

Gender Perspectives in School Health Policy Implementation among Girls in Usigu Division Primary Schools, Siaya County, Kenya

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Abstract

Low school completion rates for girls could be attributed to gender stereotypical biases and preferential treatments usually accorded to male as opposed to female gender in the education system. School health policies have been rolled out in primary schools in Kenya to ensure equity among boys and girls. However, girls still face challenges related to gender issues than boys. This study explored the extent of implementation of gender perspectives in school health policy for primary schools in Usigu division. **Materials and Methods:** The study was conducted in rural primary schools along the beaches in Usigu Division using cross-sectional analytical design. A sample of 338 girls selected through stratified random sampling, from STD 4-8 was used. Data was collected using structured questionnaires, analysis done using descriptive and inferential statistics mainly hierarchical regression with Principal Axis Factor Analysis Techniques. **Results:** Implementation threshold of gender policy as perceived by the STD 4-8 respondents (girls) was 20.79% of total variance explained by the three different gender factor loadings based on principal factor axis factoring. Gender factor loading 1 made up of one item, **“Our parents are usually informed about gender issues affecting girls through drama, music and other channels”** which explained a variance of 7.05% of the gender implementation was the most implemented, followed by Gender factor loading 2 with a variance of 6.89% and made up of two implementation indicators: **“Our school has enough toilets as per set standards which easily cater for girl's special needs during emergency menstrual cycles”** and **“Girls in our school are provided with adequate sanitary pads for use during menstrual cycles”**. Gender factor loading 3 followed very closely with a variance of 6.85% and constituted two items: **“In our school, discussion of certain topics by fellow pupils and teachers carefully avoid making girls feel less important”** and, **“Parents and teachers in our school usually avoid comments and behavior that make girls feel useless or of no importance”**. **Conclusions:** The findings revealed that level of implementation of the gender component of the current policy is still weak based on 50% factor loading out of 10 elements drawn from the policy. The study however, recommends that more evaluations focusing on the broader themes of the policy should be conducted in the wider contexts and further explorations be done to explain non extraction of other factors.

Keywords Gender perspectives, School health policy, Primary school girls

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