

Female Genital Mutilation and its Effect in Public Primary Schools Participation by the Girl Child: A Study of Samburu County, Kenya

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Abstract: *This study aimed at establishing the influence of FGM on public primary schools in Wamba Ward Samburu East sub county of Samburu County. The specific objectives were to establish the influence of FGM on girls performance, absenteeism, dropout rate and early marriages. The researcher employed the Liberal Feminism theory which focuses on analysing gender inequality and how girls miss opportunities through education. A detailed description of research design was used (survey), target population, sample size, frame and sampling procedure, reliability, validity, data collection, analysis techniques and ethical considerations of the study have been given in the project. Questionnaires, interview and direct observations by the researcher were used to collect data. The study involved 96 girls and 10 head teachers as the respondents who were obtained through the use of double simple random sampling. The data was analyzed using SPSS. The study findings revealed poor enrollment and completion rates.*

Keywords: Female Genital Mutilation, Absenteeism, dropout rate, early marriages, Academic performance

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) has been defined by World Health Organization (2005) as any procedure that involves partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural, religious or other non-therapeutic reasons. WHO estimates that approximately 140 million girls and women have experienced the cut worldwide with an average of two million girls at risk of being circumcised annually. The practice, heavily concentrated in Africa. It has been practiced for centuries in 28 African countries where more than 100 million women have been circumcised, (The World Women 2000). The practice is equally practised among Muslim population in Arabia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Indonesia, Mauritania, Australia among the Aborigines, among a few minorities of Middle East (See appendix 5).

FGM is an entrenched cultural practice in over 50% of Kenyan ethnic groups. The practice is believed to be so entrenched in the culture of many African societies such that it is seen as a way of life. (Aoko,2010). The Kenya Demographic and Survey Data (KDSD 2003:57) reveals that FGM is nearly universal among the Somalis (97%), Kisii (96%) and Maasai (93%). It is also common among the Taita (62%), Kalenjin (48%), Embu (44%) and Meru (42%). The levels are lower among the Kikuyu (34%) and Kamba (27 %). This action is a violation of the children's right provided for by law (Children's Act 2001), which advocates for, amongst others, the right to education. Also, violates Kenyan government's commitment to international declarations, protocols and conventions as resolved in world conferences on EFA (Jomtiem Thailand, 1990, and Dakar Senegal, 2000) and by the Sustainable Development goal for Africa, UN, 2015 which emphasises on ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning by 2030.

The right to education has been re-affirmed internationally (UNICEF, 2001). Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child states that every child has a right to education no matter what his or her circumstances are. The Samburu have a deep-seated patriarchal family set up in which men are the heads of the family and are the major decision makers and custodians of cultural values which cement and maintain cultural identity. Therefore among the Samburu one has to undergo female circumcision in order to be accepted and recognized as "Samburu" by others (Nasesia, 2011).

The Samburu people have practiced FGM for years and being conservatism and not readily giving into current changes in the world despite all the efforts being undertaken by various advocacy groups to stop the cruel practice. The County statistics indicate that boy's population in public primary Schools is higher by far as compared to those of girls. For instance, statistics from the D.E.O's office in 2015 indicates that in all the public primary schools in Wamba Ward boys' population is 3221 while that of girls is 2519. This gender disparity in Education participation is attributed by the persistence of FGM as a cultural practice among the many.

Some of the propagated reasons for the persistence of female genital mutilation in Samburu East Sub-County includes the following: it's a rite of passage which is socially accepted by 99 percent of the community hence a prerequisite for passage into womanhood. Secondly it is seen as a precursor for marriage to a Samburu man. Thirdly, men including the educated ones insist that their girls must undergo the rite so as avoid promiscuity in life. Finally, ones future children will not be seen as bringers of bad omen that would cause people in her community to start dying. Kithure, et al (2013).

It is in this background that the study sought to find out how FGM has influenced girls' education within Wamba Ward, Samburu East Sub-County. Majority of girls within Wamba

Ward, Samburu East Sub-County are poorly enrolled in primary schools, others drop at primary levels and get married and others perform poorly due to absenteeism. Very few excel to join universities or other education tertiary since much strength is laid on rituals and practices (FGM). This causes Samburu girls and women to be discriminated in gender Ward of labour as they are not highly educated as compared to other regions of the country like, Eastern, Central, Western, and Rift Valley among others where girls and women seem to be far in terms of participating in Education. As a result, they are disadvantaged in the job market.

The above argument creates the basis for this study because it focused on the influence of FGM on girls' participation in education in Wamba Ward. This argument was built by assessing how cultural practice contributes to girls' absenteeism from school and how this results in poor academic performance. A trend of poor academic performance may eventually make the girls drop out of school and get married at tender ages.

1.2 Statement of the problem

A major barrier to girl-child participation in formal education is the cultural and traditional values and the daily realities of poverty that stand between girls and their prospects for educational opportunities. Cultural practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) perpetuate gender imbalance in terms of educational attainments. Despite many policies and strategies developed to enhance a smooth transition rate in school there are still some students especially girls who withdraw from school prematurely to get married, thereby thwarting educational attainments. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26, for instance categorically states that everyone has the right to education (UNESCO, 2005). This is equally echoed in the Sustainable Development Goal number five, which targets to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030.

The WHO, UNESCO and other organizations have collected large sets of data on FGM and its negative impact on the plight of the girl child. From these data a number of empirical analyses have been carried out to provide insights into the major constraints it has on education and the general welfare of girls. The studies however do not give a comparative analysis in performance and the influence of FGM on girls' participation in education of between those who are not circumcised and those that are circumcised. The Children's Act of 2011 passed by the Kenyan Government states that a child has a right to citizenship, education & religion among others. However, in Samburu East Sub-County, girls are not participating as they should be from the free primary education.

The main concerns to be brought forth in this study is how FGM, a cultural practice influences participation of girls' in schools in Wamba Ward of Samburu county. Poor participation of girls in primary schools is overwhelming in Samburu East Sub-County. The study was to fill the gap by assessing the influence to which this cultural practice hinders participation of girls in education. The variables to

be looked at in this regard would be academic performance, absenteeism, dropout rate from school and the difference in age at marriage between girls who have undergone the cut and those who have not..

1.3 Objective of the Study

1.3.1 General objective

The overall objective of the study was to establish the influence of Female Genital Mutilation on girls Participation in Wamba ward, Samburu East Sub-County in Samburu County.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- i) To establish the influence of FGM on girls' academic performance in school in Wamba ward Samburu Sub-County in Samburu.
- ii) To assess the influence of FGM on girls' dropout rate from schools in Wamba ward, Samburu Sub-County in Samburu.
- iii) To establish the difference in age of marriage between girls who have undergone FGM and those who have not in Wamba ward, Samburu Sub-County in Samburu.
- iv) To find out the influence of FGM on girls' absenteeism in schools in Wamba ward, Samburu Sub-County in Samburu.

1.3.3 Specific research questions

The study addressed the following specific research questions.

- i) How does FGM influence girls' academic performance in school in Wamba ward Samburu Sub-County in Samburu?
- ii) What is the influence of FGM on girls' dropout rate from schools in Wamba ward, Samburu Sub-County in Samburu?
- iii) What is the marriage age difference between girls who have undergone FGM and those who have not in Wamba ward, Samburu Sub-County in Samburu?
- iv) How does FGM influence girls' absenteeism in schools in Wamba ward, Samburu Sub-County in Samburu?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study findings, conclusion and recommendations will contribute to the existing body of knowledge about FGM, its causes, persistence of practice and its effects on the girl-child, particularly on her education.

Secondly, study will examine and provide an understanding on the impact of Female genital Mutilation on girl child education. It will give a starting point on guidance and counselling of girls targeted for FGM. The study will provide the right information to be used by school Curriculum developers in the designing of appropriate curriculum to be used against therefore mentioned cultural practice. It will enlighten those involved in FGM campaigns on the areas that need to be looked into.

The study is important as it may enable the government to empower girls/women within the community and be sensitized on the importance of girl child education. The religious leaders also need to take a strong stand in

disbanding the FGM since it is neither supported by the Bible nor Quran nor any other religious book (DHS, 2008-2009).

Finally, the awareness created will enlighten educators, campaign designers, education providers, social workers and stakeholders in laying ways of overcoming the practice. The overall findings of the project will also provide a guide to policymakers, stakeholders and project officers on the best strategies to apply in introducing and sustaining to end this cultural practice in Wamba ward, Samburu East Sub-County.

1.5 Limitations of the study

The biggest challenge in this study was to fund the exercise. To overcome this limitation, the researcher solicited the necessary funds from the higher Education loans board. Secondly time limit, the research was carried out in a few public primary schools in Samburu East of Samburu County. To overcome this limitation, the study was conducted among school heads, and students in one ward out of the three wards in Samburu East Sub-County. The study is therefore limited in generalization to other Sub-Counties in Samburu County and even the whole country where the same practice is done on girl child. Thirdly is the means of transport was bodaboda which took advantage and charged heavily. To overcome this limitation, the researcher was to solicit enough funds from her Mwalimu Sacco account.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 FGM in theoretical context

It is estimated that over 130 million girls and women have undergone some form of cutting, and at least 2 million girls are at risk of undergoing the practice every year (WHO, 2005).

In many communities, FGM is performed as a rite of passage from childhood into adulthood. During this period, the girl is equipped with skills for handling marriage, husband and children. Family and communities that practice FGM affirms their relationships with the beliefs of the past by continuing the tradition, they maintained the community customs and preserve cultural social identity. Those who uphold cultural customs in this regard may have little consideration for education for their girls. Without this practice one would be seen as an 'outcast' and be stigmatized.

Demographic and health survey findings (2002) indicate the following: The average age is 7-10 years for FGM in Egypt, Somali, Central African Republic and during infancy, before one year of age in Eritrea and Mali. According to UNICEF (2013), factors such as hygiene, social acceptance, marriage ability, preservation of virginity and fidelity, reduction of female sexual desires and enhancement of male sexual pleasure may play a major role in influencing the girls to engage in FGM. The practice is considered to be rooted in male dominated societies that have attempted to subjugate women and repress their sexuality. As the community wish to preserve culture from generation to generation, women

become perpetrators of the practice as they push girls to the practice so as to initiate them into the community traditions.

As mentioned earlier, female circumcision has been practiced in Kenya for centuries. A World Bank report on FGM (1994), estimates that at least 50% of Kenya's female population has already been circumcised. High rates of female circumcision are found in districts, which include Kisii (98%), Narok (96%), Samburu (91.3%), Meru (73%), Nyambene (80%), Garissa (90%), and Murang'a (60%), Somali (98%). This is proof of the existence of FGM. Further findings indicate that the rate of female circumcision varies across age groups with women in the older age groups having higher rates than the younger ones.

Chege & Sifuna (2006) noted that parents tend to discourage too much education for their daughters. They argue that women stay away from too much education in order to remain manageable and to avoid entering fields, which would make it difficult to follow their husbands in case of transfer.

Sifuna 2006, Eshiwani (1993), observed that cultural factors affect academic achievement of girl's student. This was too echoed by UNESCO (1992) in their studies that there was a general trend across all countries which reported on the matter that girl student performance weakens relatively to the performance of boys at some point in the school cycle.

2.2 Contribution of FGM on academic performance.

Mbugua (1997) observes that there is a noticeable drop in school performance and attendance at soon after circumcision. (KEFEADO, 2001) attributes the poor performance to reduced interest in school work. There is also wastage of learning hours due to the girls being taken out of school to attend the long preparation for the ceremony and a prolonged recovery period resulting to further school absence (Berg and Denison, 2011, Behrendt and Moritz, 2005).

According to Population Reference Bureau (2001), there is a general correlation that the higher a woman's education level is, the less likely she is to be in favour of FGM practices. This is equally echoed by Chege (1983), who stated that where girls themselves are left to choose whether to be in school or go for initiations, the choice is for initiation. Health complications that girls suffer as a result of FGM cause irregular school attendance, thus non-performance and low performance trend on education. Some girls experience a lot of health hazards associated with the practice. Others encounter permanent problems like being anaemic due to high incidents of postpartum haemorrhage particularly where health services are poor or inaccessible (WHO, 2008). FGM leads to drop in performance. It was realized that girl's performance drop due to wastage of learning period as they prepare and engage in FGM ceremonies.

2.3 Contribution of FGM on dropout rates of girls from schools

Majority of the girls who undergo FGM consider themselves ready for marriage and take education as a lesser priority. The cut girls find it difficult to concentrate in their school

studies as they know at the back of their minds that the next option is to get married (Population Reference Bureau, 2001).

This assertion is also echoed in the Pambazuka issue 173), which states that in communities where FGM is practised, it is viewed as a prerequisite for marriage. The MYWO strategic plan (2002-2007) highlights that girls undergoing the practice are deemed mature and ready for marriage. UNICEF (2004) asserts that in some communities in Somalia, girls cannot be married without undergoing FGM. As the initiation marks the transition from childhood to adulthood (Embu Report, 2008), girls tend to exploit that chance by engaging in relations with men looking forward to be married. As the class concentration is diverted to their

expectation of marriage, back to school after initiation, girls no longer concentrate on learning but rather become unruly and in disciplined. They are likely to play truancy and drop out of school in order to fulfil their priority and expectation of marriage (Population Reference Bureau, 2001) and to protect their ego and self-esteem.

2.4 Conceptual framework of the study

The conceptual framework is presented in figure 2.1 shows the relationship between variables in the study and their relationships. The conceptual framework helps to point out the relationships proposed. It also tests the significance of the proposed relationships.

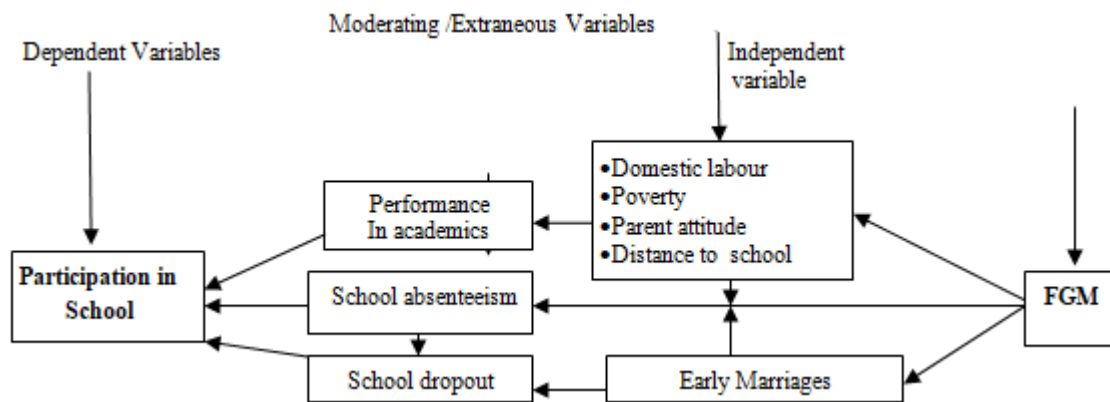


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter entails the used research design, target population, sample and sampling technique, data collection instrument, validity of instruments, reliability of instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis technique and ethical considerations of the study

3.2 Research Design

The study employed survey research design. According to Best (1970) and Cohen and Manion (1980) surveys can be defined as systematic descriptions of the facts and characteristics of a given population accurately and objectively. A survey can be extensive and cross-sectional, dealing with a relatively and objectively a large number of cases at a particular time. The study fit within the provisions of survey as it was carried out within a short time frame. The researcher collected data, reported without manipulating any variables. It was also the best method for collecting data for the purposes of describing a population which was too large to observe directly.

3.3 Target Population

Kothari (2004) defines target population as the number of respondents in the total environment of interest to the researcher. The target population for this study was 24 head teachers and 2519 girls from schools in Wamba Ward, Samburu East Sub –County, Education office, (2015).

3.4 Sample Size, Sample Frame and Sampling Technique

A sample is a small population selected for observation (Best and Kahn 2002. To get sample population for this study, the researcher grouped the target population into two categories: Head teachers and female pupils in order to achieve desired representation from the various subgroups in the population.

3.4.1 Sampling procedure

A sample frame was obtained from the records at the Wamba ward education offices. The girls from the ten schools were identified by using double sampling technique. Out of the target population of 2519 pupils, auxiliary information was collected from a sample drawn from 500 pupils (20% of the target population) then 100 pupils was randomly selected out of the 500 pupils to respond to the questionnaires. A total of 10 respondents from each group were randomly sampled from 10 primary schools representing the entire sample of 100 girls as shown in Table 3.1 below. The head teachers were purposively selected because they are always in touch with the students, parents and the entire community and deal with issues related to FGM.

Table 3. 1: Sample procedure and sample size

Respondents	Total population	Sample size	Sample percent
Total number of primary schools	24	42	10
Number of Head teachers in the schools	24	42	10
Total number of girls (Class 6-8)	2519	20	100

3.5 Data Collection Instrument

Data was collected by the use of questionnaires, interview and observation. Wiersman (1986) asserts that the most suitable instrument for descriptive research is the questionnaire. Gay (1992) maintains that questionnaires give respondents freedom to express their views or opinions and also to make suggestion. Questionnaire had two sections; the first was to establish the background information about the female student. The other section was to establish the effect of FGM on girl child participation in primary Education. Head teachers were interviewed using interview schedule and guide.

3.6 Validity of instruments

According to Orodho (2005), validity refers to the length to which an instrument measures what is was supposed to measure. The instrument was evaluated for content validity pilot of a sample of 5 head teachers and 20 girls, giving a total of 25 cases, which is the minimum number of cases required for conducting statistical analysis as recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003).

3.7 Reliability of the Instruments

Reliability according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) is the degree to which a research instrument can yield consistent results after repeated trials. Reliability of the questionnaire was ascertained through a pilot study in which the questionnaires were pre-tested to a sample group similar to the actual sample. The data collected was then analysed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

A research permit was obtained from the National Council of Science, Technology and Innovation after the approval of research proposal by the University. A copy of research permit was presented to the Samburu County Director of Education (CDE), and the County commissioner for Samburu East- Sub County for security reasons. The researcher visited the selected schools and administered the questionnaires to the female students. Face to face interviews was with the head teachers of the selected Schools of Wamba ward of Samburu East Sub- County.

3.9 Data Analysis Techniques

Before the actual data analysis, the gathered data was validated, edited and then coded. The data was processed using SPSS Version 20.0.

4. Data Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study, their analysis and interpretation. The chapter is divided into the following sections:

- The influence of FGM on girls' academic performance in schools

- The influence of FGM on girls' dropout rate from schools
- There difference in age of marriage between girls who have undergone FGM and those who have not.

4.2 Instrument return rate

100 questionnaires were administered to the respondents and a response of 96 percent obtained. This is gives an excellent data for analysis.

Table 4.1: Respondents distribution by sampled schools

Name of school	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Wamba D.E.B	10	10.4	10.4	10.4
Nagor-oworu	10	10.4	10.4	20.8
Wamba C.C.M	10	10.4	10.4	31.3
Ntepes	6	6.3	6.3	37.5
Golgtim	10	10.4	10.4	47.9
Ikisin	10	10.4	10.4	58.3
Lolkuniani	10	10.4	10.4	68.8
Lodungokwe	10	10.4	10.4	79.2
Sionta	10	10.4	10.4	89.6
Lengarde	10	10.4	10.4	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Table 4. 2 Mean Age of respondents

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age of Respondents	96	13	17	14.18	1.095
Valid N (list-wise)	96				

Table 4.3: Age of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
13	32	33.3	33.3	33.3
14	31	32.3	32.3	65.6
15	19	19.8	19.8	85.4
16	12	12.5	12.5	97.9
17	2	2.1	2.1	100
Total	96	100	100	

Table 4.4: Distribution of respondents by the time/class they underwent FGM

Class/Time of FGM	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Std 6	34	35.4	35.4	35.4
Std 7	21	21.9	21.9	57.3
Std 8	9	9.4	9.4	66.7
Before going to school	18	18.8	18.8	85.4
No experience with FGM	14	14.6	14.6	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Table 4. 5: Distribution of responses on the link between non-performance and absenteeism

If non performance is linked to absenteeism		Performance			
		Average	Good	Total	
If non performance is linked to absenteeism	Yes	Count	57	25	82
		Expected Count	55.5	26.5	82.0
		% within If non performance is linked to absenteeism	69.5%	30.5%	100.0%
		% within Performance in class	87.7%	80.6%	85.4%

No	% of Total	59.4%	26.0%	85.4%
	Count	8	6	14
	Expected Count	9.5	4.5	14.0
	% within If non performance is linked to absenteeism	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
	% within Performance in class	12.3%	19.4%	14.6%
Total	% of Total	8.3%	6.3%	14.6%
	Count	65	31	96
	Expected Count	65.0	31.0	96.0
	% within If non performance is linked to absenteeism	67.7%	32.3%	100.0%
	% within Performance in class	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	67.7%	32.3%	100.0%

Table 4.6: Chi –Squire Test results

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.837 ^a	1	.360		
Continuity Correction ^b	.367	1	.545		
Likelihood Ratio	.806	1	.369		
Fisher's Exact Test				.370	.267
No of Valid Cases	96				
a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.52.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

In relation to academic performance, the students were asked their opinion on performance and how it is affected by FGM. The findings are shown in Table 4.8

Table 4.7: Comparative analysis of performance between those girls who have undergone FGM and those who have not

Respondents	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Those who have not undergone FGM	50	52.1	52.1	52.1
Those who have undergone FGM	8	8.3	8.3	60.4
Doesn't affect performance	38	39.6	39.6	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0	

4.4 The influence of FGM on girls' dropout rate from schools in Wamba ward, Samburu Sub-County in Samburu

The researcher analyzed the data obtained from the D.E.O's office for the previous year (2014) on the enrolment by gender, for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.P.E). Table 4.9 shows that even though girls drop out of school at a young age, there was a general decline in enrolment of boys from class one to eight. It was therefore concluded that there was a general decline in pupil's numbers, irrespective of sex, from lower to higher classes. This therefore meant that other reasons, beyond cultural practices might also be to blame. The head teachers cited such reasons as high poverty levels in the area and the lack

of money for basic needs for the school going age children hence high dropouts.

Table 4.8: Discrepancies between the males and females in Wamba ward KCPE enrolment in 2014

Name of school	Boys	Valid percent	Girls	Valid Percent
Wamba D.E.B	40	66.67	20	10.4
Nagor-oworu	12	85.71	2	14.2
Wamba C.C.M	47	67.14	23	48.93
Ntepes	28	44.4	35	55.6
Golgtim	8	44.4	10	55.6
Ikisin	9	47.3	10	52.6
Lolkuniani	15	51.7	14	48.2
Lodungokwe	23	67.65	11	32.35
Sionta	9	60	6	40
Lengarde	15	100	0	0
Total	203		137	40.29

Source: Samburu County Education Office (2015)

From the qualitative interviews from the head teachers, it was noted that enrolment of pupils in class one always indicated gender equity as from class or standard one to five as shown in Table 4.10. Thereafter the difference between boys and girls was significantly varied as more boys than girls get registered in class six, seven and eight. In class 8 the difference between boys and girls was 40.29%. This could only be explained by the fact that there was an increase in the number of dropouts amongst female learners from lower to higher standards. From the interviews with head teachers on the age group involved in FGM, six out of the ten interviewed agreed that the girls who were subjected to FGM were within the ages of between 12 to 15 years while four of them said that the age group involved in FGM was 7-12 years. This information corresponds to what was earlier on reported that majority of girls getting circumcised when they get to class six then drop out as shown on Table 4.11 shows the findings.

Table 4.9: Reasons why girls drop out from school

Girls dropout and reasons		Reasons for girls drop out		Total	
		Getting married	Pregnancy		
Do girls drop out from school after FGM	Yes	Count	57	27	84
		Expected Count	60.4	23.6	84.0
		% within Do girls drop out from school after FGM	67.9%	32.1%	100.0%
		% within Why girls drop out	82.6%	100.0%	87.5%
		% of Total	59.4%	28.1%	87.5%
No		Count	12	0	12
		Expected Count	8.6	3.4	12.0
		% within Do girls drop out from school after FGM	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Why girls drop out	17.4%	0.0%	12.5%
		% of Total	12.5%	0.0%	12.5%

The study identified other factors responsible for school dropout as pregnancy and indiscipline in school because those who have undergone FGM are purported to be

‘women’. The most important factor was FGM which was reported to have affected those who were subjected to it. From the qualitative interview with the head teachers, it was established that some of the girls who underwent FGM never resumed their studies as reported in table. It was therefore evident from the interviews that the majority of the girls who underwent FGM dropped out of school. FGM therefore might be contributing largely to the high level of girl-child dropouts within Wamba Ward of Samburu sub-county. This evidence is supported by the Chi-square test (Table 4.12) which indicates a significant level of the relationship between FGM dropping out of school due to pregnancy and early marriage.

This study concurs with Mbatia (2005), that the enrolment of boys in ASAL areas was higher than that of girls throughout the years covered by the study. Education of sons is considered an investment in security for old age (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1997).

4.5 Difference in age of marriage between girls who have undergone FGM and those who have not in Wamba Ward, Samburu Sub-County in Samburu

The study sought to explore the difference in age between pupils who get married at an early age and link it to FGM. This data was collected and analysed qualitatively from the interview sessions with the key informants. The respondents

were in agreement that the girls who undergo FGM get married at very tender ages. This correspondence is confirmed by Mwiti (2006) who revealed that this practise is common in other parts of the country such as Kilifi, Busia, and most parts of North Eastern Kenya. It was reported that girls are sometimes pulled out for school and married off. Ombongi (2008) in his study carried out in Isiolo, one of the arid districts; found that early marriages influenced participation in education. Girls in standard 8 or between 12 and 14 years were withdrawn from school to be married off to wealthy men in the community in exchange for dowry. The study goes on to say that girls who remained in school were under constant pressure from their peers and community members including their own parents to drop out of school. The researcher observed an underage girl who had been brought up in the community get rescued from early marriage by Wamba nomadic rescue centre for girls coordinator (Rebecca Lesiriko) as they were reporting the matter at Wamba police station. It was claimed that the father had received 8 cows as bride price from a 72 year old man who had three other wives.

The study carried out in Wamba Ward revealed that the peak of FGM is at standard six. It was established from table that the average age of the girls in class 6 is 14. This information can be deduced to imply that most girls are ready for marriage by the time they turn 14 years of age. Figure 4.3 shows the findings

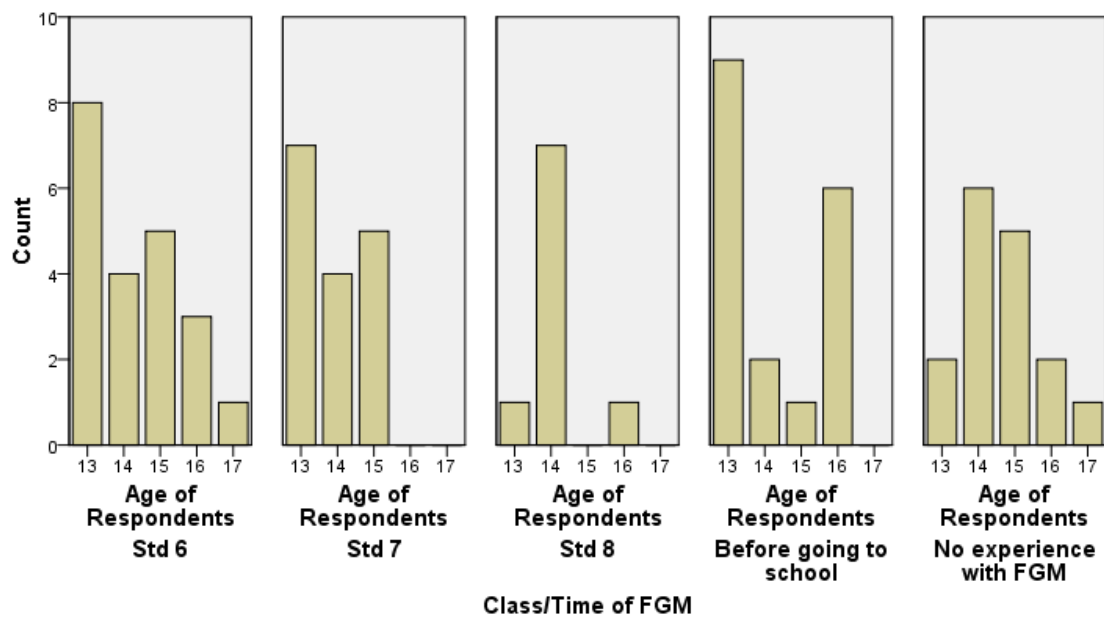


Figure 4.1: Age and class at which the respondents experienced FGM

As indicated in the Table 4.13 below, 71 percent of the respondents were aware of their friends and age mates getting married off after undergoing FGM while 25% claimed they were not aware of this situation.

Table 4. 10: Whether the respondent is aware of girls getting married after FGM

Awareness	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	71	74.0	74.0	74.0
No	25	26.0	26.0	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0	

4.6 The relationship between FGM and girls’ absenteeism in schools in Wamba Ward, Samburu Sub-County in Samburu

In order to establish the relationship between FGM and absenteeism the study sought to find out the duration that the girls take at home after undergoing FGM. As indicated in Table 4.14.

Table 4. 11: Responses on girls rate of school absenteeism after undergoing FGM

Duration	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2 weeks	22	22.9	22.9	22.9
3 weeks	18	18.8	18.8	41.7
4 weeks	39	40.6	40.6	82.3
More than a month	4	4.2	4.2	86.5
No experience with FGM	13	13.5	13.5	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0	

To further emphasize on the relationship between performance and FGM the students were asked to state difference in performance between girls who underwent FGM and those who did not. 85.4 per cent of the respondents linked performance to absenteeism as illustrated in Table 4.15.

Table 4.12: Responses on link between girl’s non-performance and absenteeism

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	82	85.4	85.4	85.4
No	14	14.6	14.6	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0	

The researcher observed that girls who wanted to have access to education pressurized to conform to the traditions or become outcasts. Groups such as Samburu Girl Child Education Support(Sagep) and Global Literacy Project have found themselves resented by the Samburu elders who feel they aimed at breaking down the Samburu’s traditions. The practice therefore puts women at a disadvantage since they are not economically empowered.

Other factors that are linked to absenteeism as reported by the key informants include long distance from school to home, poverty, and parental attitude. The respondents were all in agreement that due to the long distances that children cover from school to home, they skip some schooling days and attending of school become irregular. Poverty was the other factor that was cited by the key informants. It was reported that most of the parents would wish to marry off their daughters in order to receive the bride price which they consider more valuable as compared to the fruits of education which take too long to be realized.

Table 4. 13: Girls school attendance rate

Attendance	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Irregular	71	74.0	74.0	74.0
Regular	25	26.0	26.0	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.17 above on the response on school attendance shows that majority of girls (74%) who have undergone through the cut attend school irregularly while them that have not undergone through the practice attend school regularly. This was an indication that FGM influence absenteeism of students due to the difference in attendance.

5. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study and the research findings. Conclusions are drawn and recommendations made on possible ways of improving approaches to drug abuse among the youth in schools. Possible areas for further research are also proposed.

5.2 Summary of the study

The overall purpose of this study was to find out the influence of FGM on girls performance in education.

5.3 Summary of the major findings

From the study, it was established that, FGM influences girls’ performance at a greater length. The study showed that 85.4 percent of the respondents have undergone through FGM. The girls recorded low and average performance in academics as compared to the girls who have not undergone FGM. From the study findings, the students who have undergone FGM are easily distracted from participation in academic activities hence poor performance. Among the reasons behind this dismal performance is the general negative attitude that some develop towards academics. This behaviour emanates from the parents who value the cultural activities much more than education. Dismal performance in schools concurs with the findings of (Berg and Denison, 2011, Behrendt and Moritz, 2005). Total concentration for education is affected as girls are double minded on what they are to encounter or undergo over the holidays. These studies confirm that FGM has a negative impact on a girl’s education. There is however a small percentage of respondents who reported that FGM had no effect on performance. The issue therefore may need further investigation of relating the performance in K.C.P.E with FGM.

5.3 Conclusions

It was found out that FGM is a major problem in the community where this study was carried out as well as in all other communities practicing the vice as revealed by available literature. This study has revealed that because of FGM in Wamba ward of Samburu sub-county, the girls are unable to participate actively in education and this makes the girls’ education standard generally low in the area. The study also revealed that FGM results in chronic absenteeism from school which culminates to dismal academic performance in class and eventually compounds to high dropout rates from school as a result of this vice. Early marriages are also reported on the girls who undergo FGM since the community prioritizes marriage over education. With the support from their parents the girls abandon their chances in education and opt for marriage. Parents were noted to have contributed immensely to FGM and its attendant effects.

5.4 Recommendations

- i) Create more awareness on the dangers of FGM and influence on the education of the girl child by re-evaluating FGM and speeding up eradication campaign so that a multi-sectoral approach is adopted such as integrating FGM awareness with ante-natal and post-natal programs. This will equally require dialogue with community chiefs or elders, as the attitude of senior males in the community are crucial to changing customs. Elders are the ones who ensure that the practice is fulfilled and followed to the letter.
- ii) Sensitization of community gate keepers who include political and religious leaders as well as county governments and other administrators to change mentalities of the men in the Samburu Community since they are the ones that insist for their girls to undergo the cut so as to be respected and valued as eligible members of the community. Faith based organization (FBOs) should educate people on dangers related to FGM practice since it's neither supported by any religious body. This will ensure that girls are not endangered due to the continued practice of the vice.
- iii) The community heritage conservers should introduce other alternative rite of passage to replace the FGM so that there is no vacuum left in rearing the girl child. This is bound to continue unifying the communities in their initiation practices so as to pass on their heritage to the new generation. This new ideology has worked in other areas in Kenya for instance in Maasai land where 1200 girls transitioned to womanhood in ARP that shuns FGM
- iv) Provision of funding to the rescue centres and NGO's in the areas that are involved in the fight against this retrogressive cultural practice. The government through local administration and other children activists should be in creation of more rescue centres within the county so that those girls who are subjected to FGM, Early marriages and any other form of gender related violence have a safe landing.
- v) The government should ensure that parents and the entire community are sensitized on the importance of a girl child Education. On the same note, the government should ensure that those practicing FGM should be prosecuted; reason being that FGM promotes premarital sex, early marriage and absenteeism from school.
- vi) There is need for the education fraternity to set up strong counseling units at both the county and school levels to emphasize on the negative effects of FGM and reduce stigmatization on the uncircumcised girls. The education administrators should as well implement the requirements of Kenyan Education Act 2013 that gives affected girls a chance to continue with their education. This will also facilitate improvement in the participation of the girls in schools. In regard to distance to schools, the researcher recommends that the Government and N.G.O's should build more boarding schools in the County to curb the problem. This will lead to more pupils' access and being retained in the schools. This will as well enhance their academic performance.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

The study gives the following suggestions as areas of study for future research in Samburu County and its environs:

- i) Investigation on the most appropriate alternative rites of passage for girls in Wamba Ward
- ii) Study on other factors that hinder girl's education in Wamba ward in Samburu county
- iii) The role of mass media as a source of information on the dangers of FGM in Kenya.

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