

**DETERMINING THE EXTENT TO WHICH INITIATION RITES AFFECT  
LEARNER'S ENROLMENT RATE IN HOME SCIENCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS  
OF IN POKOT CENTRAL SUB-COUNTY, KENYA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Home Science education is an interdisciplinary field of study which applies science and arts towards achieving better, healthier and happy homes. This study sought to establish the extent to which initiation rites affect learners' enrolment rates in home science education using a case of public secondary schools in Pokot Central Sub-County. The researcher utilized socio-cultural theories which suggest that social norms and interactions of people living in a given area affect those peoples' individual behavior and choices. The study adopted descriptive survey design which was used to answer the research questions. The target population for this study comprised of 24 public secondary schools, 72 local leaders and 4,982 secondary school learners. Stratified, simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used in the selection of the respondents. The researcher used Focus Group Discussions for local administrators and document analysis for enrolment rates in 24 secondary schools. The collected data was recorded verbatim. The study revealed that initiation rites are a major contributor to low enrolment rates in home science in public secondary schools in Pokot Central. The researcher recommended that concerted efforts by local leaders, Ministry of Education, parents and other stakeholders of education should make efforts to stamp out retrogressive sociocultural practices such as FGM to boost enrolments in not only home science but also other subjects in schools. The results of this study should be beneficial to education policy formulators, managers and planners in coming up with policies and management strategies that can boost enrolment rates in Home Science.

**Keywords:** Initiation Rites, Enrolment Rates, Home Science, Pokot Central.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

In Kenya, the curriculum review and recommendations in 1985 made Home Science Education a compulsory subject to all learners in primary and secondary schools (Wangari, 2015). These developments appear to have made Home Science Education gender balanced at least in theory (Nyangara, Wangari and Thuo, 2010). However, after implementation of the 8-4-4 system of education, Home Science Education was offered in all classes in Girls' Schools while in Boys' Schools offered in forms one and two. Presently, the subject has remained elective for girls in KCSE examinations (Iregi 2015). Among boys' schools, only a few offered Home Sciences in Form One, Two and Form Three. The resultant effect was that nearly all boys stopped taking the subject. Further, Mugenda 1995 as cited by Wahome 20015 argues that this trend made Home Science a subject for girls only and hence accounts for the situations in tertiary institutions.

Currently, at the university level there are only a few men who have graduated with a Bachelor of Education Degree In Home Economics (Wahome2005). Wahome observes that, it is sad to note that although a few men are training as nutritionists, extension workers, hoteliers and small-scale businessmen in home economics related activities, home economics is still viewed as a female domain.

According to the MOEs Needs Assessment Survey (2016) respondents opined that Home Science should be emphasized in the reformed curriculum and made compulsory (KICD, 2016). Learners gain technical knowledge and information from various branches of Home Science for both personal and professional consumption (Jitumoni et al 2016). needless to say, Home Science Education is relevant to the needs of the Kenyan citizens in Pokot Central. through focus group discussions with local leaders, the researcher's intention was to establish how initiation rites have affected student's enrolment in Home Science education in secondary schools in Pokot Central Sub County.

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Enrolment in Home Science education has remained low for girls and boys in Pokot central sub county secondary schools despite its relevance in imparting knowledge and ideal home life skills for a balanced lifestyle. Home Science is a learning area that handles more efficiently adolescent personal life, family and community resources as well as their interpersonal relationships. In the last five years there has been a decrease in the learners' enrolment in Home Science subject in secondary schools of Pokot Central Sub County public secondary schools. The number of learners enrolled for all the subjects and the number of girls and boys who enrolled for Home Science KCSE examination in the last five years were as follows; out of 1246 total number of candidates, only 11 girls and 0 boys in 2016 enrolled for home science. Out of 1329 candidates only, 17 girls and 0 boys in 2017 registered for the subject. 23 girls and 0 boys chose the subject in 2018. Out of 1457 candidates only 12 girls 0 boys enrolled in 2019. And out of 1485 candidates 9 girls and 0 boys took the subject in 2020 as compared to the overall KCSE national figure of approximately 15,000 students who did Home Science in the year 2020 (Sub County Director of Education Pokot Central,2020).

Home Science has been seen as a female dominated subject for a long time despite the United Nation's Sustainable development goal number four on quality education, Kenyans vision 2030 social pillar which promotes education and gender, as well as the second and fifth national goals of education on promotion of economic growth and social equity and responsibility (KICD, 2021). The National Education Sector Plan (NESP) 2015 has shown that the learning activities that best expose a learner's abilities included those of home science which is not a reality to a boy child in pokot central secondary school education. this study determined the extent to which Initiation Rites affect learner's enrolment rate in home science in secondary schools of in pokot central sub-county, kenya.

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to UNICEF(2017), at least 200 million girls and women alive today have been subjected to Female Genital Mutilation in 30 countries in Africa, Asia and the middle East today where FGM is concentrated, with 300Million remaining at risk of the procedure each year. UNICEF, (2003) indicates that 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 in remote areas. The demographic and health survey conducted on national samples in Kenya, demonstrate a decrease in FGM/C to 27 percent in 2009 from 32 percent in 2003 and from 38-40 percent in 1998 (KNBS, 2010). Moreover, the prevalence of female genital mutilation varies in ethnic groups in Kenya, high prevalence was found in the Somali tribe 97%, Kisii 96%, Kuria 96% Maasai 93% and Pokot 85%, while low prevalence was established among the kikuyu, Kamba, Turkana and Luhya tribes (UNICEF 2017).

Female genital mutilation tends to impact negatively on academic achievement of girl student (Chiuri and Kiumi, 2011). Moreover, UNICEF (2017) observed that FGM and child marriage have adverse effects on girls' sex and reproductive health including obstetric fistula development during adolescent and social consequences such as school dropout and subsequent lower educational attainment and lack of decision making ability of girls on girl's sexual reproductive health. According to Berg and Denison (2011), the initiation ceremony takes long in preparation for such reasons as being taken to seclusion for counseling before the actual initiation; such acts cause absenteeism from school as girls who undergo FGM experience health complications for instance excess bleeding which forces them not to attend school regularly. In a study by the girl child network (2004) respondents from Kerio, Mandera, Nyeri and Transmara Districts reported that girls fail to enroll in school due to FGM because after the girls undergoing the ritual they feel that they have become old and mature for marriage and others simply drop out of school and stay at home. Pokot central leaders challenged the government to speed up the process of reopening schools during COVID 19 pandemic.

#### 4. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed Descriptive Survey Design to establish the extent to which initiation Rites affect learners' enrolment rates in Home Science in secondary schools of Pokot Central Sub-County. the researcher majorly collected verbatim discussions. It targeted a population 24 public secondary schools, 72 local leaders and 4,982 secondary school learners. purposive sampling approaches were employed in selecting the respondents. Focus group discussions were used to collect information from the local leaders. For collection of information from documents, Document Analysis was applied for enrolment rates in 24 secondary schools. The collected data was recorded verbatim.

#### 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This research established the extent to which initiation rites affect learner's enrolment rate in Home Science in secondary schools of in Pokot Central Sub-County. The indicators of the initiation rites were female genital mutilation and male circumcision. In order to find out how these indicators affect the students' enrolments in Home Science, the researcher held focused group discussions with chiefs and the village elders from the Community surrounding the study schools using a focused group and their discussions recorded verbatim as follows:-

**Researcher:** What are the common cultural practices in this community?

**Chiefs and village elders:** *The common cultural practices that youths participate in this community include but not limited to Female Genital Mutilation, Male Circumcision, cattle*

*rustling, traditional wedding and burial ceremonies*

**Researcher:** Are there girls and boys in your community that you know that have undergone the FGM and Male Circumcision? If yes, how can you rate their behavior after undergoing the rituals?

**Chiefs and village elders:** *it is difficult to know those learners especially those who joined in forms two and three from other schools. However, there is documented evidence of those who underwent the ritual and came back to schools. For those who managed to come back, reports from schools indicate that their perceptions towards Home Science changed. Most boys dropped the subject. They claim the subject is feminine in nature. Some girls have also shunned the subject because they say it is limiting them in the world of employment.*

**Researcher:** Do you believe that FGM and Male Circumcision affect learners' enrolment rates in Home Science? Please explain more.

**Chiefs and village elders:** *yes to some extent especially after passing through the ritual where girls and boys are taught their responsibilities, most boys tend to drop the subject whereas a few girls who wish to be identified by their responsibilities as mothers to be, pursue the subject*

**Researcher:** Do you identify any significant difference in general attendance between girls who have undergone FGM and boys who have undergone male circumcision and those who have not in Home Science?

**Chiefs and village elders:** *most girls drop out of school to assume duties of motherhood and most get married thinking that Home Science knowledge is taught by traditional circumcisers during the ritual. Those girls who go back after circumcision are more interested in the subject as they cover part of the concepts during the ritual.*

**Researcher:** Does FGM and male circumcision contribute to learners drop in Home Science? If yes please explain further.

**Chiefs and village elders:** *Those who come back after circumcision do assume they have already covered it during the ritual hence some avoid it assuming that they have been taught at home during the ritual.*

**Researcher:** How do FGM and Male Circumcision facilitate dropping of Home Science in the school?

**Chiefs and village elders:** *The teachings given by the career givers during the ritual affect their perceptions during selection. Boys especially those not interest in the subject prefer to take pure sciences*

**Researcher:** Are early marriages linked to initiation rites? And how do these affect enrolments in Home Science?

**Chiefs and village elders:** *Most of the initiates get married immediately after the rite of passage leading to low enrolment rates in Home Science and other subjects especially in this region to*

curb the rising cases of FGM and early forced marriages. The prevalence rate of FGM in Pokot Central Sub-County stands at 74% more than the national figure of 21% (Lochakapong, 2020). According to Kakai, (2020), despite the government policies, NGO sensitization to fight FGM and teenage marriage, illiteracy levels and ignorance among girls and women have jeopardized efforts to wage a successful war on FGM in West Pokot, especially the remote villages which are worst hit. Home science knowledge empowers one to take intelligent decisions concerning personal life and the use of materials and resource. FGM is common and popular among the Pokot mainly because it brings the social recognition of an adolescent or adult female to become eligible for her marriage, the community fight to maintain the custom because it represents prestige and identity which is their duty and responsibility to maintain, though the practice encompassed many health dangers as experienced by girls in the Pokot community. there is need to stop this practice.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Local administrator and community leaders affirmed that the common cultural practices that youths participate in the communality were female genital mutilation, male circumcision, cattle rustling, traditional wedding and burial ceremonies. They observed that learners who come back to schools after undergoing FGM and male circumcisions change their behaviors substantially. The researcher therefore concludes that initiation rites in the community are a major drawback to discipline and enrolments in secondary schools in Pokot Central Sub-County. This study recommends that the education the initiates get from their care givers ought to be investigated and appraised appropriately. The community leaders should organize dialogue for awareness on the harmful consequences of FGM on young school going girls.

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