

**INVESTIGATION INTO HYGIENE AND SANITATION PRACTICES ON LEARNER  
RETENTION IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THUA ZONE, NZAMBANI  
DISTRICT, KITUI COUNTY, KENYA**

**JUSTINA W. G. PEREIRA**

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## ABSTRACT

Hygienic conditions in most schools are appalling, characterized by mal functional water and sanitation facilities and poor hygiene practices. In many cases, toilets are neither adequate nor clean, without separation for both sexes, thereby discouraging use. The purpose of the study was to investigate the role of hygiene and sanitation practices on learner retention in schools in order to access to quality education. The objectives of the study were to establish hygiene and sanitation practices in place in schools, to find out the relationship between hygiene and sanitation and related diseases within the schools and the surrounding environment and to establish the relationship between hygiene and sanitation and learner retention in public primary schools in Thua zone. The study was based on a theoretical framework by Carl Rodgers which believed that all human beings have a natural potential and desire to learn and advocated for learner-centered approach. The theory believed that people were best served when they were helped to find their own best way. It also believed that individuals have within themselves vast resources for self-understanding and for altering their self-concepts, basic attitudes and self-directed behavior. This theory was supported by the relationship between the independent and dependent variables through the intervening variables as was demonstrated in the logical framework. The literature was reviewed under the subtopics; Importance of hygiene and sanitation promotion in schools, hygiene and sanitation education in Kenya, its effects, existing practices, hygiene and sanitation across the curriculum, gender and disability in hygiene and sanitation promotion and the key actors in hygiene and sanitation promotion. The study utilized descriptive survey research design. The target population of the study was 15 public primary schools. The study used purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques to come up with the sample size. The sampled schools were 6 which had up to class 8. Six Headteachers and six chairpersons of the sampled schools were automatically included in the sample. Simple random sampling technique was used to get 2 teachers in charge of hygiene and sanitation from each school giving a total of 12 teachers, 2 parents were purposively sampled from each school also giving a total of 12 parents. Class lists were used to identify 10 learners ( 5 boys and 5 girls) per school who were put in two strata of boys and girls and a systematic sampling technique was employed and a total of 60 learners from the 6 schools were selected. The total number of respondents from the six schools was 96. (6 Headteachers, 6 chairpersons, 12 hygiene and sanitation teachers, 12 parents and 60 learners). The instruments for data collection were questionnaires for teachers and learners and an interview guide for parents. Permission to collect data was sought from the District Education Officer, Nzambani and the research instruments administered to the respondents. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), which was then presented in the form of frequency tables, graphs and pie charts. The study established that 52.08% of schools had inadequate sanitation facilities with 71.87% using the bush as alternative method to relief themselves, 78.13% had no hand-washing facilities to wash hands after visiting the toilet, most schools 56.25%, practiced crude dumping as a method of refuse disposal, hygiene and sanitation disease and monthly periods were highest causes of absenteeism among learners ranking 34.38% and 33.33% respectively. The study also revealed that frequency of absenteeism among girls was higher 66% as compared to boys 19%.

Allocation of adequate funds for development of sanitation facilities, hastening provision of sanitary towels to girls, organizing capacity building trainings on hygiene and sanitation promotion, and also formulating a clear policy regarding hygiene and sanitation in schools and the surrounding environment were among the suggested strategies to improve on proper hygiene and sanitation practices. The research findings will enable the education stakeholders and schools in identifying areas in hygiene and sanitation promotion that need improvement. The study concluded that hygiene and sanitation practices had a vital role to play in retention of learners in school.