

**FACTORS INFLUENCING PRIMARY SCHOOL GIRLS
PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES IN RUNYENJES SUB-
COUNTY, EMBU COUNTY, KENYA.**

BY

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DECLARATION

This project report is my original work and has not been submitted for an award in any other university.

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This project report has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my dear loving husband Charles who gave me the encouragement and support to carry on, to my dear son Collins and loving daughter Joan for their support and understanding. I also dedicate it to my loving parents who have always been encouraging me to move on.

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ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

ASAL	Arid and semi arid regions
CFSI	Child Friendly School Initiative
DEO	District Education Officer
EFA	Education for All
FAWEK	Forum for African Women Educationists Kenya chapter
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GCN	Girl Child Network
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
SSA	Sub Saharan Africa
UNICEF	United Nations Children Education Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education

ABSTRACT

In Kenya adolescent girls fare poorly relative to boys in an educational system characterized by enormous growth, deteriorating quality and rising costs. Girls are more likely to drop out of school prematurely and are less likely to do well in primary school National exams. The study targeted girls in primary schools in Runyenjes sub-county. A sample of 100 girls and 87 teachers was used in the study. It sought to understand the factors that influence girls' participation in school activities. The study aimed to determine the influence of lack of sanitary towels, menstrual discomfort, cultural perspectives, pre-menstrual awareness and sanitation facilities on girls participation in school activities. The statement of the problem was that primary school girls do not participate fully in school activities and so the study sought to find out the factors that influenced this. A descriptive survey design was used for the study. Questionnaires and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were used to get data from the girls and teachers. The target population was girls in class 6-8 in Kathanjuri zone in Runyenjes Sub –County. A sample of 100 girls and 87 teachers were selected for the study using the stratified random sampling and the simple random sampling was used to pick the specific girls. The data was analyzed through descriptive statistics and tables were also used for presentation. The study revealed that none of the above had any influence on girls participation and therefore girls have an equal opportunity just like the boys. Sanitary towels are available to the girls at school 94.2% and also at home 91.4% and they therefore do not have to miss school or fail to participate in school activities. Menstrual discomforts make some girls 68.6% to stay away from participation, however in the sampled schools the girls are assisted with pain killers 27.1% and so they are able to cope. The teachers in the schools prepare the girls adequately 90% on what to expect and so they were not caught unprepared when they started their periods. There are no cultural beliefs 40% that prevent girls from participating in the school activities. The sanitation facilities in the schools are in good condition 65.7% and offer the girls the required privacy. They are also adequate 65.4% in relation to the number of girls in the school. The study recommended that provision of sanitary towels should be encouraged as part of good participation in school activities. Response to period pains requires due attention aimed at enhancing girls participation. Any cultural beliefs that may exist that could limit girls participation should be addressed by all stakeholders. The study concluded that the lack of sanitary towels, menstrual discomfort, pre-menstrual awareness, cultural beliefs and sanitation facilities were not factors that influenced primary school girls participation in school activities. The study also recommended the need for girls to receive explicit, correct and relevant information on matters of puberty and menstruation through formal and non formal. Adequate water and sanitation facilities that are designed with privacy in mind and which are girl friendly should be part of the school infrastructure. It also recommended the provision of adequate underwear for the girls so as to have enough for changing so that they are free from infections and dampness. The study gave areas for further study to be conducted in other areas of Embu county to establish other factors that could be influencing primary school girls participation in school activities.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the background of the study. This deals with other similar studies that have been carried out in other countries. It also gives the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study, assumptions of the study, definition of significant terms used in the study and the organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

One of the goals of education is to achieve gender equity towards empowerment. This is in line with Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development goals(MDGs)social, cultural, economic and political factors have tended to affect children especially girls enrolment, participation and retention in schools particularly in the developing countries. Despite the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003 and Free Secondary Education (FSE) in 2008, girls continue to be disadvantaged in education. The benefits of societies educating girls include lower birth rates, better health, lower infant mortality, fewer teenage marriages and pregnancies and greater economic well being, (Wagtale,2005).

Historically menstruation has and continues to be used as justification for preventing girls and women from fully participating in public life, justifying control over their activities in the public arena in general and over their sexuality in particular. The view that monthly bleeding is a biological defect or a divine curse renders itself appropriately to a social system in which men control women's behavior in a patriarchal regime that often subject women's bodies to more control than men's, this forces women to spend resources of money and time in managing and concealing menstruation and all other related aspects such as pregnancy and menopause, (Martin, 1998). The importance of educating the girl child presents the need to make in-depth studies and suggestions relating to hindrance to girl-child participation and access to education that although important are less emphasized by scholars.

Although the right to education may seem an obviously enjoyed right, this is not always the case. Even with the near gender parity in schools, adolescent girls participation in schools is generally

very poor especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF, 2004). The silence and lack of information makes menstruation a shameful subject to tackle not only for adolescent girls but also for some parents and relatives and hence it is ignored both at home and in schools (Kirk et al., 2006). Girls are exposed to a lot of issues that tend to discriminate them in their effort of attaining quality education. Girls also do a lot of the domestic chores that tend to take so much of their study time and this greatly disadvantages them compared to their male counterparts. For girls to fully participate in school then their needs should be taken care of more seriously by the government, parents and all other stakeholders concerned with girls education.

Early marriage is the most often cited reason for girls dropping out of school. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a rite of passage into womanhood that accompanies puberty and an immediate precursor to marriage. Once circumcised, they are ridiculed by their peers if they continue their education, since school is for children. Culturally determined ways of defining women and men and their roles in a given society shape gender specific opportunities and constraints. The existence of discriminatory attitudes towards the schooling of girls is informed by customs and culture. Mobility restrictions arise in many societies when girls reach puberty and this makes the effect to be more on girls' retention than on entry, (Lloyd et al., 1996).

Sometimes conflict arises between what is taught at home (in initiation ceremonies) and at school which may lead to parents opposing girls continued attendance in school. Indeed girls' behavior is often directly related to the many tribal and traditional taboos which dictate what and what not to do at the various stages of their development which may conflict with the demands of the school. Girls are not told how a woman becomes pregnant. This combined with lack of supervision and ignorance make girls highly vulnerable to becoming pregnant. Pregnancy before marriage brings disgrace and a reduced bride price, (Namugambe, 1997).

Girls from rural areas are disadvantaged due to the social belief that educating a boy child is more important since he is the head of the household and thereby, he provides for his family, (Wamahu, 1994). In general, the African belief is that a girl child only needs a hardworking husband to feed and clothe the family as they in return take care of their children. Kenya has moved towards modernity, and as the age of globalization and structural adjustments programmes spread throughout Kenya, those in rural areas suffer from the consequences of these

new trends. However, beliefs, traditions and myths of boys being superior and therefore more intelligent than girls and thus likely to succeed over girls is still believed by many parents.

Many girls are denied an education solely because of parental concern for their safety during those long walks. Even those who make it to school, the long walks undermine education. Teachers report that children, who have spent two to five hours walking to school in the morning often without having had anything to eat, are tired and their ability to concentrate is impaired (Maasai girls Education Fund,2003).

It is also often late when the girls arrive home after such long walks and they are still required to do chores. Even if they still have the desire and energy to study after they are finished with their responsibilities at home, it is dark and there is no electricity or artificial light. Long distances to schools from homes expose girls to physical and sexual dangers. This leads to girls dropping out of school. One school in Samburu serves several villages typically within 15-20 KM radius. There are no cars or even bicycles available, so the girls must walk this great distance. Parents' perception and society expectations affect how girls and boys participate in education. Most girls fail to enroll in or complete primary schooling because their parents do not value education. Due to lack of education themselves, some parents believe that education leads their daughters to prostitution and being unfaithful in marriage (Bello.et al.,1993).Some parents believe that educating girls is enriching her husband's family and therefore will prefer educating the boys. Parent's positive attitude towards child's education is important in determining school attendance and academic achievement of the child. Family involvement is the strongest predictor of child educational outcomes.

Poverty combined with the traditional practices of preference for boys influences parents to take sons to schools rather than their daughters in situations of economic constraints. Where resources are scarce and the school demands for expenditures from a household, a girl child is likely to be pulled out of school compared to the boy child. The introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) has greatly reduced the direct cost of schooling for the parents. Despite these efforts however studies have shown that there are still other direct costs to schooling which act as constraints to enrolling and keeping girls in school (Burchfield et al., 1996).It therefore becomes a necessity for children to perform economically important tasks that support household survival and this limits girls' participation in education.

The education of girls is seen as economically and socially costly to parents. Costs come in four forms: tuition fees and other direct school fees; indirect fees (such as PTA fees, teachers levies and fees for school construction and buildings); indirect costs (such as transportation and uniforms); and opportunity costs (such as lost household or paid labor) (Benn ,2005).These costs have a significant impact on whether and which children are educated. Educating girls can incur extra direct costs. The high cost of education is the biggest deterrent to families educating their daughters.

Parents feel that by investing in boy's education, the risk of losing money is very minimal since they believe that boys are more likely to succeed (Davidson, 1993).Studies in other parts of the continent have shown that the cost of educating girls is higher than educating a boy. Different factors including the number of children in a household and the family's income are significant in determining a girl's education. Often girls are used as sources of income, commonly working on sugar plantations and or working as housemaids for low income in order to contribute to educating a boy child, (Eliza ,2010).When financial decisions are made, girls are more likely than boys to be held back or withdrawn from schools ,(Ilon, 1990).In most cases labor of a girl child is required to support the mother in ways such as looking after other siblings, helping the mother with domestic chores, assisting in running the mother's small scale business, caring for the sick among others. Because the girls labor is critical, taking her to school and keeping her at school appear to be very costly to poor parents.

A study conducted in Nepal, India revealed that the impact of menstruation on school attendance is significant and negative, but extremely small. Attendance is slightly lower on period days, but only very slightly, it falls from 85.7% on days without menstruation to 83.0% on days with menstruation, (Oster ,2010).In Ethiopia ,like in many parts of the developing world, menstrual hygiene management is one of the critical challenges adolescent girls face while they are in school (Tsegaye ,2011).A study conducted in four districts in southern Ethiopia revealed that the school environment is not conducive especially for menstrual hygiene management. The study showed that girls use unhygienic rags during menstrual period and have little knowledge on how to keep personal hygiene during menstruation. The study also revealed that menstruation is seen as a taboo by communities and school teachers. Parents do not provide information and guidance on menstrual hygiene management which leave school girls without assistance on how to

manage their menstruation hygienically. The same study disclosed that 70% of adolescent school girls miss 2-3 school days each month, which in turn has a significant impact on their school performance.

Another study carried in Ghana by Scott Linda (2009) revealed that girls attending school in several remote rural areas stayed at home the entire length of their periods due to fear of soiling themselves in the presence of others. They used discarded cloth, which they felt offered insufficient protection on the long walks to school, which in turn prompted them to stay at home. A study conducted in Uganda on the effect of sexual maturation on performance of girls in secondary schools by Namugambe(1997) found that sexual maturation affects girls' educational performance. Menstruation makes them absent from school for some good days hence affecting on their performance. Universal Primary Education started in 1997 in Uganda. Enrolment in primary one of boys to girls was 1:1, seven years later slightly more than 400,000 sat for primary seven. The ratio in primary seven, seven years later, boys to girls was 3:2.

In Kenya a need assessment was undertaken by Girl Child Network (GCN) (2003) on gender equity and equality following the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE).The study revealed that a girl absent from school due to menstruation for four days in 28 days loses 13 learning days equivalent to two weeks of learning in every school term. In a year a girl loses 39 days equivalent to 8 weeks of learning time. A girl in primary school between grade 6 and 8 loses 24 learning weeks out of 108 weeks. Within the 4 years of high school, the same girl loses 156 learning days equivalent to almost 31 weeks out of 144 weeks of learning in secondary school. In addition, this lowers her self esteem, militates against girls retention and transition in schools and leads to poor performance.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Unlike the education of the boy child in Kenya, the relatively poor status of girls education has been attributed to various challenges that hinge on gender disparities in the ways that schools, families and communities engage with issues related to the well-being of the girl –child. The lack of gender sensitivity and responsiveness in educational programmes has been linked to the poor outcome of girls' education in terms of access, retention, performance and transition to higher level and to the world of work, (Bella, 2011).

The study focused on girls' education with regard to participation in school activities. The fact that education for most girls retrogresses at the onset of puberty and takes a notable nose dive during the monthly period warranted this kind of research. In Runyenjes Sub –County, the girls in most of the public primary schools do not actively participate in school activities more so the co-curricular (Ministry of Education officials at the Runyenjes office, 2010). Runyenjes sub-county was chosen because the Ministry of Education through an NGO Aphia plus has made effort to distribute sanitary towels but still challenges of participation for needy girls have not been adequately addressed.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influence primary school girls participation in school activities in Runyenjes Sub –County.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The study intended to achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine the influence of lack of sanitary towels on primary school girls participation in school activities in Runyenjes Sub- County.
2. To establish the influence of menstrual discomfort on primary school girls participation in school activities in Runyenjes Sub-County.
3. To establish the influence of cultural perceptions on primary school girls participation in school activities in Runyenjes Sub- County.
4. To determine the influence of pre-menstrual awareness on primary school girls participation in school activities in Runyenjes Sub- County.
5. Establish the influence of school sanitation facilities on primary school girls participation in school activities in Runyenjes Sub- County.

1.5 Research questions.

1. How does lack of sanitary towels influence primary school girls' participation in school activities in Runyenjes sub- County?
2. How does menstrual discomfort influence primary school girls participation in school activities in Runyenjes Sub-County?

3. In what ways do cultural perceptions influence primary school girls' participation in school activities in Runyenjes sub- County?
4. What is the influence of pre-menstrual awareness on girls' access and participation in education in Runyenjes sub- County?
5. To what extent do school sanitary facilities influence girls' participation and access to education in Runyenjes sub- County?

1.6 Significance of the study.

The information obtained from this study may be of great help to the Education stakeholders in the Sub –County for they will be able to address issues that cause girls not to fully participate in school activities. The Ministry of Education in Runyenjes sub-county and other stakeholders will be able to source out ways of providing sanitary towels to the girls so that they can fully participate in school activities. The study hoped to serve as a point of reference to sensitize communities on the importance of girls fully participating in school activities. Menstrual discomforts was also be discussed in the study and it was hoped the parents and teachers would be able to know how to assist the girls so that they are comfortable to carry out their school activities. It was also hoped that parents and teachers would appreciate the importance of giving girls the premenstrual education so that they would be confident during their periods and were not ashamed of it. Many of the cultural perceptions associated with menstruation were also well discussed and this would enhance the girls' participation in school activities. The school management would also benefit in that they would look out for measures to improve on the school sanitation facilities and this would greatly enhance the participation of girls in school activities during their menses. The study would also provide information as a reference to other researchers conducting related studies.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

The study was only targeting primary schools in Runyenjes Sub-County. There are many other factors that influence girls participation in school activities but the study narrowed down on lack of sanitary towels, menstrual discomfort, cultural perceptions, and pre-menstrual awareness and sanitation facilities. Respondents were class six, seven and eight girls and teachers. Primary school girls were chosen for the study because it is at this level that adolescence occurs and the

girls may not know how to deal with it and this could be a big hindrance to their participation in school activities. Unlike primary schools the secondary schools have an organized programme for the co-curricular activities and the girls are free too choose which ones to participate in.

1.8 Limitations of the study.

Issues of menstruation are not openly spoken about and people are shy to discuss them, this was a very big limiting factor in this study. Girls try as much as possible to hide it from their friends and that is why this was a big limiting factor to this study. To ensure the desired data was collected, the teachers in the school were used as the key informants. The instruments for data collection were questionnaires and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to ensure anonymity and give girls and teachers the confidence to respond. The use of the questionnaires ensured that the girls filled them and gave information without fear of others knowing what they are filling.

1.9 Assumptions of the study.

Assumptions of the study were that the girls and teachers would respond to the best of their knowledge the questions asked in the FGD and those on the questionnaires. It is also assumed that the school administration and the District Education Office at Runyenjes would grant the permission to conduct the survey in the stated schools.

1.10 Definitions of significant terms.

Cultural perception: This is what the community thinks of girls in relation to participation in school activities.

Lack of Sanitary towels: This is when the girl has her menstrual flow and she does not have any protection to use or what she is using is not hygienic.

Menstrual discomfort: This are the discomforts that come to girls when they are on their menstruation especially on the first day of the flow.

Primary school girls Participation: This is girls freely taking part in school activities whether in class activities or co-curricular.

Pre-menstrual awareness: This is any information that is given to the girls either by teachers, parents, guardians or any other relative regarding menstruation.

Sanitation facilities: This includes the toilets with functional doors, water to clean hands after using the toilets, adequate number of toilets and proper disposal facilities.

1.11 Organization of the study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one deals with background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitation of the study, assumptions of the study, definition of significant terms used in the study and the organization of the study. Chapter two deals with literature review, theoretical framework, conceptual framework and a summary of the literature review. Chapter three deals with research methodology which includes research design, target population, sampling procedure and sample size, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis, ethical considerations and operationalization of variables. Chapter four deals with data analysis, presentation and interpretation which includes questionnaire return rate, demographic characteristics of respondents. Chapter five deals with summary of findings, discussions, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction.

This chapter deals with the literature review on lack of sanitary towels, menstrual discomfort, cultural perceptions, pre-menstrual awareness and sanitation facilities and how they influence primary school girls participation in school activities, the theoretical framework and the conceptual framework. Literature review shows what previous researchers have found out in the area of my study. The conceptual framework is a brief explanation of the relationships between the variables identified in my study.

2.2 Lack of sanitary towels and primary school girls participation in school activities.

For many girls from impoverished backgrounds, the onset of puberty marks a sharp decline in school attendance and could even lead to their dropping out. One of the reasons for this high drop out rate is the lack of sanitary protection and lack of knowledge around puberty Namugambe et.al (1997). Because they are unable to afford sanitary protection and because they do not understand what is happening to their bodies, what should be a celebration of womanhood becomes a time of shame and embarrassment with dire consequences for girls education and consequently their future. A testimony from 15 year old Annette Shilago confirms this “my mum had passed on by the time I started menstruating and I used rugs because my father could not afford to buy me pads and there was nobody in the family who could help me. I felt ashamed about my periods and at first I did not know what was happening to me as nobody had told me about menstruation.”(Weigaard, Julie, 2013).

Research has shown that a girl who is absent from school due to menses for four days per month loses thirteen learning days which is equivalent to two weeks of learning in every school term. A study by the ministry of Education and an NGO, the Girl Child Network (GCN) in 2006, showed that out of the estimated 1.5 million menstruating girls who attended public primary and secondary schools at the time 60 percent of them or close to 900,000 missed schools during their menses. According to UNICEF, one in ten school girls in Africa miss class frequently or drop out completely out of school due to their periods and they substitute pads or tampons for less safe and less absorbent materials such as rags, newspapers or bark.

The Education ministry seeks 2.6 million to buy sanitary towels for more than 2.6 million girls from poor families. The Education Secretary underscored the need to provide girls with sanitary pads saying that most girls quit school as they are forced to stay at home for long during menstruation. (KBC, 2013). Girls in Marigat, Baringo county one of the districts which has never benefited from the free sanitary towels programme, girls miss school during their menses and opt to use goat skins, chicken feathers, soil and even leaves during their menses for lack of an option. (Citizen, 2013). Valentine Atieno a 13 year old girl confirms this through her testimony, that before she was introduced to Ruby cup she was using rags and newspapers during her periods, as her mother could not afford sanitary pads. She usually stayed at home during menstruation because she was afraid of the too frequent leaks that made boys and other girls in school laugh at her (Weigaard, Julie, 2013).

“Re-usable pads are not the most ideal option and it is a challenge to provide disposable ones. Even though sanitary wear is now zero-rated as far as taxes are concerned the disadvantaged families will still be unable to provide them to their girls since sanitary towels do not feature high on the list of priorities of a family that lives on less than a dollar a day. We need to find a way to provide sanitary wear free of charge to disadvantaged girls”, Shiprah Gichaga of the Forum for African Women Educationists Kenya chapter (FAWEK).

In an assessment report on sexual maturation in Kenyan, Ghana, Uganda, Zimbabwe, FAWE (2003) found out that menstrual materials used by girls during menstruation depended on the family's socio-economic status that allowed girls to acquire absorbencies ranging from the 'Always' pad, old clothes to nothing at all. Girls who were fortunate to access cloth reportedly did not have enough of it, thus resulting in sharing of the menstrual cloth with other girls. The absorptive capacity of the product determined how secure the girl felt and the level of mental concentration in class work. Reportedly, the girls who used 'Always' pads only worried about the period pains and cramps while those who used rags or cloth constantly worried about potential 'accident' of soiling their clothes. Hence, because of the physical and mental discomfort that accompanied the menstrual period, girls were essentially distracted from learning. It is therefore not unrealistic to imagine that many of the girls might have remained

physically in class but would be mentally absent as they ‘listened’ to the pain or for an accident of soiling their clothes. To avoid these physical and mental discomforts, many of the girls reportedly opted to stay away from school during the duration of the menses, a practice to which teachers ignored because that was the only reasonable response they knew(UNICEF). Research has proven that most girls from poor backgrounds are forced to stay away from school during menstruation period while boys continue learning, a situation that creates a margin gap in performance between the two genders, (Llyod, 1998).

There are a number of broader reaching implications to the school drop out rate among girls. Once they drop out of school, girls become even more disempowered. Firstly they are less likely to find employment and secondly due to the effects that their stigmatization has on their self esteem, they become more susceptible to gender violence and sexual abuse and are less likely to abstain from or negotiate safe sex which can result in teenage pregnancies and even HIV/AIDS. It is not uncommon in Kenya for girls to miss school when they are menstruating because they lack sanitary towels. This impedes their ability to compete in the classroom because it leads to low self esteem especially in remote and conservative parts of the country where the ‘taboo’ nature of menstruation prevents girls and their communities talking about the problem,(Matovu,2011).

2.3 Menstrual discomfort and primary school girls participation in school activities.

As girls progress through primary school, puberty sets in and brings with it menstruation especially girls between the ages of 10-14 which have proven to be a challenging barrier to girl child education (Oster,2011). Menstruation and its accompanying physical, psychological and hygiene requirements has implications towards their education participation in regard to access, retention, attendance and final completion (McMahon ,2011). As Eruke in (Kirk ,2006) states, whereas girls in developed countries generally have access to a range of pain killers, access to such becomes a nightmare for girls living in poverty stricken countries. Girls menstrual discomfort, back pains, swelling, cramping, mood swings and itching cannot pass unnoticed. Menstruation can cause discomfort and high incidences of pain for a majority of women. It can cause shifts mood, depression, vomiting, pyrexia, endometriosis, haemorrhage, migraines, anaemia and fibroids(Dalton, 1964; Donimirski,2013).

Studies have shown that not less than 10% of menstruating young women are incapacitated for up to three days all because of menstrual disorder, (Pullon.et al., 1998). Patel et al (2006) complemented this by reporting that the burden of dysmenorrhoea is greater than any other gynecological complains. Though mild and moderate cases of dysmenorrhoea could be treated by reassurance and paracetamol Davis et.al (2001) but the effect of menstrual disorder and discomfort on a woman's life could be so severe as to confine the woman to bed(El-Gilany et al 2005).

Where water was scarce, the cloth would not be cleaned properly, thus, increasing the risk of genital infections. Further, even when the cloth was cleaned, it was not dried adequately in the sun because the girls wished to be discreet in managing their menses, and hence kept their menstrual cloth hidden and drying in the privacy of the house or even under the bed or mattress. Again, drying menstrual cloth in damp dark places increased the risk of genital infections from bacteria and fungi. This was bound to eventually create foul smell that would discourage girls from attending school even after the menstrual period was over. Because such infections are related to sexual organs, the girls are likely to keep the concerns to themselves thus increasing their physical and psychological problems that would keep them away from school (UNICEF, 2005).

2.4 Cultural perceptions and primary school girls participation in school activities.

Although there are differences by country, culture, ethnic group, social class or family the oppression of women has its effects on issues concerning reproductive health and other issues related to the reproductive systems and its functions and processes. Most striking is the restricted control which many women and girls have over their own mobility and behavior during menstruation including myths, misconceptions, superstitions and taboos concerning menstrual blood and menstrual hygiene. Besides the fact that girls are married off at an early age in some cultures, many girls are kept at home when they start menstruating, either permanently or temporarily (UNICEF, 2005; GAPS & FAWE,1999) during the days that they menstruate. .Because of this, girls get left behind especially in complex and abstract subjects where there is a continued building on previous knowledge. To prevent girls from dropping out of school due to problems concerning menstruation, it is necessary to educate all children within the framework

of ‘comprehensive sexual education’ about health issues in general in particular, including menstrual hygiene (Martin, 1998).

Many communities world over have gone through centuries of myths and taboos that have created an ideology of the female body which has continued to organize the lives of women and girls in modern society. Religious teachings, cultural beliefs and traditional practices, have all played their role in the ideology of stigmatizing the menstruating woman. For Western societies, the popular reference to menstruation as ‘the curse’ began with the biblical telling of it being inflicted on Eve because of her sin in tempting her husband to eat a supposedly forbidden fruit.

2.5 Pre-menstrual awareness and primary school girls participation in school activities.

The role of education in addressing issues of puberty and not in the least the accompanying feminine concerns cannot be over emphasized,(UNICEF ,2007).Menstruation is a biological inevitability in human nature preparing women and girls on how to respond to menstruation issues without demeaning their dignity as menstruating being is an educational imperative. Over decades, women including those in Africa settings and elsewhere have been taught that having periods is shameful (UNICEF ,2007).

Menstruation is a significant event in girls’ lives as they progress through puberty. The need to have good menstrual management awareness is key in preparing them for menstruation. The government and the non-government sector ought to see the elimination of the institutional, community and family encumbrances that intersect with menstruation to make girls participation in school activities education a dilemma, (Wamahiu, 1997). Different stakeholders need to follow policies with concrete actions. For example, there is need for government to sensitize people about the social and cultural constructions of menarche to make it better experience for girls. Psychological and physical barriers have to be handled in order to lessen their impact on girls schooling, and the existing social structures have to be strengthened so as to create a better learning environment for girls, (Tsegayo et al., 2011). Schools as key avenues for reform need to consider changes in curriculum and infrastructure. Further the possibility of forming girls clubs which constantly monitor the sanitation infrastructure would be a great action towards gender parity in schooling. Menstrual studies should be integrated in puberty studies in the science

classes to reduce shocks and discomforts associated with menarche. Similar to findings by Bharadwaj (2004), poor menstrual hygiene and management emanates from the beliefs and attitudes within schools and the community and is worsened by other factors like poverty and lack of supporting infrastructure. The menstrual management approaches have to deal with the physical, emotional and cultural aspects in order to have meaningful impact and this can well be done if its spearheaded by Government as a key stakeholder, (Ten, 2007). Since a great percentage of feelings like embarrassment, concealment and secrecy are mainly fuelled by male presence, there is need to sensitize them about menstruation and its normality. Further, informants about menstruation like teachers, mothers, should always be encouraged to convey positive messages to pubescent girls so that realistic expectations are transferred to them (Rembeck, 2006).

2.6 Sanitation facilities and primary school girls participation in school activities.

On the whole, comprehensive interventions geared towards dealing with menstrual-related barriers to education are needed in order to eliminate the exclusionary tendencies that arise due to menstrual experiences. There are efforts aimed at improving the school environment to become learner friendly through the provision of better facilities and equipment Republic of Kenya (2005). Poor sanitation facilities which have in the past been a hidden barrier to girls' education in particular are being addressed more seriously. According to UNICEF (2008) the child-friendly schools, which provided privacy and hygiene facilities for girls through separate toilets for boys and girls as well as water and wash areas, tended to attract and retain students at a comparatively higher rate, especially the girls. This is because separate toilets not only provide privacy but also encouraged girls who were menstruating to attend and remain in school where they could attend to their feminine hygiene needs and manage their period discreetly. The provision of such facilities contributed greatly in addressing the constraints of the estimated one in four girls who did not complete primary school (compared with one in seven boys) by ensuring that the girls actually stayed on and completed schooling alongside the boys, (Muchemi, 2007). In addition, this strategy also contributed in addressing the MDGs target on provision of drinking water and adequate sanitation which, when coupled with provision of feminine hygiene facilities was bound to greatly accelerate the attainment of MDG targets on universal primary education (UPE) and gender parity, AWE (2003). UNICEF has demonstrated, through its child

friendly school initiative (CFSI), that girls' attendance at school could be increased through improved sanitation. Unfortunately, surveys of school sanitation tend to ignore the pertinent issue of menstruation and feminine hygiene and its relevance to female education, particularly access and participation. In Kenya, for example, the coupling of sanitary facilities in schools, particularly functional toilets (with doors, roofs and a proximity to water source) with availability of sanitary pads, has been strongly linked to not only girl's improved attendance to school but also, their improved participation in learning activities as well as their consequent enhanced performance relative to boys, (Muchemi, 2007).

According to teachers, poor conditions of the toilets and lack of privacy and hygiene facilities resulted in girls' absenteeism from school (Muchemi ,2007). And even when in attendance, girls reportedly withdrew from school related activities –both within and outside the class. Poor primary school infrastructure is one of the major barriers to improving access to primary education in Kenya, (FAWE ,2001). Empirical data show that physical facilities are an important factor in both school attendance and achievement. For this reason, improving primary school infrastructure is a high priority among school management committees (Republic of Kenya, 2005). The link between feminine hygiene, schooling, water and sanitation may be addressed holistically only when some of the stereotypes and myths against menstrual issues by sector specialists who are mostly men, are also addressed in a cross-sectoral manner. The issue of feminine hygiene has continued to undermine the efforts to provide quality participation. Policy measures for addressing the problem related to retention have begun with the enforcement of the children's Act which provides for the right to education by every Kenyan child UNICEF (2009). Further the policy which prohibits repetition in schools is being strictly enforced.

In Kenya, the phenomenon of high toilet ratios that exceed the government recommendation have reportedly discouraged the girls who were on their menses from attending schools mainly because accessing the toilet was inconvenient for their needs Muchemi, (2007); Njoroge, (2004); Akoth, (2004); and Odhiambo.(2004) clearly reveal how the poor state of sanitation in Kenya that have made the toilet, in particular, to emerge as one of the most neglected facilities in the school infrastructure. Muchemi (2007) underscores the advantage that the boys had over their female counterparts in terms of responding to their toilet needs. In many instances, Muchemi's

findings confirmed the observations of other studies such as Mbatia (2003) whose survey of education access by girls in Arid and Semi-Arid (ASAL) regions of Kenya. Mbatia found out that sanitation was one of the major setbacks for girl-children that was manifested in many of them having to drop out of the formal education system due to lack of basic facilities in schools such as toilets and sanitary facilities, this was in spite of the introduction of free primary education (FPE). Reportedly, in the ASAL the number of girls enrolled in upper primary progressively decreases towards upper classes and almost nil for the candidate class (Mbatia, 2003:53). The situation was not different in other districts as reported by Akoth (2004) and Odhiambo (2004) in their separate studies of districts in Western Kenya. In Kisumu, according to Akoth (2004), all head teachers reported lack of enough toilets and sanitation. The few latrines available were in desolate condition with no roofs, doors and the temporary walls had gaping holes.

Njoroge (2005) reports that 66.7% of teachers in Kiambu schools were of the view that provision of sanitary towels and construction of toilets could help retain more girls in schools. Further, the head teachers lamented that even though the government has provided teaching and learning materials, the schools still lacked essential facilities such as toilets, water and adequate sanitation. Kiriimi's school assessment survey on the provision of sanitary facilities under the FPE programme in Kenya showed that the expansion of physical infrastructure has been too slow to cope with the influx of pupils. School sanitation and hygiene have received least attention in the allocation of free education monetary grants and other resources, Kiriimi, (2005).

Studies in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA), countries show that lack of adequate toilet facilities is a common feature in many schools where the child-toilet ratio is average. UNICEF (2007). In one school in Kenya, 190 girls shared only two available toilets indicating a child toilet ratio of 1:15 UNICEF (2007). In Ethiopia, like in many parts of the developing world, menstrual hygiene management is one of the critical challenges adolescent girls face while they are in school, (Tsageye et al., 2011). According to UNICEF (2005) more than half of primary schools in the country lack water supply and proper latrine facilities and existing facilities remain inadequate and poorly managed. In Tanzania a study of every school in 16 districts undertaken in

2009, it was identified that 52% of all schools had no doors on their latrines, 92% had no functional hand washing facilities and 99% had no soap.(UNICEF ,2011).

2.7 Theoretical frame work.

Behaviorist theory is based on behavior changes. It is primarily concerned with observable and measurable aspects of the learner. It is directed to stimuli. Behaviourists asserts that the only behavior worthy of study are those that can be directly observed, thus it is action rather than thoughts or emotions which are legitimate object of study. The advocates of behaviorist theory are Pavlov (1849-1936) who was a Russian psychologist and his work was based on classical conditioning or stimulus substitution. Another advocate of behaviorists' theory was Thorndike (1874-1949) whose theory of connectionism stated that learning was the formation of connection between stimulus and response. Another advocate of this theory was Skinner (1904-1990) who studied operant behavior. In operant conditioning the learner operates on the environment and receives a reward for certain behavior. Eventually the bond between the operation and the stimulus is established. This theories can be applied in school situations by promoting behavior that is desirable and discouraging undesirable behavior.

Constructivism is a theory of knowledge based on observation and scientific study about how people learn. It states that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. The theory asserts two main principles whose applications has far reaching consequences for the study of cognitive development and learning as well as for the practice of teaching and interpersonal management. The two principles are: -knowledge is not passively received but actively built up by the cognizing subject; -learners must conceptualize the learning that is taking place.

Constructivism seeks to explain how knowledge is constructed in the human being when information comes into contact with existing knowledge that had been developed by experience. It has its roots in cognitive psychology and biology and an approach to education that lays emphasis on the ways knowledge is created in order to adapt to the world. Constructs are different types of filters we choose to place over our realities to change our reality from chaos to order.

Constructivism draws heavily on psychological studies of cognitive development from Jean Piaget and Jerome Bruner. Constructivism emphasizes the importance of the active involvement of learners in constructing knowledge for themselves and building new ideas or concepts based upon current knowledge and past experience. It asks why students do not learn deeply by listening to a teacher or reading from a text book.

The purpose of education is educating individuals in a way that supports their interests and needs. Students come to class with ideas, beliefs and opinions that need to be altered or modified by teachers who facilitate this alteration by devising tasks and questions that create dilemmas for learners.

Participation in lessons facilitates learning. There are a number of ways that students can participate including offering their ideas and thoughts ,volunteering to answer questions, answering questions when called upon, demonstrating at the chalkboard, talking to peers or the teachers about tasks and completing written work. They may also participate in learning activities by watching, listening and thinking. Participation in school activities is a valuable habit for several reasons. It provides students with opportunities to learn and practice new knowledge and strategies, to explain their reasoning and to examine their thinking processes and recognize the need to revise thinking.

2.8 Conceptual framework

This is a brief explanation of the relationship between the variables identified in my study. The dependent variable is girls participation in school activities. A dependent variable is also called criterion variable because it attempts to indicate the total influence arising from the effects of the independent variable. The independent variables are lack of sanitary towels, menstrual discomfort,pre-menstrual awareness,cultural perceptions and sanitation facilities. These are variables that are manipulated in order to determine their effect or influences on another variable. they are also called predictor variables. The intervening variables are student attitude and the state of the mind. Moderating variables include distance to school, sickness and availability of co curricular facilities. This is as shown on Table 3.1

Table 3.1 conceptual framework

Independent

Moderating

Variables

Lack of sanitary Towels
-Provision of sanitary towels
-school attendance during period days
-participation in class

Pre-Menstrual awareness
-level of awareness
-level of preparedness when periods started

Sanitation Facilities
-condition of facilities
-disposal of used towels
Privacy of sanitation

Cultural perceptions
-girls married off after start of menstruation
-beliefs associated with menstruation

Menstrual Discomfort
-discomforts experienced
-ways of relieving discomforts
-assistance from school

Variables

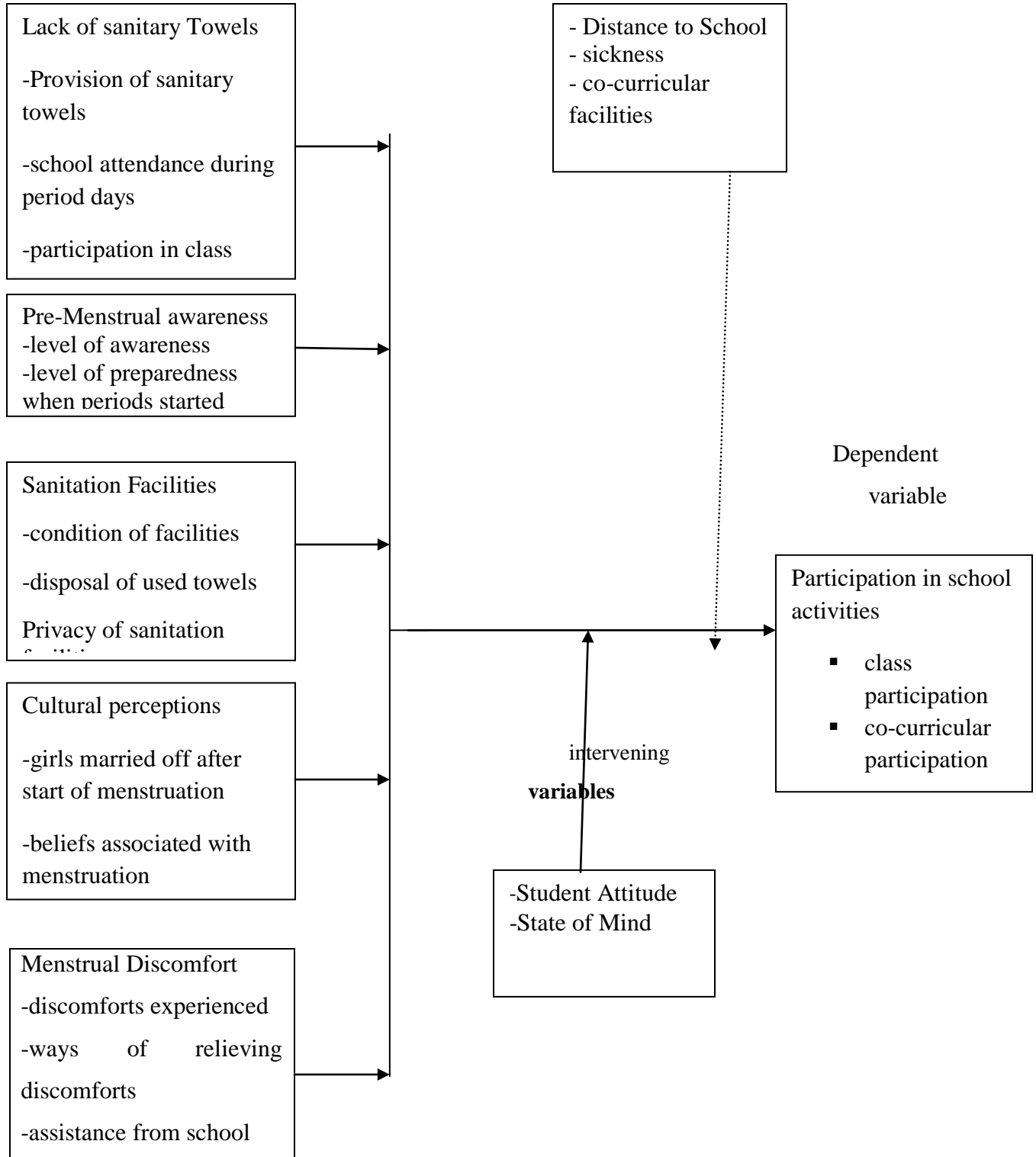
- Distance to School
- sickness
- co-curricular facilities

Dependent variable

Participation in school activities
▪ class participation
▪ co-curricular participation

intervening variables
-Student Attitude
-State of Mind

2.9 Summary of literature review



The chapter has looked at literature that is available that relates to my areas of study. Studies have been carried out in other parts of the world and even in Kenya that are similar to this one. Lack of sanitary towels, menstrual discomfort, pre-menstrual awareness, cultural perceptions and sanitation facilities have been studied widely in various studies that were looked at in this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses a detailed methodology that was used in the study. This includes the procedure through which data was collected for the study. It specifically focuses on the research design, the target population and the sampling design or procedure. It discusses the methods, instruments of data collection and procedures for administering them in the field. It also discusses how validity and reliability was established and the validity of data collection instruments that enable us to ascertain that we are measuring the correct concept. Finally it discusses the methods of analyzing the data relating to the research questions.

3.2 Research design

Research design is the strategy for collecting and analyzing data in order to answer research questions. A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), descriptive survey is a process of collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects in the study. The design was appropriate because it employed questionnaires and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to gather information about the subjects' feelings, opinions and perceptions. It also involved visiting the schools for the girls and teachers to answer the questions related to the research problem. It also looked into the overall process of identifying the population, the location of the sample and instruments to be used in data collection.

3.3 Target population.

The study focused on primary schools in Runyenjes Sub-County. The targeted population were girls in primary schools who were in class 6-8. It also included the teachers of these girls in the respective schools. The total numbers of girls in the target population was 4595 and the teachers were 858.

3.4 Sampling procedure and sample size.

This is a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a given population. This is a number or case from the accessible population. This sub-group was carefully selected so as to be representative of the whole population with the relevant characteristics.

3.4.1 Sample size

Kenya has a total of 47 counties and out of these Embu county was picked through simple random method. In Embu county there are four sub-counties and using simple random sampling Runyenjes sub-county was picked. The total numbers of schools in Runyenjes sub-county are 74. The schools in Runyenjes Sub-County were put into four clusters which represents the four zones. A cluster was then randomly selected. Schools in the cluster were randomly selected. Girls were then selected randomly from these clusters. To get the actual sample size from the four schools, the formula given by Munyoki et.al (2012) was used. To draw a sample of 100 girls from the four schools in the Kathanjuri zone which were Kathanjuri with 43 girls, Ciamanda with 132, Kathunguri with 38 and St. Barnabas with 41 girls. The four schools were selected out of the total number of schools in the sub-county based on Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003 of 10% rule.

Total population (N) = $43+132+38+41=254$

$100/254=0.4$

Therefore for each school the actual sample was

Kathanjuri $43 \times 0.4 = 17$

Ciamanda $132 \times 0.4 = 53$

Kathunguri $38 \times 0.4 = 15$

St. Barnabas $41 \times 0.4 = 16$

The actual numbers of teachers in the four sampled schools were also calculated using the same formula.

The sample was calculated based on Yamane's formula, Yamane (1967)

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

Where, n=sample size
 N=the size of the population
 e =the error of 10 percentage points

$$n = \frac{4595}{1+4595 (0.1)^2}$$

$$= 97.87$$

By using Yamane's formula of sample size with an error of 10% and with a confidence coefficient of 90% (Yamane, 1967), the calculation from a target population of 4595 girls from the primary schools came up to 100 girls.

The teachers were also sampled following the same formula.

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

3.4.2 Sampling procedures.

Stratified Random Sampling.

The goal of stratified random sampling is to achieve desired representation from various sub groups in the population. The major advantage in this method is that sampling subjects are selected in such a way that the existing sub groups in the population are more or less reproduced in the sample. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003).

Simple Random Sampling.

This method of sampling involves giving a number every subject or member of the accessible population, placing the number in a container and then picking any number at random. The subjects corresponding to the numbers picked are included in the sample. The advantage of this method is that every member of the population stands an equal chance of being picked. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003).

3.5 Data collection instruments

Questionnaires were used to collect data from the girls and the teachers. A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted for the girls and the teachers. This was to assist in getting more information from the respondents that could not be available through the questionnaires. The questionnaires should be on good quality paper and should be attractive so that they are inviting to the respondents. The questions should be easy to complete.

3.5.1 Pilot testing of the instrument.

The questionnaires were pre-tested to a selected sample which was similar to the actual sample. The pre-test sample was 10% of the sample size; Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). Therefore out of a target population of 4595 girls 10 were in the pre-test sample. The purpose of the pilot study was to refine the research tools so that the respondents in the study will not have a problem while answering the questions. Pre-testing aimed at determining the reliability of the research tools including the wording, structure and sequence of the questions.

3.5.2. Validity of instruments

This is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results. This is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study. It has to do with how accurately the data obtained in the study represents the variables of the study. Validity was largely determined by the absence or presence of systematic error in my data also referred to as non-random error. Construct validity was assessed based on the theoretical framework, regarding the concept to be measured. Content validity was assessed by using professionals or experts in the particular field. Validity was ensured by pre-testing the instruments to be used to identify and change any ambiguous, awkward or offensive questions and techniques. The researcher did an inventory of the research instrument items to ensure that all the objectives were addressed

3.5.3 Reliability of instrument.

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. Reliability is influenced by random error. As random error increases, reliability decreases. Random error is the deviation from true measurement due to factors that have not effectively been addressed Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003).The random error was minimized by accurate coding of the data and not being biased when using the FGD. Split –half technique was used to assess reliability. The split half has the advantage in that it requires only one testing and therefore eliminates chance error due to differing test conditions Mugenda and Mugenda (2003).The items in the questionnaire were divided into two parts; even and odd numbered items. The questionnaire was then administered to the pilot group. The scores from the two groups of items were then correlated using spearman-Brown prophecy formula. The resulting coefficient indicates the degree into which the two halves of the test provide the same result and hence describe the internal consistency of the test. The reliability coefficient was calculated using the Spearman Rank correlation.

$$\text{Reliability of scores on total test} = \frac{2 + \text{reliability for } \frac{1}{2} \text{ test}}{1 + \text{reliability for } \frac{1}{2} \text{ tests}}$$

$$= 0.740$$

Data with a high Split- half reliability will have a high correlation coefficient. The computation of correlation coefficient yields a statistic that ranges from -1 to +1. This statistic is called a correlation coefficient (r). The bigger the coefficient the stronger the association between the two variables.

3.6 Data collection procedures

Data was collected from the girls and teachers using the questionnaire and FGD. There was no treatment or manipulation of the subjects. Permission to conduct the study was sought from the headteacher of the institution. The teachers in the school helped in bringing the girls together. The questionnaires were given out to the girls and teachers who filled them at their own time and

they were collected at the agreed time. The FGD was done in groups of girls and teachers separately and the information recorded as they answered to the questions.

3.7 Data analysis techniques.

The collected data was analyzed in order to make it comprehensive. The study generated both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was systematically organized and coded into various categories using the statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) software. The results were presented in frequency distribution tables and percentages. Qualitative data was organized into themes corresponding to the study objectives. Descriptive statistics was used for data analysis. This describes the sample in summary form in terms of percentages and frequencies. Tables were also be used for better understanding of the information. Inferential statistics were used to establish level of contribution of the various variables in influencing girls participation in school activities. The level of significance was 10 %.

3.8 Ethical consideration

Institutional permission for the interview was expressly sought from the respective headteachers. The District Education Officer (DEO) in charge of Runyenjes Sub –County was also informed about the intended survey. This involved telling them about the purpose of the study, the confidentiality, voluntariness regarding participation and the fact that no allowances were available for giving the required information.

The identity of the girls and teachers was protected by using numbers, third parties or psedo-names. This was to ensure they gave more honest responses. Lack of confidentiality and mishandling the information provided may cause the respondents physical or even psychological harm.

The research also ensured that no physical or psychological harm was caused to the girls and teachers. Preliminary tests were carried out to obtain background information in an effort to avoid imparting any harm to the girls. Embarrassing questions, expressing shock or disgust, using threatening statements or compelling them to say something that they do not believe in or causing fear and anxiety among the girls and teachers was avoided especially when using the FGD. Any action or statement which lowers their self esteem or self worth was also avoided.

3.9 Operationalization of variables.

This table shows the objectives of the study, the independent variables, the indicators to these variables, the measurement scales to be used and the method to be used for data analysis. This is as shown on Table 3.1

Table 3.1 Operationalization of variables

Objective	Variable	Indicators	Measurement scale	Type of data analysis
Determine effect of lack of sanitary towels on girls participation in school activities	Sanitary towels	-provision of sanitary towels -school attendance during periods -participation in class during periods	-Ordinal -Ratio	Descriptive
Establish the influence of menstrual discomfort on girls participation in school activities	Menstrual discomfort	-types of discomforts experienced -ways of relieving discomforts -assistance from the school	Ratio	Descriptive
Determine effect of cultural perceptions on girls participation in school activities.	Cultural perceptions	-cultural beliefs associated with menstruation -education of boys versus girls -girls married off after onset of menstruation	Ratio	Descriptive

Determine the effect on pre-menstrual awareness on girls participation in school activities.	Menstrual awareness	-level of awareness -level of preparedness when periods started	Ratio	Descriptive
Establish the relationship between school sanitation facilities and girls participation in school activities	-sanitary facilities	-condition of facilities -disposal of used towels -privacy of sanitation facilities	-Ratio -Ordinal	Descriptive

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis, presentation and interpretation. The data presented includes the themes of the study that included lack of sanitary towels on primary school girls participation in school activities, menstrual discomfort and primary school girls participation in school activities, cultural perceptions and primary school girls participation in school activities, pre-menstrual awareness and primary school girls participation in school activities and school sanitation facilities and primary school girls participation in school activities.

4.2 Questionnaire return rate.

The questionnaire return rate for the students was 65% while those for the teacher was 71%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) 50% return rate is adequate for analyzing and reporting. A response of 60% return rate is good and a response rate of 70% and over is very good.

4.3 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

This focuses on the age of the respondents, their classes and for how long the teachers in the sample had served in their respective schools.

4.3.1 Distribution of respondents by age

The study sought to establish information the age of the girls in the sample. This information is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 **Distribution of the respondents by age**

Distribution by age	Frequency	Percent
10 -12Years	34	50.13
13-14 Years	33	31.4
14-15	12	17.04
16 and above	1	1.4
Total	70	100

The girls in the study were aged between 10 years and 16 years. Out of 100 girls who were in the sample majority of them were in the age of 13 -14 years.

4.3.2 Classes of participating pupils.

In one of the items the girls were asked to indicate their classes in the school. The information is as indicated in Table 4.2

Table 4. 2 Classes of participating girls.

Classes of participants	Frequency	Percent
Class 6	22	31.4
Class 7	46	65.7
Class 8	2	2.9
Total	70	100

The girls were sampled from class six, seven and eight, majority of those who responded were in class 7.

4.3.3 Teachers service in their schools.

The teachers in the sample were asked on one of the items to indicate for how they had stayed in that particular school. Their responses are as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4. 3: Teachers service in their schools.

Teachers service in their schools	Frequency	Percent
0-5 Years	24	46.2
6-10 Years	9	17.3
11-15 Years	6	11.5
16-20 Years	3	5.8
20 Years and above	8	15.4
Don't Know	2	3.8
Total	52	100

The highest percentage of the teachers in the sample had stayed in their stations for below 5.

4.4 Influence of lack of sanitary towels on primary school girls participation in school activities.

Lack of proper protection during the monthly periods can make girls feel very uncomfortable and this can affect not only their co curricular participation but also their academic performance.

4.4.1 Provision of sanitary towels

Lack of sanitary towels can be a big limitation to girls participation in school activities. Girls were asked who provided them with sanitary towels and this was their response as indicated in the Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Provision of sanitary towels

Provision of sanitary towels	Frequency	Percent
Mother	64	91.4
Father	1	1.4
Sister	3	4.3
Don't Know	2	2.9
Total	70	100

Most of the girls who answered the questionnaire got their sanitary towels from their mothers. Very few of them are provided for by their fathers.

4.4.2 Frequency of distribution of sanitary towels

The girls were further asked to indicate whether they got any sanitary towels from the schools. Their responses are as shown on Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Frequency of distribution of sanitary towels

Frequency of distribution	Frequency	Percent
After every term	22	31.4
Given three packets each	1	1.4
Given in absence of boys	6	8.6
Teachers call us in confidence	1	1.4
They encourage us about menses	3	4.3
Every month	12	17.1
Don't Know	25	35.7
Total	70	100

Majority of the girls (31%) indicated that the schools provide them with the sanitary towels on a termly basis while 17.1% get them on monthly basis.

4.4.3 What girls do if not prepared

The girls were asked to indicate what they did if periods started in school and they were not prepared. The findings from the study are as indicated in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 What girls do if not prepared?

What girls do if not prepared	Frequency	Percent
Tell the teacher	42	60
Go home	4	5.7
Tell lady teacher	6	8.6
Tell class teacher	10	14.3
I tie a sweater around my waist	1	1.4
Don't Know	6	8.6
Not Applicable	1	1.4
Total	70	100

From the findings it is clear that the girls have a lot of confidence in their teachers and they are able to confide in them.

4.4.4 School attendance on period days

The girls were further asked to indicate whether they attended school when they were on their periods. Findings were as presented on Table 4.7

Table 4.7 School attendance on period days

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	56	80
No	10	14.3
Don't Know	4	5.7
Total	70	100

Eighty percent of the girls did not miss school on their period days.

4.4.5 Teachers support to girls during periods

The teachers in the sample were also asked to indicate in one of the items whether they gave any support to the girls during their periods. Their responses are as shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Teachers support to girls during periods

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	49	94.2

No	2	3.8
Don't Know	1	1.9
Total	52	100

From the above responses it is clear that the teachers are very supportive to the girls during their periods.

4.4.6 Ease in class participation

The girls were asked whether they found it easy to participate in class during their periods. Their responses are as indicated in the Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Ease in class participation.

Ease in class participation	Frequency	Percent
Yes	28	40
No	34	48.6
Don't Know	8	11.4
Total	70	100

Most of the girls did not find it easy to participate in class during their periods.

4.4.7 Reasons for not participating

The girls were asked to indicate on one of the items their reasons for not participating in school activities. Their responses are as indicated on Table 4.10

Table 4.10 Reasons for not participating.

Reasons for not participating	Frequency	Percent
I have messed	5	7.1
I am worried	4	5.7
Because boys will laugh at me	11	15.7
When you are participating it can start	3	4.3
Because I am not comfortable	5	7.1
I feel shy	8	11.4
I have stomach pain	4	5.7
I have a headache	2	2.9
Don't Know	28	40
Total	92	100

From this information it is evident that girls had reasons that made them not to fully participate in the activities. Fear of being laughed at and feeling shy are some of these reasons.

4.4.8 Days absent from school

The girls were also asked to indicate how many days they had missed school during the term and their responses were as shown in Table 4.11

Table 4.11 Days absent from school this term

Days absent from school this term	Frequency	Percent
None	40	57.1
One day	6	8.6
Two days	5	7.1
Three days	5	7.1
Four days	1	1.4
Five days	3	4.3
Don't Know	9	12.9
Not Applicable	1	1.4
Total	70	100

Most of the girls had not missed school though a number had. Majority had only missed one day.

4.4.9 Reasons for missing school

The girls were asked to further indicate what reasons made them miss school. Their responses are as indicated in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Reasons for missing school.

Reasons for missing school	Frequency	Percent
Because I was not prepared	11	15.7
Pad is disturbing	4	5.7
My mother did not give me pads	2	2.9
Because of pain in the stomach	5	7.1
My class teacher told me to go	1	1.4
I was feeling unwell	6	8.6
Don't Know	19	27.1
Not applicable	22	31.4
Total	70	100

Most of the girls missed school because they were not prepared. Some were unwell and so did not go to school.

4.5 Influence of menstrual discomfort on primary school girls participation in school activities.

Menstrual discomfort is a challenge to the girls and can be barrier to their participation in most of the school activities.

4.5.1 Types of discomfort during periods

The girls in the study were asked to indicate which discomfort they experienced during their periods and their responses are as shown on Table 4.13

Table 4.13 Types of discomfort during periods.

Types of discomfort during periods	Frequency	Percent
Headache	37	52.9
Nausea	3	4.3
Mood swings	12	17.1
Itching	1	1.4
Cramps	1	1.4
Stomach pains	12	17.1
Don't Know	4	5.7
Total	70	100

Headache was the most common discomfort (52.9%) encountered by the girls.

4.5.2 Hindrance of menstrual discomfort in school activities

The girls were asked to indicate whether this discomforts hindered them from fully participating in school activities and their answers are indicated on Table 4.14.

Table 4.14 Hindrance of menstrual discomfort in school activities.

Hindrance of menstrual discomfort	Frequency	Percent
Yes	48	68.6
No	15	21.4

Don't Know	7	10
Total	70	100

Majority of the girls in the study admitted to not fully participating in school activities when they were on their periods because of the discomforts they encountered.

From the FGD some girls said they were very uneasy to participate in class because they did not feel protected.

“I hate when the teacher comes to class and tells us to stand or asks me to solve a sum on the board because I fear I might have messed my dress.”

4.5.3 How to relieve menstrual discomfort

The girls in the sample were also asked in one of the items on the questionnaire to indicate how they relieved their menstrual discomforts. Their responses are as shown on Table 4.15.

Table 4.15 How to relieve menstrual discomfort.

How to relieve menstrual discomfort	Frequency	Percent
Pain Killers	19	27.1
Discuss the problem with my teacher	3	4.3
By wearing pads always	6	8.6
Keep quiet and away from boys	8	11.4
Being ready for them	3	4.3
Don't Know	28	40
Doing exercises	3	4.3
Total	70	100

Majority of the girls said they took pain killers to relieve the pain.

4.5.4 School assistance to relieve discomfort

The girls were further asked to indicate whether they received any assistance from the schools.

The findings are as presented in Table 4.16

Table 4.16 School assistance to relieve discomfort.

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	57	81.4
No	6	8.6
Don't Know	7	10

Total	70	100
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Majority of the girls (81.4%) admitted to getting a lot of assistance from the schools to help cope with menstrual discomforts.

4.5.5 Type of assistance from school

The teachers in the sample were also asked to indicate the kind of assistance the schools gave to the girls to relieve menstrual discomfort. Their responses are as shown on Table 4.17

Table 4.17 Type of assistance from the school.

Types of assistance from school	Frequency	Percent
Giving first Aid	9	17.3
Provide pain Killers	23	44.2
Counsel / Guide them	10	19.2
Don't Know	10	19.2
Total	52	100

The teachers in the sample also indicated that the schools were very supportive to the girls when they experience the menstrual discomforts.

4.6 Influence of cultural perceptions on primary school girls participation in school activities.

Many communities have beliefs regarding menstruating women that can be a big barrier to girls participation in school activities. These cultural issues affect not only girls but also women.

4.6.1 Cultural beliefs associated with menstruation

The girls were asked if there are any cultural beliefs that they knew associated with menstruation and this were their responses as shown in the Table4.18

Table 4.18 Cultural beliefs associated with menstruation.

Cultural beliefs associated with menstruation	Frequency	Percent
Without menstruation one is not normal	13	18.6

People say blood comes because one has a wound in her body	3	4.3
No	9	12.9
Yes	6	8.6
Stomach pains	11	15.7
Don't Know	28	40
Total	70	100

Many of the sampled girls did not know of any cultural beliefs that are associated with menstruation; however they cited myths that they had heard said about menstruation.

4.6.2 Cultural issues affecting participation

The teachers in the sample were also asked to indicate any cultural issues that affected girls participation and this were their responses as shown in Table 4.19

Table 4.19 Cultural issues affecting participation.

Cultural issues affecting participation	Frequency	Percent
Kitchen work	9	17.3
None	22	42.3
Poverty	4	7.7
Not applicable	7	13.5
Don't Know	9	17.3
F.G.M	1	1.9
Total	52	100

Many of the sampled teachers did not know of any cultural beliefs that affected girls participation in school activities. However kitchen duties seem to take much of the girls time making them not to fully participate.

4.6.3 Beliefs about educating boys as opposed to girls

The girls were further asked whether they knew of any beliefs associated with educating boys as opposed to girls. These were their responses as shown in Table 4.20

Table 4.20 Beliefs about educating boys as opposed to girls.

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	16	22.9

No	19	27.1
Don't Know	35	50
Total	70	100

Majority of the girls did not know of any beliefs of educating boys a opposed to girls.

4.6.4 Girls married off after start of periods

The girls were also asked to indicate if they knew of any of their classmates who were married off after starting their periods. Their responses are given in Table 4.21

Table 4.21 Girls married off after start of periods.

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	17	24.3
No	38	54.3
Don't Know	15	21.4
Total	70	100

Only 24% of the sampled girls knew of some of their classmates who were married off after starting their menstrual periods.

4.7 Influence of pre-menstrual awareness on primary school girls participation in school activities.

When girls have the right information then they will be able to make the right decisions when that time in their live comes. They will not be caught unprepared.

4.7.1 Had any one talked about menstruation before

The girls were asked to indicate whether anyone had talked to them about menstruation before they started. Their responses are as indicated in Table 4.22.

Table 4.22 Had any one talked about menstruation before.

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	63	90
No	6	8.6

Don't Know	1	1.4
Total	70	100

Majority of the girls (90%) indicated that someone had talked to them about menstruation earlier. This indicates that there was awareness by the majority.

4.7.2 Who had talked about menstruation before

They were further asked to indicate who it was that had talked to them. Their responses are as shown on Table 4.23.

Table 4.23 Who had talked about menstruation before.

Who had talked about menstruation before	Frequency	Percent
Science Teacher	34	48.6
Teacher	12	17.1
No One	1	1.4
My Sister	4	5.7
My Mother	3	4.3
My Cousin	1	1.4
My Class teacher	6	8.6
My Friend	3	4.3
Don't Know	6	8.6
Total	70	100

Most of the information was from their teachers and not their mothers as one would expect.

4.7.3 How teachers prepare girls for puberty

The teachers were also asked on one of the items to indicate how they prepared girls for puberty. Their responses are as indicated on Table 4.24

Table 4.24 How teachers prepare girls for puberty

How teachers prepare girls for puberty	Frequency	Percent
Through guidance and counseling	19	36.5

Awareness programmes	9	17.3
Talking to them	7	13.5
Teaching about their bodies	14	26.9
Not applicable	3	5.8
Total	52	100

The teachers in the sample admitted to giving the girls pre- menstrual talks to adequately prepare them for puberty.

4.7.4 Girls preparedness when periods started

The girls were asked on one of the items to indicate whether they were prepared when the periods started .Their responses are presented in Table 4.25.

Table 4.25 Girls preparedness when periods started

Girls preparedness when periods started	Frequency	Percent
Very prepared	34	48.6
Not prepared	32	45.7
Don't Know	4	5.7
Total	70	100

Despite the fact that the girls had prior knowledge about menstruation 45.7% were not adequately prepared for it when the time came.

4.7.5 Person talked to when periods started

The girls were asked to indicate whom they talked to when their periods started and this were their responses as shown on table 4.26

Table 4.26 Person talked to when periods started.

Person talked to when periods started	Frequency	Percent
Mother	57	81.4
Teacher	10	14.3
Sister	2	2.9
Don't Know	1	1.4
Total	70	100

The mother gave very little information on menstruation yet she received most of the information when the girls started their menstruation. This is an indication that the girls may have received the information through a normal science lesson.

The responses from the FGDs gave similar findings as the questionnaires.

4.8 Influence of school sanitation facilities and primary school girls participation in school activities.

Girls should be provided with private sanitation facilities away from the boys so that they will feel confident to use them without fear of being noticed.

4.8.1 Condition of school sanitation facilities

The girls were asked to rate their school sanitation facilities and their responses were as indicated in Table 4.27

Table 4.27 Condition of school sanitation facilities.

Conditions of school sanitation facilities	Frequency	Percent
Very Good	46	65.7
Good	16	22.9
Bad	5	7.1
Don't Know	3	4.3
Total	70	100

Many of the girls in the sample (65.7%) admitted that their sanitation facilities were very good.

4.8.2 Ways of improving school sanitation facilities

In one of the items the girls were asked to suggest what they thought could be done to improve on the sanitation facilities. Their responses are as indicated on Table 4.28

Table 4.28 Ways of improving school sanitation facilities

Ways of improving school sanitation facilities	Frequency	Percent
By spraying them	2	2.9
Tell the head teacher	4	5.7
Build toilets for those who have started periods	2	2.9
keep them clean	14	20
One should be ready	2	2.9
Don't Know	46	65.7
Total	70	100

Keeping the sanitation facilities was one of the ways the girls felt could help improve their conditions.

4.8.3 Adequacy of school sanitation facilities

The teachers in the sample were also asked on one of the items on the questionnaire to comment on the adequacy of the sanitation facilities .Their responses are as indicated on Table 2.2

Table 4.29 Adequacy of school sanitation facilities.

Adequacy of school sanitation facilities	Frequency	Percent
Yes	34	65.4
No	18	34.6
Total	52	100

Majority of the teachers (65.4%) indicated that the sanitation facilities were adequate for the number of girls in the schools.

4.8.4 Ways of disposing used towels

The girls were also asked to state ways in which they disposed off the used sanitary towels. Their responses are as indicated on Table 4.30

Table 4.30 Ways of disposing used towels.

Ways of disposing used towels	Frequency	Percent
Go to the toilet and change it	25	35.7
Keep them in my pocket or bag	2	2.9
Throw into the latrine	17	24.3
Don't Know	26	37.1
Total	70	100

Majority of the girls changed their sanitary towels in the toilet. A few kept them in the pocket or bag to dispose at home and this should be discouraged due to the unhygiene associated with it.

4.8.5 Privacy of sanitation facilities

The girls were further asked whether there was privacy in their sanitation area. Their responses as shown in Table 4.31

Table 4.31 Privacy of sanitation facilities.

Privacy of sanitation facilities	Frequency	Percent
Yes	53	75.7
No	9	12.9

Don't Know	8	11.4
Total	70	100

Majority (75.7%) indicated that the sanitation facilities had enough privacy and so the girls felt confident enough to use them and therefore participated fully in all the school activities. However from the FGD with the girls they were able to express some issues concerning their sanitation facilities that were not captured on the questionnaires.

“We share the toilets with young girls in class one and there is no privacy.”

“The toilets have big holes on the walls and are not clean and therefore one feels uncomfortable inside there.

The independent variables and the dependent variables were analyzed using the analysis of variance (ANOVA). This is a procedure that is used to determine whether there are significant differences between the samples selected. The results were as indicated.

Lack of sanitary towels and primary school girls participation in school activities.

The results for the ANOVA are as indicated on Table 4.32

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	2.790	6	.465	1.066	.393 ^a
Residual	27.495	63	.436		
Total	30.286	69			

This gives a significance of 0.393. This means that 39% of the variables can be explained or predicted while the rest 61% can not be explained.

Menstrual discomfort and primary school girls participation in school activities

The results of the ANOVA are as shown on Table 4.33

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.917	4	.729	1.732	.154 ^a
	Residual	27.369	65	.421		
	Total	30.286	69			

This gives a significance of 0.154. This means that 15% of the variables can be explained or predicted while the rest 85% can not be explained.

Cultural perceptions and primary school girls participation in school activities

The results of the ANOVA are as shown on Table 4.34

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.114	3	.371	.840	.477 ^a
	Residual	29.172	66	.442		
	Total	30.286	69			

This gives a significance of 0.477. This means that 47% of the variables can be explained or predicted while the rest 53% can not be explained.

Pre-menstrual awareness and primary school girls participation in school activities

The results of the ANOVA are as shown on Table 4.35

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.085	5	.417	.946	.458 ^a
	Residual	28.201	64	.441		
	Total	30.286	69			

This gives a significance of 0.458. This means that 45% of the variables can be explained or predicted while the rest 55% can not be explained.

School sanitation and primary school girls participation in school activities

The ANOVA results for these are shown on Table 4.36

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.277	4	.319	.715	.585 ^a
	Residual	29.009	65	.446		
	Total	30.286	69			

This gives a significance of 0.585. This means that 58% of the variables can be explained or predicted while the rest 42% can not be explained.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND
RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1 Introduction.

This chapter outlines a summary of the key outcomes from the study focusing on the emerging issues in relation to the study objectives. The chapter also presents conclusion of the study and identifies areas for future research.

5.2 Summary of findings

This section reminds and informs about the purpose of the study, the process used to collect and analyze data and the major findings of the study.

5.2.1 Influence of lack of sanitary towels on primary school girls participation in school activities

Most of the girls (91.4%) in the study said their mothers provided them with the sanitary towels though the fathers were also involved but to a very small percentage (9.4%). The schools also provided the sanitary towels either on a termly (31.4%) basis or monthly (17.1%). The sanitary towels were bought by the head teacher's through a special kitty levied to the parents. Some schools got them from well wishers. If the girls start their periods while in school most of them (60%) are confident to tell their teachers but there are those who will tie a sweater around their waist. Few of the girls (5.7%) opted to go home when their periods started. Majority of the girls (80%) did not fail to attend school because of periods and this is because they are aware that they have to acquire an education to make their future bright. Some of the girls (11.4%) are not confident of the kind of protection they use and they are afraid it might fall and get embarrassed and so they opt to stay at home instead. Majority of the girls (48.6%) do not fully participate in school during their periods and it is because they fear the boys will laugh at them if they have messed themselves. They complained the pad was not comfortable and so did not feel confident to participate.

5.2.2 Influence of menstrual discomfort on primary school girls' participation in school activities.

Majority of the girls(52.9%) in the sample said they get headaches during their periods and this greatly affected their participation in school activities. Mood swings(17.1%) was also a common discomfort during the periods and this can greatly affect how a girl relates with others in class. The schools in the sample offered a lot of assistance (81.4%) to the girls and this greatly helped to make them feel comfortable to participate in the school activities. Majority of the girls in the sample (68.6%) admitted to not fully participating in school activities due to menstrual discomfort.

5.2.3 Influence of cultural perception on primary school girls participation in school activities.

The majority girls (40%) in the sample did not know of any cultural beliefs associated with girls' participation. The education of boys and girls is done almost uniformly and so none of them was discriminated upon when it came to education. However the girls had heard of some myths associated with menstruations that need to be cleared by their teachers, parents or guardians though 40% of them did not know of any. Girls in this region are not normally married off after the start of their periods and this can be confirmed by the small number of girls (17) who admitted to knowing some of their classmates who had been married off after the start of their periods. The teachers in the sample cited kitchen work 17.3% as a barrier to girls full participation in school activities. Majority of them (42.3%) did not know of any barrier to girls participation in school activities.

5.2.4 Influence of pre-menstrual awareness on primary school girls participation in school activities.

Majority of the girls (90%) had prior knowledge about menstruation before they started and most of the information came through a normal science lesson (48.6%). The teachers had talked to them but the girls were not confident enough to tell them when their periods started, only 14.3% told their teachers compared to 81.4% who told their mothers. The mothers gave very little information (4.3%) but they received most of the information when the periods came. With the

prior knowledge that they had received some of them 48.6% were very prepared when that time came as opposed to 45.7% who were not prepared.

5.2.5 Influence of school sanitation facilities and primary school girls participation in school activities.

Majority (65.7%) of the sanitation facilities in the sampled schools are very good, but the few that are bad should be improved. The girls gave some suggestions on what they think should be done to improve them. They should be cleaned and sprayed and separate toilets built for the girls who have started their periods. Privacy of the sanitation facilities was rated to be very good (75.7%) by majority of the girls. Disposal bins should be provided so that the girls do not have to keep the soiled pad in their pockets as some of them 2.9% indicated they did. The majority of the teachers (65.4%) in the sampled schools indicated that the sanitation facilities were adequate.

5.3 Discussion of findings.

This section discusses the findings of the study as per the objectives.

5.3.1 Influence of lack of sanitary towels on primary school girls participation in school activities.

From the study it is clear that lack of sanitary towels does not influence primary school girls participation in school activities. Most of the schools are able to benefit from the government distribution of the sanitary towels though it is not enough. Some NGO's have also come in to partner with the government on this. Most of the girls started their menstruation when they were 12 years old and the youngest at 10 years. Provision of the sanitary towels may not be enough to make these girls to fully participate, they should also be provided with enough under garments so that they will be able to dry them properly and keep off the infections and bad smells caused by dampness. As Wango (2010) states in his report on innovation of the Ministry of Education to provide sanitary towels to needy girls in public primary schools in Kenya, there has been an increase in the enrolment and attendance of girls (Wango,2010). The girls are able to take part in extra curricular activities and are more confident than before. The ANOVA analysis gave a significance value of 0.393 meaning there is some relationship between lack of sanitary towels and primary school girls participation in school activities.

5.3.2 Influence of menstrual discomfort on primary school girls participation in school activities.

When the girls have the menstrual discomfort they are not able to fully take part in the school activities. Some of the discomforts are so serious that one ends up in hospital for the entire four days. Mc Mahon(2011) notes that menstruation and its accompanying physical, psychological and hygiene requirements has implications towards their (girls) education participation in regard to access,retention,attendance and final completion. Girls should be supported on this so that they fee comfortable enough to take part in all activities. From the study it is clear that this is one of the factors that keep girls from participation. For the government to achieve gender parity in education it is important that this issue is looked into. The ANOVA analysis gave a significance value of 0.154 meaning there is some relationship between menstrual discomfort and primary school girls participation in school activities.

5.3.3 Influence of cultural perceptions on primary school girls participation in school activities.

From the study it is clear that there are no cultural barriers to girls participation in school activities. After reaching maturity girls in some Kenyan communities are married off but very few of such cases are reported in Runyenjes Sub-County. According to UNICEF (2005) besides the fact that girls are married off at an early age in some cultures, many girls are kept at home when they start menstruating, either permanently or temporarily. Domestic chores take up much of the girls' time and this affects their performance in school. Education for both boys and girls is considered equal and so both genders benefit. FGM is not a common practice in this region and so this does not affect the girls' participation in school activities. The ANOVA analysis gave a significance value of 0.477 meaning there is some relationship between cultural perceptions and primary school girls participation in school activities.

5.3.4 Influence of pre-menstrual awareness on primary school girls participation in school activities.

Most of the girls received their pre-menstrual awareness from their teachers and this could mean it was done during a normal science lesson. The topic of menstruation is not talked about at home and so this could explain why few mothers had talked to their daughters about it. Peers

also contribute a lot to the information that is given in which most of the cases is not the right one. Parents especially mothers should strive to talk to their daughter so that they are not caught unawares when it happens. According to Martin (1998) to prevent girls from dropping out of school due to problems concerning menstruation, it is necessary to educate all children within the comprehensive sexual education about health issues in general in particular, including menstrual hygiene. The ANOVA analysis gave a significance value of 0.458 meaning there is some relationship between pre-menstrual awareness and primary school girls participation in school activities.

5.3.5 Influence of school sanitation facilities on primary school girls participation in school activities.

Clean toilets that offer good privacy are essential for the girls to feel secure while inside. From the study it is clear that the facilities in the sampled schools were good and the girls felt comfortable. According to UNICEF (2008) the child- friendly schools which provided privacy and hygiene facilities for girls through separate toilets for boys and girls as well as water and wash areas, tended to attract and retain students at a comparatively higher rate especially girls. However the cleanliness of some of them needs to be improved and the privacy too. Washing areas need to be provided for the girls to clean their hands after use. The schools can also build separate toilets for the lower and upper classes. The ANOVA analysis gave a significance value of 0.585 meaning there is some relationship between school sanitation facilities and primary school girls participation in school activities.

5.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study has found out that there are no good reasons as to why girls should not be participating equally in school activities as the boys. The lack of sanitary towels was not a major factor in girl's participation in school activities because they are provided on regular basis at school. Menstrual discomfort was a major factor influencing the girls participation in school activities. Pre-menstrual awareness was not a major factor influencing the girls participation because majority of the girls had knowledge on this. Cultural beliefs were not a major influence to girls participation in school activities. Sanitation facilities were provided and girls indicated they were comfortable and there was enough privacy. The girls should be able to participate in

all curricular and co-curricular activities just like the boys. With this they will stand an equal chance of admission to secondary schools and there after to the university and other tertiary colleges. With equal chances of getting employed, girls will become better mothers and better decision makers on issues regarding their families.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS.

The National Government, the County Government and other stake holders should consider the following suggestions should consider these recommendations.

1. Provision of sanitary towels should be encouraged as part of good participation in school activities with government and development partners being involved to support the practice through relevant policies.
2. Response to period pains require due attention aimed at enhancing the girls participation in school activities.
3. Any cultural perceptions that exist that limit girls participation should be addressed by all stakeholders.
4. There is need for girls to receive explicit, correct and relevant information on matters of puberty and menstruation through formal and non-formal channels.
5. Adequate water and sanitation facilities that are designed with privacy in mind and which are girl friendly should be part of the school infrastructure to support girls participation in school activities.
6. Provision of adequate underwear for the girls should be considered so that they are free from infections caused by dampness.

5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY.

The study aimed at determining the influence of lack of sanitary towels, establishing the influence of menstrual discomfort, effect of cultural perceptions, influence of pre-menstrual awareness and influence of sanitation facilities on primary school girls participation in school activities in Runyenjes sub-county of Embu county. The study gives the following suggestions:

- i. A similar study needs to be carried out in other parts of the county more so the drier parts of Mbeere to establish the factors that influence primary school girls participation in school activities.

- ii. More studies should be done to establish other factors other than the ones mentioned above that could be influencing primary school girls participation in school activities.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1

INTRODUCTION LETTER

MILLICENT WANJA MUGENDI
P.O BOX 819 -60100
EMBU.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY.

I am a final year Master of Arts student at the University of Nairobi, specializing in Project Planning and Management. I am currently undertaking a research on “**FACTORS INFLUENCING PRIMARY SCHOOL GIRLS PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES IN RUNYENJES SUB-COUNTY, EMBU COUNTY.**”

I will be grateful if you could spare sometime from your busy schedule and answer the questions that I will put forward to you. All information provided will be purely used for academic purposes and your identity will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Millicent WanjaMugendi

APPENDIX 2

PUPILS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge. Answer by ticking or by filling in the spaces provided.

SECTION 1 PERSONAL INFORMATION

- 1. What is your age?-----
- 2. In which class are you in? Please tick [6] [7] [8]
- 3. Have you started your menstrual periods? [YES] [NO]
- 4. At what age did you start your menstruation periods?

SECTION 2 LACK OF SANITARY TOWELS

5 .Who provides your sanitary towels?

Mother []

Father []

Sister []

Any other please state-----

6. Does the school provide any sanitary towels to you? YES [] NO []

If yes how often are they provided? Please explain-----

7. What do you do if your periods start when in school and you were not prepared?

8. Do you attend school when you are on your periods? YES [] NO []

Explain your answer-----

9. Do you find it easy to participate in class during your periods? YES [] NO []

If no what prevents you from participating fully-----

10. How many days have you missed school this term -----

11. What was the reason for missing school?-----

SECTION 3 MENSTRUAL DISCOMFORT

12. Which of the following discomforts do you experience during your periods?

- Headache
- Nausea
- Mood swings
- Itching
- Cramps
- Any other.....

13. Does menstrual discomfort hinder you from fully participating in school activities?

Yes [] No []

14. How do you relieve your menstrual discomforts.....

15. Does the school give you any assistance to relieve your discomforts?

Yes [] No []

SECTION 4 CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS

16. Are there any cultural beliefs that you know that are associated with menstruation? Please indicate a few -----

17. Are there beliefs about educating boys as opposed to girls? State a few -----

18. Do you know of some of your class mates who were married off after starting their periods? -

SECTION 5 PRE-MENSTRUAL AWARENESS

19. Had any one talked to you about menstruation before they started? YES [] NO []

If yes who was it -----

20. How well prepared were you when you started your periods?

Very prepared []

Not prepared []

21. Had your teachers ever told you of what to expect when your periods come?

YES [] NO []

22. Who did you talk to when you started your periods? Please tick

Mother []

Aunt []

Teacher []

Sister []

Any other please state -----

SECTION 6 SANITATION FACILITIES IN SCHOOL

23. How are the school sanitation facilities (toilets)

Very good []

Good []

Bad []

If bad what do you suggest can be done to improve them -----

24. How do you dispose off the used sanitary towels when in school?-----

25 Is there enough privacy in your sanitation area? YES [] NO[]

APPENDIXE 3

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Please answer the questions to the best of your knowledge. Answer by either ticking or writing on the provided space.

1. For how long have been in this school?

2. How do you prepare girls for puberty before its onset?-----

3. From your own experience do girls participate equally with boys in school?

YES []

NO []

If no what are the reasons for the variation?-----

4. Are girls provided with sanitary towels while in school? YES [] NO []

If yes who provides them?-----

5. Do you have cases of girls missing school due to lack of sanitary towels? YES [] NO []

6. Have there been instances when girls have come to you with problems of lack of sanitary towels? YES [] NO []

If your answer is yes what was your reaction?-----

7. How do you ensure that parents of girls provide sanitary towels for their daughters?

8. Are the school sanitation facilities adequate to cater for the girls especially when they are on their periods? YES [] NO []

If your answer is no what do you think can be done to improve on this?-----

9. Do girls participate in co-curricular activities in the same way as the boys? YES []

NO []

If no what limits their participation?-----

10. From the KCPE results who performs better the boys or girls?-----

What is the reason for the disparity?-----

11 What cultural issues affect girls participation and access to education in your school?-----

12. Do you give any support to girls during their periods? YES [] NO []

If yes what kind of support do you give?-----

13. Do girls complain of menstrual discomfort during their periods?

Yes [] No []

If yes what does the school do to assist these girls?.....

APPENDIX 4

GUIDE TO FGD FOR PUPILS

1. Tell me about your school
2. At what age did you start your menstruation?
3. How and when did you learn about menstruation?
4. Who buys your sanitary towels?
5. Do you feel well protected during your periods to fully participate in school activities?
6. `Are there any problems that you face that prevent you from fully participating in school activities?
7. What discomfort do you experience during your periods?
8. Do these discomforts hinder your full participation in school activities?
9. Do you know of girls who stopped coming to school after they started their menses?
10. Are you happy with the sanitation facilities in the school?
11. If you were the headteacher of this school what is one thing that you would improve to make girls fully participate in school activities?

APPENDIX 5

GUIDE TO FGD FOR TEACHERS

1. Having interacted with girls in your class for some time, are you able to identify girls who are having their periods?

If so how are you able to do it?

2. From your own experience, is there any significant difference in participation for girls during their periods?

3. How do you ensure girls have sanitary towels to use during their periods?

4. How do you prepare girls for menstruation before its onset?

5. Do you think the ratio of toilets to the number of girls in the school is okay?

6. Does the school provide any pain killers to the girls during their menses?

APPENDIX 6

LIST OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN RUNYENJES SUB- COUNTY

SCHOOLS	GIRLS STD 6	GIRLS IN STD 7	GILRS IN STD 8	TOTAL	NO.OF TEACHERS
Sacred Heart	146	125	171	442	23
Kubukubu	52	46	59	157	51
Ngeriari	16	21	19	56	12
Kanja	36	28	33	97	14
Kiaragana	20	16	15	51	15
Kagaari	22	27	26	75	12
Kathuniri	16	16	15	48	10
Kithare	12	16	14	42	10
Mugui	17	12	14	43	11
Mwenendega	16	21	22	59	12
Kithunguthia	23	16	20	59	14
Munyuttu	16	13	12	41	15
Irangi	21	14	22	57	10
Gichiche	36	33	35	104	10
Ugweri	16	20	15	51	08
Njenuri	13	11	9	33	09
Ena	27	16	24	67	10
Gitare	17	26	29	72	13
Mukuria	14	12	8	34	09
Kavuru	14	12	6	32	11
Kiamboa	17	13	11	41	12
Mbuinjuru	47	43	42	132	15
Rukuriri	21	27	22	70	12
Kathugu	10	11	6	17	13
Ngarali	14	10	11	35	14
Muganjuki	17	21	16	54	10
Kigaa	20	26	28	74	11
Mufu	36	20	30	86	12
Kiarimui	23	21	29	63	12
Karurumo	46	39	42	127	11
Kivuria	29	31	27	87	10
Gikuuri	22	25	37	84	15
Muragani	26	29	24	79	12
Ndumani	10	14	11	35	11
Kathabaiconi	9	10	7	26	10
Kathanjuri	14	16	13	43	08
Macumo	11	10	9	30	09
Nthagaiya	12	11	15	38	09
Kaveti	8	10	11	29	10

Iriari	10	12	9	31	11
Gatumbi	21	24	19	64	14
Magaca	17	15	28	60	12
Kanduli	16	17	13	46	13
Gakwegori	12	13	11	36	10
Kithithe	12	11	13	36	11
Kyeni	8	13	10	31	08
Kiangungi	16	23	14	53	10
Mjagari	16	13	14	43	12
Kamugere	16	15	19	50	14
Kandete	16	11	17	44	10
Ciamanda	41	42	49	132	11
Kathunguri	13	11	14	38	10
Kathari	41	46	50	137	13
Karungu	12	13	11	36	09
Kasalani	12	10	9	31	10
Kangondi	8	11	9	28	12
Kariru	14	13	12	39	09
Kathande	32	36	33	101	08
Karago	12	11	14	37	09
St mary kanja	10	23	10	43	10
Nice Academy	11	14	12	37	11
St Barnabas	12	14	15	41	10
Kigaa Adventist	11	10	08	29	09
Plainsview	12	15	19	46	08
St Kelvin	11	17	15	43	10
Parochial	12	17	15	44	12
Winners	14	18	14	46	09
Bidii academy	12	15	11	38	14
Precious academy	13	14	12	41	12
Irangi victory	12	14	13	39	10
Lukas Vision	11	14	13	38	10
St.James	10	14	12	36	08
Marathon	08	10	09	27	09
High vision	12	08	09	29	09
TOTAL	1520	1509	1566	4595	858

