coverage.

Improved hygiene was also mentioned by most of the girls. The girls mentioned during the focus group discussion that hygiene has improved since they feel that they are clean unlike before when they would use any material. In fact, one of the girls stated that, "I Feel I don't smell during my menses, this has given me confidence to interact with the other pupils even the boys". This is an indication that the girls are happy and more confident in school and especially when they are with the rest.

Concentration and confidence have also improved among the girls. The girls during focus group discussion explained how their concentration and confidence have improve after the provision of sanitary pads. This findings are in agreement with the study done by Wang'anya A, (2018) on the effects of provision of sanitary towels on performance of adolescent girls' in primary schools in Matungu Sub-County, Kaka mega County where it revealed that there was a progressive increase in transition rates from lower to upper classes with 88% agreeing to concentrate on their study activities. Happiness and shyness were 43% and 56%. Self-confidence and being confident was at 61% and 78% while 81% were comfortable in class during their menses. Majority of the girls at 85% can freely participate in class while 82% relate well with the peers and 68% mingle freely with their classmates both boys and girls

The girls further explained that they are able to participate in various activities unlike when they don't have sanitary pads and they feel very insecure. This is good for the girls because with confidence they can achieve so much and it also boost them academically. This finding is in agreement with the finding in by Wang'anya A, (2018) on the effects of provision of sanitary towels on performance of adolescent girls' in primary schools in Matungu Sub-County, Kakamega County where it revealed that the girls can freely

participate in all the other activities without fear. It revealed that Majority of the girls at 85% can freely participate in class while 82% relate well with the peers and 68% mingle freely with their classmates both boys and girls. Overall 72% admit there is adequate provision of sanitary towels.

Adequate sanitary pads were also sighted by some girls in some schools though there were a few schools the girls felt that at times they miss out on sanitary pads. In fact, one of the girls explained the at time they need sanitary pads but they are informed that it not available. This concurs with the study done in Kakamega by Wang'anya A, (2018) where it revealed that 72% admit there is adequate provision of sanitary towels. This has been of great help to the girl child and women generally.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that provision of sanitary pads has reduced absenteeism among the girls in primary schools in Ainamoi sub-County, Kericho County. Hence improving teenage girls' retention in schools. The study recommended that sanitary pads be provided to all teenage girls both in primary schools and secondary improve on girl child retention in school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that sanitary pads be provided to all teenage girls both in primary schools and secondary improve on girl child retention in school.

REFERENCES

- Acker, S. (1987). "Feminist Theory and the Study of Gender and Education", *International Review of Education*, 33 (4): 419-435.
- Arnott, M. (1982) "Male Hegemony, Social Class and Women's Education", *Journal of Education*, 164 (1): 64-89.
- Coleman, J.S., Campell, E, Q., Hosbon, C.J., MC Partland, J., Mood, A.M., Weifeld, F.D and York, R, L (1966). Equality of educational opportunity, Washington, D.C. Government printing office.
- Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. California SAGE Publications.
- E. Oster & R. Thornton, (2010). Menstruation, Sanitary Products and School Attendance: Evidence from a Randomized Evaluation. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*
- Gall, D.M., Gall, J.P. & Borg, R.W. (2007). *Educational research, an introduction*. New York: Longman.
- Gathigah, M. (2011). Kenya Parliament opts to Help Girls with Sanitary Pads . Women News Network (WNN); IPS; the Guardian Development Network. Retrieved from www.womennewsnetwork.net/2011/08/16/Kenya-sanitary-pads/ on January 19, 2012.
- Gordon, R. (1996) "Legislation and Educational Policy in Zimbabwe: the state and the reproduction of patriarchy" *Gender and Education* 8(2): 215-229.
- Hanushek, E.A, (2008). Education Production Functions. The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics, 2nd edition. Abstract. Basingtoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hopkins, G . (1990). the poor die young: housing and health. Earth Scan Publications, London.
- Jewitt , S. & Ryley, H (2014). It's a girl thing: Menstruation, school attendance, spatial mobility and wider gender inequalities in Kenya. *Elsevier journal Geoforum*. Volume 56, September 2014, Pages 137-147
- Liston, V. (2006). *NGO'S and Spatial Dimensions of Poverty in Kenya*. Dublin: Department of Political Science, Trinity College.
- Marlaine, L. and Hanushek, E. (1988). Improving Educational efficiency in developing countries.
- Monica J. Grant, Cynthia B. Lloyd & Barbara Mensch, (2013). Menstruation and school absenteeism: Evidence from rural Malawi. *Comparative Education Review* 57(2): 260-284 (PMC4286891).
- Montgomery P., Ryus C.R., Dolan C. S., Dopson S & Scott L. M. (2012). Sanitary Pad Interventions for Girls' Education in Ghana: A Pilot Study <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0048274>.
- Mugenda, O.M. & Mugenda, A.G. (2003). *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Nairobi: ACTS Press.
- Ngayila, L and Zani, A. (2014). An Evaluation Of The Perception Of Secondary School Students Towards Menstruation In Kenya. *African Journal of Education and Technology*, Volume 4 Number 1 (2014), pp. 83-96
- Ngeno, V.C., Simatwa, E.M.W. & Soi, D.C. (2013). Determinants of Girl Students' Academic Achievement in Mixed Day and Boarding Secondary Schools in Kericho District: An Analytical Study. *Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 4 (7):543-554. <http://www.interestjournals.org/er/>.
- O'Brien, M. (1983) "Feminism and Education: A Critical Review Essay", *Resources for Feminist Research*, 12 (3):3-16.
- Phillips, P.A. at el (2011). Menstrual cups and sanitary pads to reduce school attrition, and sexually transmitted and reproductive tract infections: a cluster randomised controlled feasibility study in rural Western Kenya
- Pritchett, L and Filmer, D (1997). What Education Production functions Really show; a positive Theory of Education expenditure. World bank.
- Psacharopoulos, G. & Woodhall, M. (1985). *Education for development. An analysis of investment choices*. Washington D.C: Oxford University Press.
- Sommer, M. (2009). "Ideologies of sexuality, menstruation and risk: Girls' experiences of puberty and schooling in northern Tanzania,

- Culture, Health and Sexuality." 11, no. 4 (2009): 383.
- Stromquist, N. P. (1990a) "Gender Inequality in Education: Accounting for Women's Subordination," *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 11 (2): 137-153.
- UNICEF, (2011). Menstrual Hygiene Key to Keeping Girls in School. UNICEF, INDIA <http://www.unicef.in/Story/122/Menstrual-Hygiene-Key-to-Keeping-Girls-in-School>
- United Nation, (2010). Study on menstrual management in Uganda Main report on the study results. The Netherlands Development Organization (SNV)/IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre.
- Wang'anya A, (2018) Effects of provision of sanitary towels on performance of adolescent girls' in primary schools in Kenya: A case of Matungu Sub-County, Kaka mega County. University of Nairobi.
- Woodhall, M. (2004). *Analysis in Educational Planning Cost Benefit Analysis in Education*. Paris: IIEP .UNESCO.
- World Bank, (2017). Education for Global development. A blog about the power of investing in people. World Bank Group. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/globally-periods-are-causing-girls-be-absent-school>

Cite this Article: Ngeno, V (2019). Retaining Teenage Girls in Kenya: The Effect of Provision of Sanitary Pads in Ainamoi Sub-County Primary Schools, Kericho County, 9(2): 116-125, <https://doi.org/10.15580/GJER.2019.2.101319184>.