

**EFFECTS OF MENSTRUATION ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF TEENAGE  
GIRLS IN KENYA: A STUDY OF FUNYULA CONSTITUENCY, BUSIA COUNTY**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has never been presented for a Degree in any other Institution.

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## **DEDICATION**

My special dedication goes to my family members for the financial and moral support they gave me.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

MHM-Menstrual Hygiene Management

PMS- Pre-Menstrual Syndrome

NGO- Non-Governmental Organizations

SPSS-Statistical Package for Social Sciences

NSTP-National Sanitary Towels Program

SRHR- Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

MoE-Ministry of Education

MoH-Ministry of Health

UNICEF-United Nation, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

FAWE-Forum of African Women Educationist



## DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS

**Menstruation-** it is the period of discharging of the menses, the flow of blood on cells from the lining of the uterus in female human beings Also known as Catamenia

**Menses-** it is the discharge of blood mixed with pieces of cellular tissues from the uterus of a female through her vagina. Occurs roughly every month.

**Pre-menstrual phase-** is the period exactly before menstruation.

**Adolescent-** this is literally a teenager from 13-19 years who undergoes the transitional period of physical and psychological development between childhood and maturity.

**Menarche-** is the onset of menstruation; the beginning of the menstrual period, a girl's first period.

**Sanitary napkins-** these are the pads worn by the girls during menstruation.

**Dysmenorrhea-** painful menstruation

**Endometrium-** the mucous membrane that lines the uterus in mammals and in which fertilized eggs are implanted

**Endocrinological-** is the process of the study of the endocrine glands of the human body, the hormones produced by them and their related disorders.

**Hemorrhage-** a heavy release of blood within or from the body

**Corpus luteum-**is a mass of cells that forms in an ovary and is responsible for the production of the hormone progesterone during early pregnancies. Its role depends on whether or not fertilization occurs.

## **ABSTRACT**

Many studies have been conducted on menstrual hygiene all over the world. However, Menstrual Hygiene Management remains the problem amongst the adolescents especially in the rural low-income countries like Kenya, particularly in its relation to school absenteeism. This study examined the effect of menstruation on academic performance among teenage girls within Funyula constituency, Busia County. The study focused on three specific objectives namely, to assess the effects of menstrual cramps on the academic performance of the girls, to determine the hygiene management skills in relation to academic performance and lastly to explore the social and infrastructure support system about menstruation that affect their academic performance. A simple random sampling method was employed in which three purposively selected rural public primary schools namely: Moody Awori primary school, Bumulimba primary school and Bujwan'ga primary school, both are mixed oriented schools. The sampled data consisted of 40 female students aged between 9-11 and 110 students aged between 11-15 using a structured questionnaire. The SPSS was used to analyze the data with the aid of descriptive analysis to analyze the qualitative data collected. The study found out that at menarche it was so challenging considering some did not understand the changes. Some experienced fear and embarrassment since they lacked early training, lack of support system, money to purchase sanitary towels and lack of accurate information about menstruation both at home and in school. The study recommends that there should be early education to inform the girls. The girls should be empowered to appreciate their natural girlhood because it is their human nature. It further recommends that there should be an urgent need of breaking the silence on menstruation.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction to the study**

This chapter focuses on the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope and also limitations of the study.

### **1.2 Background of the study**

Menstruation is a particular stage in which each girl goes through unless otherwise. It is the periodic discharging of the menses: the flow of blood and cells from the lining of the uterus in females of human. At its best it is only messy but at its worst it is greatly a limiting agent in which severe pain or heavy bleeding inflicts restrictions on teenagers' studies and social life. Menstruation also has got the most studied menstrual cycle known as pre-menstrual phase; the period exactly before menstruation.

Adolescence goes hand in hand with menstruation and it is said to be a special period in life cycle mostly in the girl child's life. This period of adolescence is marked with the onset of menarche; the onset of menstruation, beginning of menstrual period. This onset is therefore linked with other funny practices like use of sand, leafs, dirty piece of clothes e.t.c which at some point result to adverse health outcomes bringing effects as well on their academic performance.

Menstrual Hygiene Management is a globally known problem especially in rural low-income countries according to Tjon (2007). United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF 2005) observes that one in 10 schools, African adolescent girls miss school during their menstruation or even opt to drop out of school at puberty due to lack of private sanitation facilities in schools, Ngugi and Nyaura (2014) Chebii (2014). The knowledge that menstruation is a normal process healthy occurrence and also knowing how to manage it, can increase these teenagers' confidence and self- esteem. Teachers, parents and fellow students should encourage a

more supportive environment to these adolescents UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, EAPRO 2016)

A school environment should comprise of school buildings with all its indoor and outdoor facilities and services which are placed in a given social and environmental context, this is according to Pol and Morale (1991). Sommer (2013) discovered that more than half of schools in low- income countries lack sufficient pit latrines for menstruating girls hence the situation making it very challenging for the girls to privately observe their personal hygiene amounting to ignoring their human dignity. He states that there are some structural factors in schools which affect the teenage girls academic success. These factors include: availability of sanitation systems, basic water, curriculum, dormitories, disposal paths, cloths, beliefs about menstruation and school discipline and policies.

Menstruation therefore is managed by the adolescents differently across the world according to the cultural, social and economic context, McMohon (2011). In the Zimbabwean set-up, culture was found to be an influence on pre-menstrual and menstrual experiences where their women reported to have accepted these menstrual changes, McMaster, Cormie and Pitts (1997). Adolescents usually hid the onset of their menstruation from other people and chose to miss school due to fear and embarrassment of menstrual leak, Winker and Roaf (2013). UNICEF (2016 ) reported that girls continue to be subjected to several challenges while attempting to manage their menstrual periods because of the things like taboos, norms and practices which affect a girl's education.

In a Kenyan context it shows that adolescent girls from Funyula constituency, Busia county are not taught effectively on how to manage their menstruation.

Menarche, therefore, is a critical stage in an adolescent girl's life because it signifies a golden opportunity to teach them how to take care of their bodies, and also that they

have the potential to determine their future without feeling ashamed or embarrassed

(McMahon,2011); such lessons are perennial and everlasting in an adolescent

girl's life as advocated by (Adler, 1952; 1961)

Menstrual cycle is actually an important sign of a woman's / girls' reproductive health. So this study was carried out to assess the effects of menstruation on young girls academic performance.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The issue of menstruation is mostly ignored or unnecessarily misunderstood mainly due to taboos and misconceptions of social-cultural factors that usually prevent women from articulating their needs.

The issue of sanitary towels has to be put into consideration since it is now a challenge. In India, according Chinta Kumar( 2018) it was studied that the young teenage girls were using reusable cloths during their menses period unless they were given pads in schools. Some of them could not access them due to shyness to buy the pads in the shops, financial constraints and non-availability of the pads in the interior areas hence making the teenagers in school feel uncomfortable and lack concentration on their academics. Several studies have been conducted ranging from provision of free sanitary towels, awareness about menstruation to focusing on the structural and environmental factors in connection to the girls academic performance. Some conducted on the adolescent girls' health, disposal facilities, attitudes and perceptions on menstruation. The studies were conducted in several developing countries including Kenya, Nepal, India, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Uganda, Pakistan, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and unfortunately too much is missing including the family role in educating these teenage girls. Although some mothers try to educate their daughters on menstruation management. Kirk and Sommer (2006) report that menstruation resulted to many challenges e.g social-cultural and economic constraints which do interfere with the ability of the girls' attendance in school and active participation in

class. Lack of sanitary products and menstruation related challenges according to Oster and Thorn (2011) were barriers to the girls' schooling leading to academic performance. Moreover popular media has reported that menstruation is limiting school attendance, Mawathe (2006), BBC News (2010). It is therefore for the reasons that the study sought to examine the effects of menstruation on academic performance among teenage primary girls in Funyula constituency Busia county.

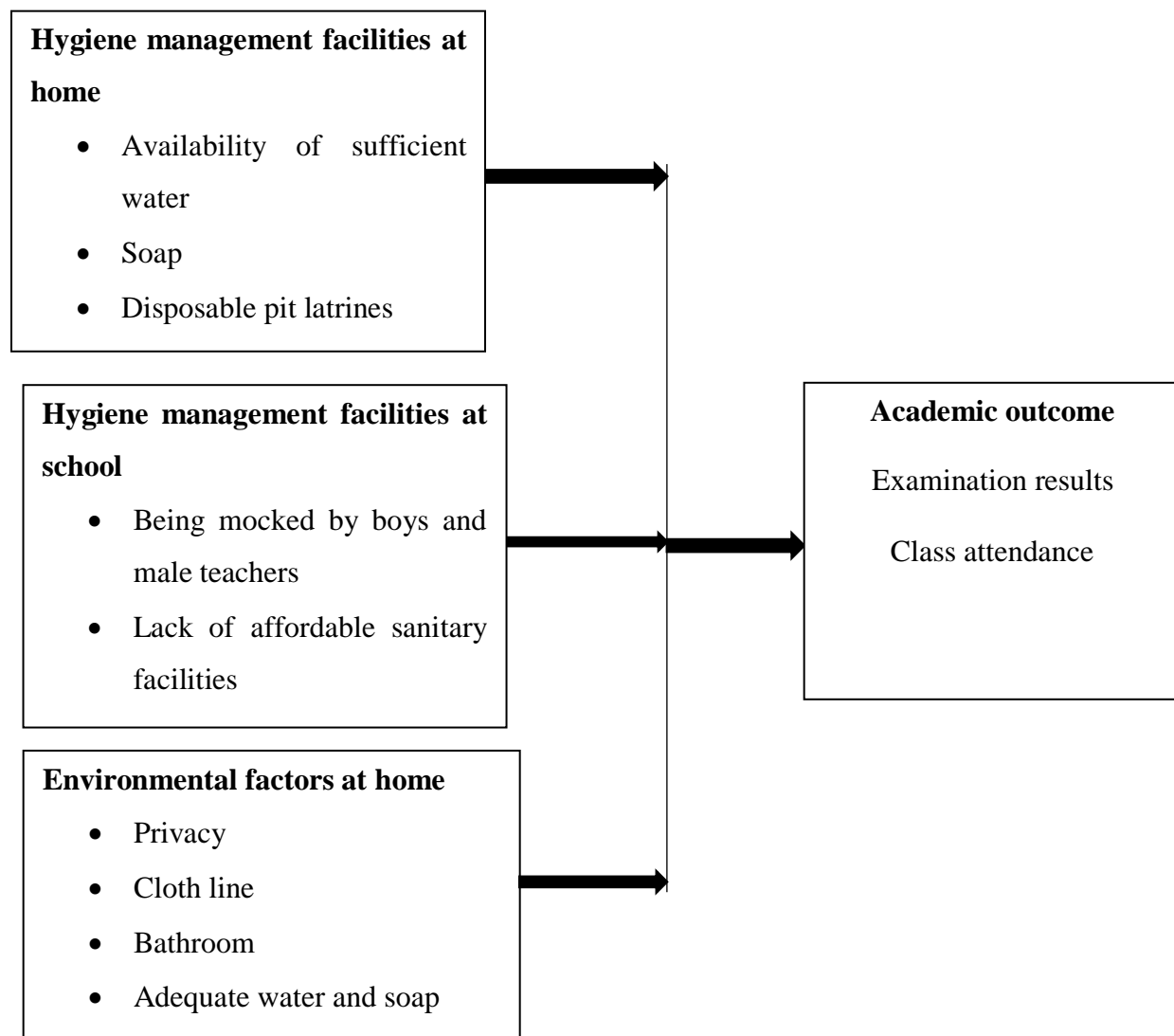
### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The study aimed at investigating the several effects of menstruation on teenage girls' academic performance. The study also sought to recommend the proper hygiene methods and practices to be employed by the teenagers in schools in order to make their life easier.

## 1.4 Conceptual Framework

### Independent variables

### Dependent variables



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## **1.5 Objectives of the study**

### **1.5.1 General objective**

To examine the effects of menstruation on the teenage girls in school between the age of 9-15 years.

### **1.5.2 Specific Objectives**

- i. To determine the hygiene management skills towards menstruation in relation to academic performance.
- ii. To assess the effects of menstrual cramps on their academic performance.
- iii. To explore the social and infrastructure support systems about menstruation towards academic performance.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

- i. Does menstruation affect academic performance of the teenage girls'?
- ii. What are the hygiene management and facilities available in school?
- iii. What are the social and infrastructure support systems about menstruation provided towards academic performance?

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The study findings were also essential towards the formulation of interventions by the government which are necessary to help and to curb the cases that are resulting from menstruation related issues. Finally, the study will provide a background for advanced knowledge to researchers who may carry out a similar research hence this paper will be an important source for future reference.

## **1.8 Delimitations of the study**

Due to climate changes in the afternoon hours, the researcher conducted the research in the morning hours since it was the conducive time for the respondents' availability.



## **1.9 Limitations of the study**

The researcher conducted the study in a specific selected region and it was done with utmost care. The Structural limitations:

- a. There are fewer girls-only rural public primary schools that are structurally well-equipped and address the menstrual needs of adolescent girls. The researcher ensured that the teenage girls get civic education on how to handle menstruation process.
- b. Security and access to some of the rural public primary schools were a limiting and challenging factor. The researcher sought security and permission from the chief of the areas.
- c. Health challenge experienced by the researcher. the researcher prepared for the climatic changes by carrying warm clothes.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature on menstruation and explains the extent to which menstruation affects teenage girls' education so as to know how these effects can be dealt with.

### **2.2 Review of literature**

Menstruation is simply an observable fact or occurrence unique to female gender. It is rendered as physiological process in which its onset brings very serious changes in a young woman's life and therefore it is one of the most important changes occurring among our teenage girls during the adolescent stage. Mostly the first menstruation, menarche occurs between the age of 9 -15 years. In Indian society at some point it is regarded as unclean and dirty due to some religious and societal factors. It is now increasingly known that social and cultural activities are important and they are related to menstruation.

Menstruation causes Kenyan adolescents to skip learning days per month. Faced with complete lack of pads, means that girls can miss school for a considerable period of time which has a certain impact on the quality of learning they receive. Constant discomfort brought by menstruation while in class affected negatively the girls' participation and their academic performance. All these lead to interrupted attendance in school, insufficient learning and therefore poor results in the long run and can eventually lead to drop outs, Muvea (2011). United Nation, Educational, Scientific And Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates that one in 10 African teenage girls miss school during menstruation period and thereafter drop out of school due to menstruation related issues such as the social taboos connected to menstruation, inadequate sanitary provision and the culture of silence that revolves around it, All Africa (2011). In addition, a study conducted in Kenya by the Ministry of Education (MoE) in 2017 discovered that sanitary provision when coupled together with the sensitization of

reproductive health education and sexual facts could reduce absenteeism. MoE further explains that many Kenyan girls miss school during their periods and this lowers their academic performance and self-esteem widening a gap of gender disparities in educational achievement.

Many girls are unable to access sanitary towels and this resorts to unhygienic solutions such as use of soil, feathers, old cloths and leaves. Programs have been put in place to make an effort of distributing pads to schools, such a program started in 2012 by the government as a part of free education for all campaign, Scott (2009). The MoE launched the National Sanitary Towels Program (NSTP) in public primary schools in 2012 with the aim of giving opportunities to the poor girls, to reduce absenteeism among girls, improve self-esteem and participation during instruction. The researcher quotes, “Limited access to safe affordable, convenient and culturally appropriate methods for dealing with menstruation has far reaching implications for rights and physical, social and mental well-being of many women and adolescent girls in Kenya. It undermines sexual and reproductive health and well-being and has been shown to restrict access to education.” *APHRC 2010, (p.2)*.

provision of sanitary towels increased their performance and reduced level of absenteeism. Citizen Television stated how adolescents in Marigat Baringo county had to opt for desperate and unhygienic measures such as the use of rags, hides and feathers since pads were not available. These actions do not only expose them on the risk of getting infections but also many of them have to skip school when they had their periods or simply drop out of school completely, (Citizen TV). Many studies show that girls begin menstruation at the time they do not even understand what is happening to them. Menstruation is considered a private issue making it difficult for the girls to speak about it in public. Some parents find it difficult to speak of sensitive topics like menstruation and sexual facts with their children. McMahon (2011) says that parents should admit that it is their responsibility to educate their girls as well as the schools

have a central role in puberty education. According to O'Connor and Kovacs (2003), menarche with its associated physical developments, its hygienic needs and its increased social pressure to move into adulthood has effects on the teenage girls academic performance.

### **Psychological Trauma**

According to Brehm, (2002), there is need for self-esteem. She says that people who are healthy, happy, productive and confident have a positive self -image while those with a negative self-image turn out to be depressed and confused. The absence of pads makes the girls' sense of interaction with others be lowered down. They feel very uncomfortable being together with boys for the fear of messing their clothing and getting embarrassed hence damaging their self-esteem slowing their academic progress. The school girls interviewed for the various studies described menstruation as a time of anxiety and discomfort especially in school leading to low concentration in class, Stella Chebii (2012). Menstruation is surrounded by stigma which tend to damage psychological appearance of the girls who are not properly taught about menstruation and this hinders their access to education. According to Kotoh (2008) menstrual blood is considered dirty and harmful. Girls who are menstruating are restricted from participating in some activities for fear that they may contaminate others and things they come in touch with. Long school days that increase the risk of menstrual leaks with some frequent harassment from boys in and around toilet add to the shame and embarrassments experienced. Where there are difficulties in the change of pads and the odour smell of menstrual blood being detected by others, girls suffer discomfort and stigmatization as a result, Muito (2004). It is not surprising that many adolescent view menstruation as the most social stressor and a barrier to schooling and therefore prefer to manage their menses at home, McMahon (2011).

The culture of silence and secrecy towards menstruation increases the adolescents' perception that menstruation is something shameful that needs to be hidden and not to be talked about in the

public. Kirk and Sommer (2006) says that same curriculum should be provided for both girls and boys, there should be sensitization. This is because boys have too little knowledge about menstruation hence this being the root of teasing and bullying in schools. Therefore, educating boys and male teachers should be aimed at creating less stigmatization. Lack of understanding likely going to increase the teasing and shaming that is widely common in schools and elsewhere, (Haver,2013)

## **2.2 Theoretical framework**

A theory is a set of ideas which are properly argued upon and are intended to explain a phenomenon. This is a structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. It introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists (USCLibraries).

### **The Estrin-Deprivation Theory of Menstruation**

The studies which have been conducted during the past quarter of a century have served to elucidate many of the events of the menstrual cycle. It is now fully appreciated that there are morphological changes in the ovaries and uterus which bear a definite relation to one another; it is known that the endometrial changes are controlled by endocrinological factors arising in the ovaries; and it has been established that the hormonal activity of the ovaries themselves is not autonomous, but is regulated by the anterior hypophysis. However, it is yet necessary to explain the mechanism by which menstruation and its accompanying hemorrhage are brought about.

It was long considered that the menstrual flow must be attributed to some toxic substance which produces a hemorrhage by direct action on the endometrium. Fraenkel believed that such a factor was elaborated by the corpus luteum, and recently Hartman et al. (1) suggested that the bleeding is brought about by the action of an anterior hypophysial hormone.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the specific methods the researcher employed during the research for an effective outcome. The chapter highlights the methodological details which were appropriate to the study. They include the study area, research design, and target population, sampling technique, measurable variables and the research instruments.

### **3.2 Research Design**

Across-sectional study was carried out by the researcher to determine the amount of knowledge these teenage girls have when it comes to menstruation which was the issue at hand and the only participants were the teenage girls aged 9-15.

### **3.3 Study Area**

The researcher specifically based the study in Funyula constituency Busia county.

### **3.4 Target Population**

Population refers to the larger group from which the population sample is derived (Kombo & Tromp, 2013). The researcher targeted girls in the age bracket of between 9-15 years old who were students in regular primary schools in Funyula constituency Busia county picked randomly. Funyula constituency has a total number of 67 primary schools.

### **3.5 Sampling Technique**

The researcher employed purposive, simple random sampling. Purposive method because schools in interior Funyula constituency suffer the largest percentage of hygiene and sanitation related to menstruation. Simple random sampling because this particular method helped to give an equal chance to everyone who was selected and became the subject. A sample size of 150 pupils as respondents in total and selected proportionately, participated in the study. These mainly comprised of girls from classes five, six, seven and eight who had started their menses.

### **3.6 Measurable Variables**

#### **3.6.1 Dependent variables**

The dependent variables were the Academic performance or outcome

#### **3.6.2 Independent variables**

Hygiene management facilities at home, hygiene management facilities at school and environmental factors at home.

### **3.7 Research Instruments**

The researcher used the semi-structured questionnaires which were administered to the respondents in order to give them freedom to express their view about menstruation. The respondents were able to express themselves freely making the project a success. The study used questionnaires (Appendix 2) administered by the researcher as data collecting instruments. Both closed and open-ended items were used in the questionnaire.

### **3.8 Validity of measurement**

According to Kothari (2004), Validity is the most critical criterion and indicates the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), validity is a measure of relevance and correctness. It is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences which are based on the research results. Therefore, Validity was ensured by having objective questions included in the questionnaire.

### **3.9 Reliability of measurement**

Reliability measure is an indication of stability and consistency with which the instrument measures the concept. It has to do with the accuracy and precision of a measurement procedure.

A measuring instrument is reliable if it provides consistent results (Kothari, 2004).

The researcher measured the reliability of the questionnaire to determine its consistency in testing what they are intended to measure. The test re-test technique was used to estimate the reliability of the instruments. This involved administering the same test twice to the same group

of respondents who had been identified for this purpose by administering the test to the respondents for the first time, after 2 days administer the test a second time

### **3.10 Data Analysis**

The researcher obtained the analysis by putting the data collected in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The SPSS was used to run the statistics such as frequency and percentage so as to present quantitative data in form of tables and pie charts on the major research questions and objectives.

### **3.11 Logistical and Ethical considerations**

The study was approved by the area chief and the sub-chief. Participation information sheets describing the study and the activities involved for the study were prepared. The consent from the parents was sought by the help of the area sub-chief and the assent of the girls was obtained before the study. The survey questionnaire had no names on it. The questionnaires were translated into local languages for easier understanding.



## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents classified and summarized data of the research findings. It displays the findings giving the analysis of the data collected from different respondents who filled the questions distributed to them.

**TABLE 1: 4.1.1 CLASS**

	Frequency	Percent	
	5	50	50.0
	6	40	40.0
Valid	7	20	20.0
	8	40	40.0
Total	150	150.0	

Most of the respondents were from class 5 which recorded a percentage of 50% then followed by the pupils from class 6 and 8 with a 80% outcome. The remaining 20% was from class 7 and therefore these findings show that menstruation on the teenage girls in funyula constituency begins mostly when they are in class 5 in which they usually have no idea of what is happening to them.

**TABLE 2 4.1.2: KINDLY INDICATE YOUR AGE**

	Frequency	Percent
9-11	40	40.0
11-15	110	110.0
Valid above 15	00	0.00
Total	150	150.0

The researcher found out that the girls aged between 9-11 years as seen above were 40%, those ones aged between 11-15 years were 110. Those ones aged from 15 years and above were not recorded since there was none.

**TABLE 3 4.1.3: WERE YOU AWARE OF MENARCHE BEFORE MENSTRUATION?**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	50	50.0
.Valid No	100	100.0
Total	150	150.0

50% of the students are aware of the menarche onset hence they do get prepared and knows what is to be done, the remaining 100% are not aware of what menarche is and therefore they find it difficult to deal with the situation and this leads them to opting to unhygienic solutions which are a threat to their health.

**TABLE 4 4.1.4: IF YES, WHAT WAS THE SOURCE OF INFORMATION BEFORE MENARCHE?**

	Frequency	Percent	
Valid	Sister	10	10.0
	Teachers	30	30.0
	Others	110	110.0
	Total	150	150.0

The researcher found out most of the students who claim to be aware of the menarche onset get to know it through other different sources apart from the known ones, maybe from books, friends or even their pastors, 30% get the information from their teachers whom they say do offer them with life skill lessons regarding menstruation, how to take care of themselves or handle themselves during this period. Some 10% of them said that they happened to know it through their siblings mostly their sisters.

**TABLE 5 4.1.5: IS YOUR HEAD TEACHER MALE OR FEMALE?**

	Frequency	Percent
Male	80	80.0
Valid Female	70	70.0
Total	150	150.0

80% of the respondents reported that their head teachers were male teachers making them feel more uncomfortable to express themselves freely. They fear to explain themselves to the head teacher since they know that menstruation cannot be told a male gender. 70% reported that though their head teacher is a female gender, most of them do not open up or clearly tell them what is to be done during menstruation.

**TABLE 6 4.1.6: HOW OFTEN DO YOU CHANGE YOUR PAD?**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	once	70	40.0
	twice	50	40.0
	not at all	30	20.0
	Total	150	150.0

Change of pads is a hygiene act that has to be observed strictly if not it leads to many complications. 120% of the respondents are not sure at what time or how long one has to stay in a sanitary towel, many claim that they are not taught on such issues because it is like a taboo. 30% of them do not change or rather do not use the pads because it is rarely found since they are from interior areas.

**TABLE 7 4.1.7: HOW DO YOU TAKE CARE OF YOUR UNDERWEAR?**

	Frequency	Percent
wash and expose to sun	20	10.0
Valid wash and hide	100	80.0
hide and discard	30	10.0
Total	150	150.0

The researcher found out that 100% wash their inner wears and hide them since they are afraid to expose out for people might see in which the stains do remain on them. Some decide to hide them because they feel shy when people get to know that they have started menstruating. 30% prefer to hide and discard later since they cannot afford to wash them and the remaining 20% know how to handle the situation by washing and exposing the pants under the sun for the bacteria to die.

**TABLE 8 4.1.8: IS IT IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN MENSTRUAL HYGIENE?**

		Frequency	Percent
	yes	100	90.0
Valid	no	50	10.0
	Total	150	150.0

Many of them know and understand the importance of maintaining menstrual hygiene hence they do observe it appropriately. 50% of them need to be taught because they do not take hygiene as a serious act. This is because the area they come from one is not supposed to talk about menstruation in public, you are not supposed to share the items used by others like soap, basin, cans e.t.c hence there is no one to teach them what directions to take.

**TABLE 9 4.1.9: WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE DIFFICULTIES FACED DURING MENSTRUATION?**

	Frequency	Percent
lack of pads	70	70.0
mood swing	20	20.0
Valid lack of moral support	60	50.0
Total	150	150.0

The researcher found out that 60% of the respondents were in need of the moral support during the menstruation period. They stated that lack of moral support makes them feel isolated and lonely, they need to have somebody to turn to and explain how they feel about it. 70% of them are unable to access the sanitary towel due to many reasons like the pads are inadequate, there is lack of money to buy the pads and also some parents do not advise them to use the pads since they believe that they have some chemicals which can affect them, seems like a taboo. 20% of them complained about the change of moods at one point or another in which one feels like not talking to anyone, another feels angry the whole day and therefore these are some of the difficulties they undergo.



**TABLE 10 4.1.0: WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT PREVENT YOU FROM MAINTAINING MENSTRUAL HYGIENE?**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	improper toilet facilities	70	70.0
	Cost	50	50.0
	Elaborate	30	30.0
	Total	150	150.0

The researcher found out that 70% of the respondents were complaining of the poor conditions of the toilets which are one of the main factors contributing to the poor hygiene acts. The toilets do not have the bins for the proper disposal of the used pads hence giving the young girls a hard time. The toilets do not have proper doors for privacy, they do not have clean water for the girls to clean up and change their pads. 50% of the respondent's talk of the cost factors in which the sanitary towels are sold on a high price which they cannot afford hence they prefer using other ways like using the piece of clothing. The remaining 30% elaborated further on what hinders them to observe proper menstrual hygiene.

## Frequency Table

**TABLE 11 4.1.11: WHAT ARE THE ITEMS USED FOR MENSTRUAL HYGIENE?**

	Frequency	Percent
disposable pads	60	60.0
Valid Cloths	60	60.0
re-usable pads	30	30.0
Total	150	150.0

**TABLE 12 4.1.12: WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF MENSTRUATION ON SCHOOL EXPERIENCES?**

	Frequency	Percent
absenteeism	100	50.0
Valid painful body parts	30	30.0
fear and worries	20	20.0
Total	150	150.0

## 4.2 Discussion

For this particular analysis, the research sought out only the girls who reported to have started menstruating. The researcher tabulated the results for the regular schools by state regarding the following themes; awareness about menarche, the source of information about menarche, menstruation- related restrictions, effects of menstruation on the school experience, menstrual absorbent, ways of discarding the used sanitary towels and finally the barriers or those that hinders and the facilitators of menstrual management at the school level. The following factors were explored using the univariate analysis: age, class, gender, menstrual items used, life skill education or a program on menstrual hygiene in school.

Out of the hundred (150) girls who participated in the activity reported to have started menstruating and therefore they were all included in this analysis. These particular girls attended the regular schools randomly selected by the researcher. 50% of the girls were from standard five (5), 80% were from standard six (6) and eight (8) then the remaining 20% were from standard seven (7) as shown in **table 1**. The girls' average age was 15 years of age.

### **Girls' awareness and knowledge about menstruation**

100% of the girls reported that they had not heard about menstruation until their first period begun and they had to deal with it themselves. 50% of these menstruating girls had at least received information about the menstruation as shown in **table 3**. Teachers and others (parents, guardians, books, pastors etc.) **table 4**, were the major sources with the sibling's mostly older sisters being the next reported source. These girls should also be directed on the need to clean their inner wears, 80% of the girls do wash and hide their panties for the fear of other people seeing them **table 7**, most of them find a hard time to clean them nicely hence the panties get stained. They should be told on the need to observe hygiene by thoroughly cleaning the pants

and exposing them under the sun. Some of them prefer to hide the inner wears and discard them later since they know they cannot be cleaned.

These young girls should be given moral support and be directed through what should be done. Most of them lack a shoulder to lean on or somebody to talk to.

Overall 60% used disposable sanitary towels. 60% used piece of cloths and 30% used the re-usable pads. A lesser number of 50% girls reported that they usually go to school during menstruation, 100% reported missing school during the menstruation period. They went ahead and explained that concentration problems in class were common. They frequently mentioned that they have pain (stomach, head, hips, and limbs), fear of staining, smell or even losing the pad or cloth in the view of others making them a laughing stalk. Most of the schools in Funyula constituency Busia county are mixed schools so they fear the boys seeing them. Others feel dizzy and weak, only the girls who were using the disposable pads were able to attend classes during menstruation.

This study explored the current developmental programs put in place by World Health Organization (WHO), the government and the external agencies to reduce the barriers menstruation causes for the young schooling girls in Busia hence identified where the actions should be taken to improve this further.

Menstruation was not only seen to impact the absenteeism characteristics but also it affected the performance and the quality of the school results. Close a three-quarter complaining of the inability to attend school while in the menstruation period and about 20% complaining of pins and others complaining about fears and worries of staining, smell or feeling unwell. Mostly all of these complains were due to the type or the kind of the menstrual items used.

Status of the sanitary facilities were reported to be in poor conditions and inadequate hence compromising the young girls' ability to manage themselves. At a point these young girls not

only need the supply of the sanitary towels. Simply what the researcher is insinuating is providing sanitary pads would clearly resolve or rather give a solution to these girls' menstrual issues, there is a need to come up with interventions so as to address the different cultural and geographical challenges for example; in the areas where cloths are used routinely, the girls only need some information on how to hygienically clean and dry them.

Most of the girls were not aware of menarche and the restrictions to be observed while menstruating. However other sources like (parents, books, pastors) were the main sources of information about menarche and therefore there should be an effort to equip families with the appropriate information to prepare their girl on menarche and menstrual hygiene.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the findings of the research, the discussions and the conclusions drawn and the recommendations for further research readings.

### **5.2 Summary**

Menstruation is a woman's cycle, when the lining of the uterus is shed and it occurs throughout a woman's reproductive life with each monthly cycle. To summer up the researcher found out that many students are affected by the menstruation period. Many complained of the abdominal pains, swollen and painful nipples, painful pimples (larger than the normal ones), some feel dizzy and tired as some become bored. Some of them also complained of losing appetite hence menstruation becoming a burden to them. The change of moods was also observed in which some feel angry and not in the mood to mingle and talk to others.

All these challenges led to absenteeism among these teenage girl as seen it had a larger percentage. Many teenage girls preferred to skip school during this menstruation period for the fear of staining their uniforms and being laughed at by others (especially those in mixed school), some feared that either the cloth or the pad might fall or even have an odour smell making them not to express themselves freely. Many of the schools reported to have poor toilet facilities an disposal facilities, the providence of the disposal bins and the incinerators were not enough so many of them were disposing them in the pit latrines. The cost of the pads also turned out to be quite expensive for the teenage girls to purchase hence many used the pieces of cloths available. Many schools were from interior and therefore to access the sanitary towels was a problem.

Schools should offer painkillers to help the girls ease their pain. The toilet facilities should be improved with the disposal bins for the hygiene observation purposes. The bins help the bacteria

not to spread and also aids in hiding the pads in which the sight of the used pads is irritating, the environment should be kept clean. The disposal and the burning of the pads ought to be done in the incinerators to avoid the pollution of the environment. Those who fear and worry about the falling of the pads and the odour smell should be given a general education on matters entailing the hygiene of a menstruating girl that is; how to maintain cleanliness, how often is one supposed to change the pads and which types of pads are suitable for each and every girl, for example those with heavy and light menses. The MOH should ensure that there is provision of pads which are affordable to each girl.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

In conclusion, my study further strengthens the need for the Government of Kenya to put emphasis on the investments in menstrual hygiene management by schools. Budget support for menstrual hygiene and focused government policies would facilitate schools to improve this in a sustainable way. Sufficient gender specific private toilets facilities with running water for washing and changing would help reduce the girls' absenteeism behaviors in schools during menstruation period. Also the provision of pain relief pills may further help to facilitate care in schools.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

#### **5.4.1 For Practice**

Early training should be done to empower young girls for them to appreciate their natural girlhood because it is their human nature.

Identification of abnormal menstrual patterns in adolescents may improve early identification of potential health concerns for adulthood and immediate actions to be put in place.

Once girls begin menstruating, clinicians should ask at every preventive care of comprehensive visit for the patient's first day of her last menstruation period and the pattern of her menses

Hospitals should also come up with consultation facilities for the young teenage girls experiencing menarche to easily access them and learn more about effects of menstruation and how to observe proper hygiene.

It is important for clinicians to have an understanding of menstrual patterns of adolescent girls, the ability to differentiate between normal and abnormal menstruation and the skills to know how to evaluate the adolescent girl patient.



The nurses and the clinicians should educate our girls and their guardians as well as their caretakers about what to expect of a menstrual period and the range formal cycle length of subsequent menses.

#### **5.4.2 For Further Research**

Black women may have higher prevalence and more severe symptoms resulting from fibroids compared to the white women. This is a field for further study

The youth's perception of sexual and reproductive health during menstruation.

There should be urgent need of breaking the silence on menstruation

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## APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

### 5.1.1 Background information

1. Kindly indicate your age bracket (use a tick)

9-12. ( )                      13-15. ( )                      Above 15. ( )

2. Which class are you (indicate below)

.....

### 5.1.2 The Knowledge General Information on Menstruation

1. whom do you live with (specify)

2. Were you aware of Menstruation before menarche?

Yes. ( )                      No. ( )

3. If yes, what was the source of the information before Menarche (use a tick ✓ to indicate)

i) Mother

ii) Sister

iii) Friend

iv) Teachers

v) Others

5. How often do you change pads?

i) Once

ii) Twice

iii) Not at all

iv) Indicate yours below

.....

6. Where do you discard them?

i) pit toilet

- ii) Refuse bin
- iii) Flush in toilet

7. How do you take care of under wear?

- I) wash and expose to sun
- ii) Wash and hide
- iii) Hide and discard

### **5.1.3 Questions regarding hygiene in school environment**

1. Is your headteacher male or female

2. if male, are you comfortable about it

3. Is it important to maintain Menstrual Hygiene (your opinion?)

4. What do you think are difficulties faced during menstruation?

5. What are the factors which prevent you from following proper Menstrual Hygiene?

I) lack of proper places to dispose

ii) Improper toilet facilities

iii) Cost

iv) If others (elaborate)

4. What are the items used for menstrual hygiene management

a) Disposable pads

b) Cloths

c) Re-usable pads

5. What are the effects of menstruation on school experience?

a) Absenteeism

b) Painful body parts

c) Fear and worries

**Thank you very much for your answers**