

Journal of Education

ISSN Online: 2616-8383



Stratford
Peer Reviewed Journals & books

Covid-19 Break and Its Impact on High School Girls in Migwani Sub-County

Christopher Mwinzi Mbuvi

ISSN: 2616-8383

Covid-19 Break and Its Impact on High School Girls in Migwani Sub-County

Christopher Mwinzi Mbuvi

Post Graduate, Africa Nazarene University

E-mail of Corresponding Author: chrismbuvi73@yahoo.com

How to cite this article: Mbuvi, C. M. (2021). Covid-19 Break and Its Impact on High School Girls in Migwani Sub-County. Journal of Education, 4(3), 81-92.

Abstract

On January 30 2020, The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Corona Virus Disease a Public Health Emergency of Global concern. In April 28 2020 the COVID-19 infections globally had reached over 3.04 million people with reported deaths amounting to over 211,305, and slightly over 895,261 confirmed recovered cases. The emergence of Covid-19 pandemic resulted to restricted movement except for essential services such as specialized medical care and security services among others. Major transportation means ceased ranging from air transport to sea and land. Most governments imposed quarantine measures to curb the spread of the Corona Virus Disease. The quarantine measures were extended to learning institutions. The Ministry of Education in Kenya moved fast to introduce a raft of measures in schools to protect the learners from contacting the virus. This led to the closing of all learning institutions. The break was so long than ever experienced in Kenya before, running from 15 March 2020 to 5 October 2020. The learners were now at the hands of parents and guardians for seven months consecutively. This was quite abnormal as it has never happened before and more so in our generation. , this theoretical paper review sought to look at the COVID-19 impact on high school girls in Migwani Sub-County and gives recommendations on the way forward. The study employed mixed methods research design owing to the fact that this was an effective design that accommodated both qualitative and quantitative data. The findings revealed that 31 schools reported pregnancies of girls, 23 schools reported dropouts of girls, while 30 schools reported poor academic performance and finally 14 schools reported that girls were married off. The study recommended that high school principals needed to come up with strategies on how to enhance the parent teacher and learner relationship. In addition, the parents needed to take charge of their daughters by ensuring close contact where the parents can create rapport necessary for the daughters to have confidence needed to disclose their personal needs.

Keywords: Covid-19, Impact, School, Girls, Migwan.

1.1 Background of the Study

According to the Paper on Epidemic Psychology by P.M Strong (1990) as quoted by Dingwall, Hoffman & Staniland, K. (2013), the sociological relevance of new diseases was identified for readers of sociology of health and illness. In this paper Strong explored the parallels between what would now be defined as pandemics caused by two emerging infectious diseases, that is HIV in the 1980s and the Black Death of the 14 Century Europe. Although, HIV, according to the subsequent research had its origin in the transmission from simian to human populations during the early days of 20 century in West Africa, its spread across the developing world in the 1980 caused panic due to the absence of known effective therapy. As Strong observed, the response towards the spread of HIV resembled that of European populations at the time of virulent form of bubonic plague that raged across the continent around 1350. Similarly, the fight against the Justinian plague (541-542 CE) had been lost. The plague appeared as new affliction without history neither explanation nor remedy. Both pandemics threatened the very existence of the societies in which they emerged and so is COVID-19.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Thus Corona Virus Disease enters the annals of pandemics after its first case was reported in Wuhan District of China in 2019 December. China had reported COVID-19 infections amounting to 83,878 and 4,636 deaths. On January 30 2020, The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Corona Virus Disease a Public Health Emergency of Global concern. In April 28 2020 the COVID-19 infections globally had reached over 3.04 million people with reported deaths amounting to over 211,305, and slightly over 895,261 confirmed recovered cases (Areba, G. 2020).

As COVID-19 infections and deaths increased globally, there was a need for a global common front. This resulted to restricted movement except for essential services such as specialized medical care and security services among others. Major transportation means ceased ranging from air transport to sea and land. Most governments imposed quarantine measures to curb the spread of the Corona Virus Disease. The quarantine measures were extended to learning institutions. The Ministry of Education in Kenya moved fast to introduce a raft of measures in schools to protect the learners from contacting the virus. This led to the closing of all learning institutions. The break was so long than ever experienced in Kenya before, running from 15 March 2020 to 5 October 2020. The learners were now at the hands of parents and guardians for seven months consecutively. This was quite abnormal as it has never happened before and more so in our generation. Studies conducted have shown that many school going girls became mothers during this period, while academic performance was dismal and many more issues affecting girls were reported.

Therefore, this theoretical paper review sought to look at the COVID-19 impact on high school girls in Migwani Sub-County and gives recommendations on the way forward. The study assumed that the sample possess the characteristics of the general situation in Kenya during the period when the Ministry of Education ordered the closure of the schools until the schools were opened.

1.3 Research Objective

- i. To assess how COVID-19 break affected high school girls in Migwani Sub-County.
- ii. To determine the extent in which COVID-19 break affected high school girls in Migwani Sub-County.

1.4 Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no relationship between COVID-19 break and the impact on high school girls.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_a): There is a relationship between COVID-19 break and the impact on high school girls.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review of Literature

The study focuses on the social theory underpinning the COVID pandemic as advanced by Walby 2021. According to Walby (2021), approach to this pandemic has been influenced by early debates in social theory on the implications of COVID within the society. Accordingly, the interpretation of the public health interventions in theories of society as well as the relationship between science, governance and society during such crisis is at stake. In light of this premise, the key policies focus on how to segregate the affected from the not-infected people. Arguably, the key debate on the fair model of justice that would underpin the relationship between individual and the society within the policies that seeks to stop the spread of the deadly virus arises.

Walby 2021 quotes Johns Hopkins University 2020 which observed that there is a dilemma on how the society and governance would be structured in times of COVID pandemic that has claimed over a million lives around the world and infected much more than it has killed. This is complicated by the fact that the routes of COVID transmission are shaped by elements of inequalities within the society, some forms of employment, as well as some sort of caring that involve contacts with the infected people. The response to COVID pandemic has resulted to the curtailment of the socio-economic activities. The healthcare interventions for COVID pandemic involve non-pharmaceutical and the segregation of the infected from the not-infected people. This strategy is only possible through policies that in reality would adversely affect the socio-economic activities.

Achieving the strategy of segregation in the context of COVID pandemic is challenging because not all the carriers of the virus show symptoms and tests for the same are hard. As a consequence to the already infected, this strategy involves engagement with those at risk of contracting the virus rather than those who are visibly sick. Delanty's 2020 is quoted by Walby 2021 in their review of the response of social theory to the impact of COVID on society having identified six political philosophical positions on the corona virus pandemic. These are Utilitarian, Kantian, Libertarian, Biopolitical Securitization, Post Capitalism and Behavioralism. These theorists address the relationship between the individual and society in the development of policy through the justice lens. They invoke concepts pertaining to science, crisis and alternative forms of society.

2.2.1 Assessment of How COVID-19 Break Affect High School Girls

The teacher learner physical contact for content delivery is very important and plays a crucial role to students. Much of the academic performance is enhanced through physical contact where

regulated and monitored exercises are administered by the teachers. Again, the teacher learner physical contact enhances individual discipline. The Ministry of Education announcement of school closures was a measure of ensuring physical distance is maintained and again, to give the schools ample time to put up COVID-19 preventive measures in place. However, as it turned out, this extended break worked to the disadvantage of the girls. The schools introduced online teaching and coaching. Consequently, not every learner had access to technology due to either geographical internet coverage, poverty levels, homelessness, lack of power and more importantly lack of technology knowledge such as use of zoom, skype etc. (Areba, G. 2020).

Although UNESCO as quoted by Areba (2020) had recommended the use of internet applications to act as distant learning platforms that institutions and instructors can utilize and minimize the physical distance between the students and learning institutions, this remained a challenge to both the learners and the learning institutions. Therefore, a vacuum was created between the learner and the instructors as well as the learning institutions. The learners were left in the hands of their parents and guardians. This was more so an unfamiliar territory to many parents and guardians. Many parents and guardians are held up by their careers to an extent that they do not have time for their children, an indication of having a family of ‘strangers’ coming together for a prolonged period of time due to COVID-19 pandemic and the governments quarantine measures.

2.2.2 The Extent to Which COVID-19 Break Affect High School Girls

COVID-19 has been a great equalizer of the health services. Worldwide COVID-19 is providing the impetus for a serious rethink on many issues -Transform Aqorau, 2020. The world almost in its entirety is facing a rising burden of diseases particularly the Corona Virus Disease. As a result of the looming threat, governments are now focused on flattening the curve than ever before. These efforts are an important maneuver to limit the direct health impact of the Corona Virus Disease and most important, trying to protect the overstretched health systems (Krubiner, C., Keller, J., & Kaufman, J. 2020).

Other essential services are in need of protection as the governments’ struggles to contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. Essential services such as education, training and research are critical for the realization of the sustainable development goals (Areba, G. 2020), and any government must endeavor to protect this field of knowledge. The estimates are worrying as they paint a grim picture of the potential magnitude of negative impact on health outcomes due the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated disruptions. For instance, real data from India suggest an almost 80 per cent decline in daily TB notifications during the lockdown. An estimated 117 million children worldwide could miss out on measles vaccination because immunization campaigns have been halted to curb the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. The suspension of the distribution campaigns for insecticide treated nets as well as the disruption of malaria treatment could also lead to approximately 225 million additional malaria cases in the Sub-Saharan Africa in 2020 alone (Krubiner, Keller & Kaufman, 2020).

In light of this, the projected impact for women and girls who are unable to access modern contraceptives including unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions and maternal deaths are staggering. The World Health Organization observes that existing gender and social inequalities are exacerbated by the pandemic context which impacts women and girls in different ways than men and boys. Women and girls exposure is likely to be affected by social norms and expectations around their caregiving mandate. At home, they are expected to provide the overwhelmingly and almost mandatory care.

Overall, the failure to protect the most vulnerable group in the society puts them at higher risk of infections and undermines the broader effort to curb the spread of the Corona Virus Disease.

Thus, WHO notes that when facility based provision of sexual and reproductive health services is disrupted, prioritizing digital health services, self-care interventions, task sharing and outreach to ensure access to medicines, diagnostics, devices, information, and counseling is extremely important. The prioritization should include ensuring access to contraception, abortion to the full extent allowed by law, prevention and treatment services for sexually transmitted infections including HIV and human papillomavirus (WHO, 2020).

In the wave of the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with what Bainton and McDougall (2021) notes that in the 21 Century, the world is witnessing both the global extensification and local intensification of inequality, and there is definitely going to be a global impact on the girls' education. The Ministry of Education Sessional Paper of 2019 as quoted by Areba (2020), admits that major challenges emerge in the light of enhancing and ensuring quality, equity, access and relevance in education and training. Some of these challenges are such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic which struck in December 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic had a global impact on the education sector. As Areba (2020) quotes UNESCO statistics that as of 26 April 2020 about 1.8 billion students were affected as a result of institutional closures in reaction to the Corona Virus Disease. The UNESCO monitoring observed 189 states that had effected nationwide cessations with 5 states that had local closures effected, affecting approximately 98 per cent of the world's learner population (Areba, 2020).

3.0 Research Methodology

The study employed mixed methods research design owing to the fact that this was an effective design that accommodated both qualitative and quantitative data. In the study numerical and descriptive data was obtained and presented in tables, graphs and contexts. The study was carried out in Migwani Sub-County which is located on the west side of the larger Kitui County. The study focus was on high school girls whose schools fall within the sub-county. In Migwani sub-county there are 38 high schools with girls. The study focused on those 38 high schools with girls. The study employed Krejcie & Morgan Table 1970 obtain a sample size of 36 respondents. The sample selected was assumed to possess the characteristics of the population, thus, the sample characteristics was used to generalize the results. The study was conducted using stratified random sampling. This sampling procedure is useful because the sample is distributed in the same way as the population in terms of the stratifying criterion, i.e. in terms of geographical location and easiness in the allocation of units to strata (Bryman, A. 2015).

The sample size was selected from the 38 schools based on their geographical location and concentration due to time and cost constraints. Out of the 38 schools sampled 32 high schools participated in the interview translating to 88 per cent response rate. The study used both primary and secondary data collection methods where primary data was obtained directly from the subjects using interviews and questionnaires whereas secondary data was obtained through e-books and journals. In the study both qualitative and quantitative techniques in data processing and analysis were used. The data collected was processed and analyzed according to the standard guidelines.

4.0 Findings and Discussion

4.1 COVID-19 Break and the Impact on High School Girls

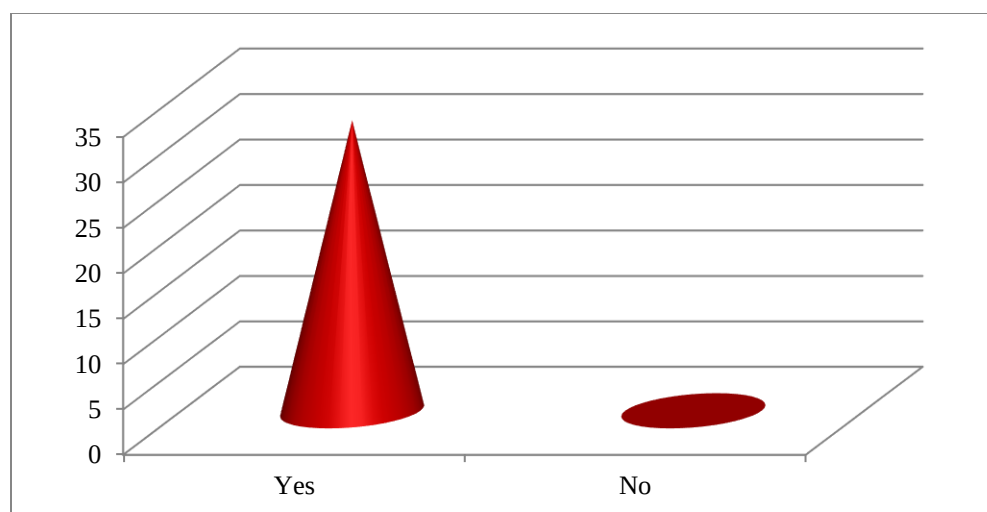


Figure 1: COVID-19 Break and its Impact on High School Girls

Source: Field Data 2021

The respondents were requested to rate on a scale of 1-5 the impact of the COVID-19 on high school girls during the long vacation as announced by the Ministry of Education. The data obtained showed that the impact was indeed intense as 24 schools reported the impact on scales 4 and 5 while the rest of schools reported less impact of between 1 and 3 as shown in Figure 2.

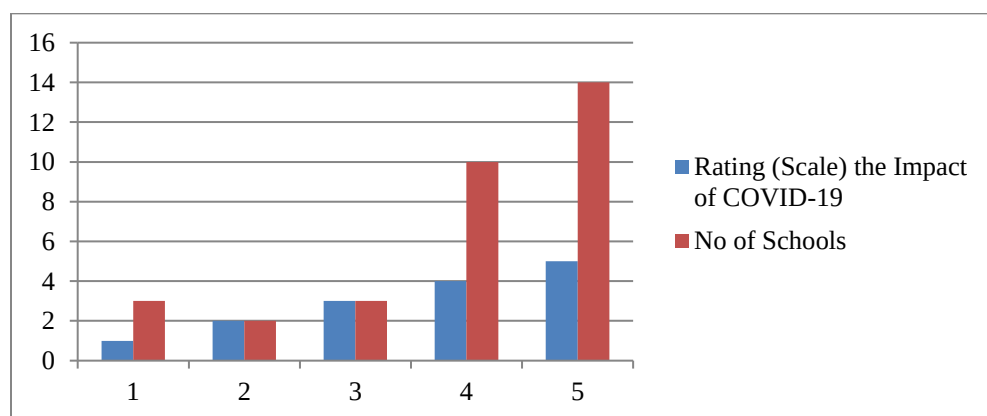


Figure 2: Rating of COVID-19 Impact

Source: Field Data 2021

4.2 The Extent in which COVID-19 Affected High School Girls

The purpose for this premise was to find out the degree in which COVID-19 affected the girls in high schools within Migwani Sub-County. This information is articulated well in Figure 3. The data from the respondents showed that 31 schools reported pregnancies of girls, 23 schools reported dropouts of girls, while 30 schools reported poor academic performance and finally 14 schools reported that girls were married off.

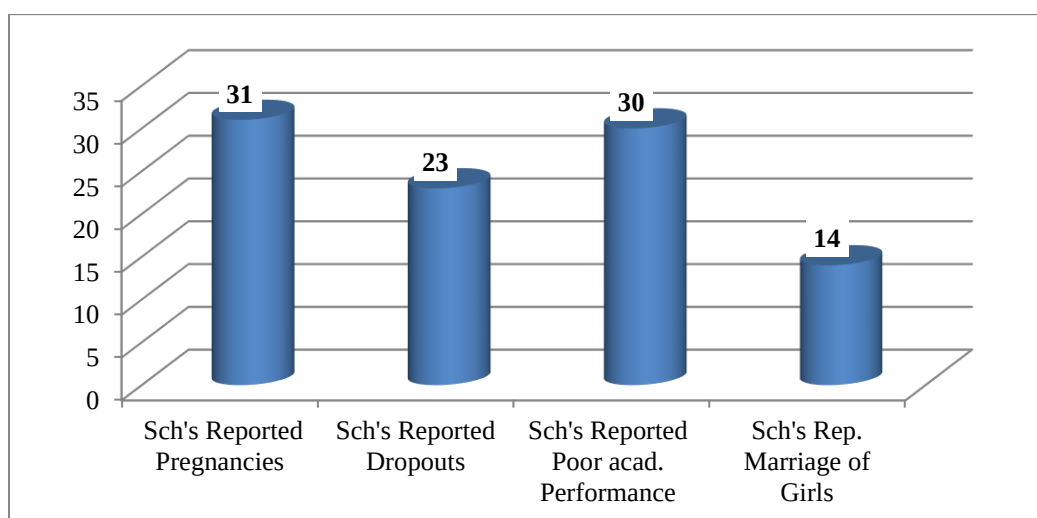


Figure 3: Extent of COVID-19 Effects to High School Girls

Source: Field Data 2021

According to Figure 4, evidence from the data collected showed that in all 31 schools that reported pregnancies, a total of 114 girls were affected.

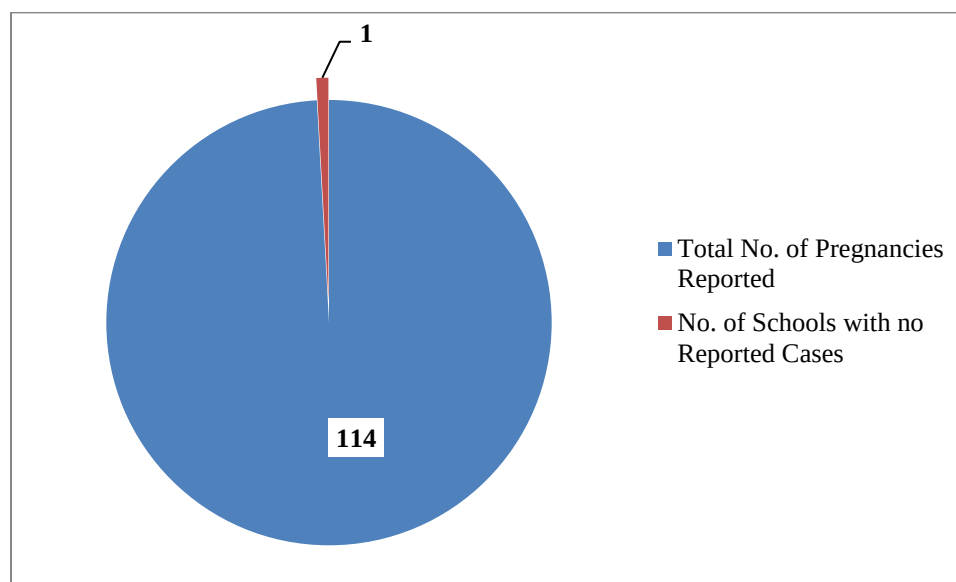


Figure 4: Total Number of Girls with Pregnancies

Source: Field Data 2021

The Figure 5 shows the number of High Schools that reported girls' dropouts as a result of other causes besides pregnancy. The evidence from this data indicates that 25 schools reported school dropouts and the total figure of girls who dropped out school stood at 94.

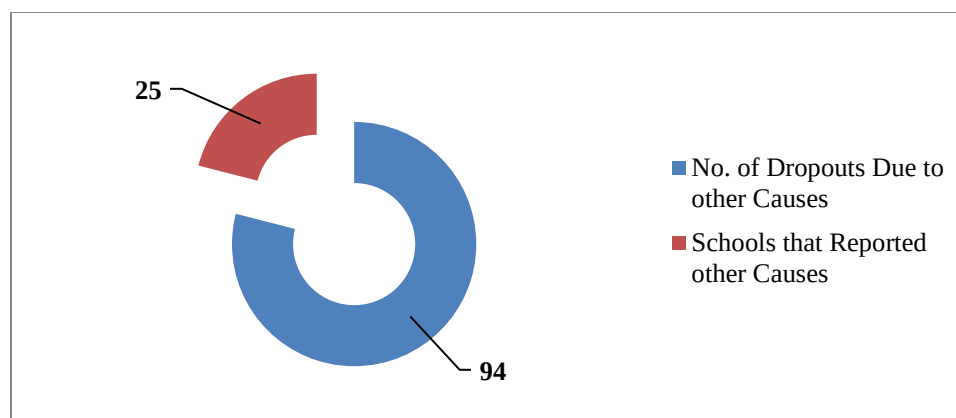


Figure 5: Number of Dropouts as a Result of other Causes

Source: Field Data 2021

The Figure 6 below shows the number of high school girls as at March 2020 before COVID-19 and after the COVID-19 break when all the learning institutions were ordered to resume learning by the Ministry of Education. The period covered in March 2020 all the high schools with girls in

Migwani Sub-County had a total number of 4691 girls. After resuming classes in October 2020 the number went down by a total of 204 girls. At the time of this study, the total number of girls in all high schools within Migwani Sub-County had reduced to 4487. Therefore, only 4 percent of the girls were affected by COVID-19 who dropped out of school due to pregnancies, were either married off or affected by other causes.

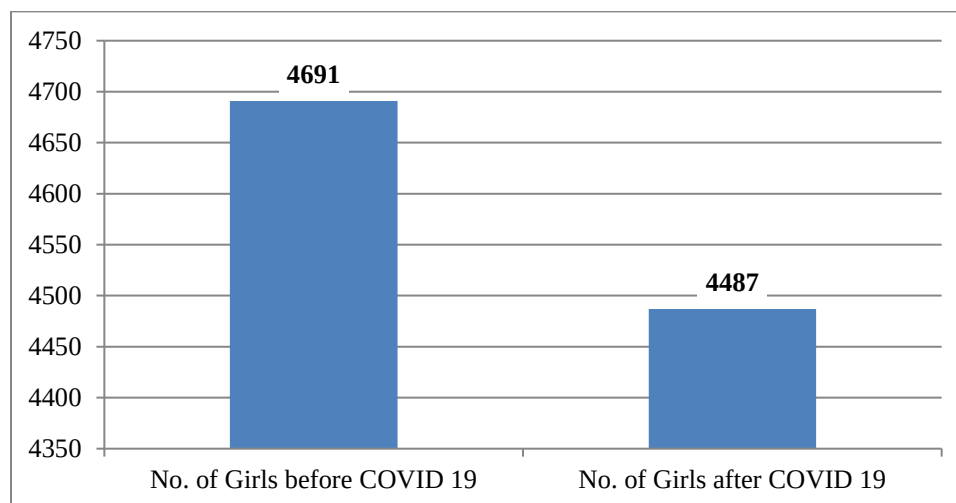


Figure 6: No. of Girls Before and After COVID-19

Source: Field Data 2021

According Figure 7 below, a total 31 subjects said the parental control of the high school girls is wanting while 1 subject reported that the parents in the school were in control of their daughters. This translates to a 96 percent response that the parents had lost control of their girls and probably left the responsibility to teachers only.

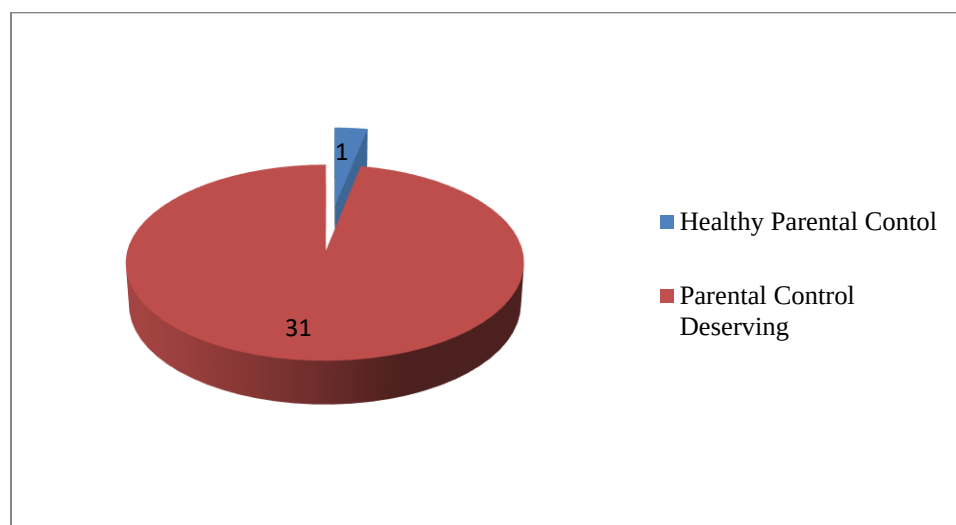


Figure 7: Parental Control

Source: Field Data 2021

The majority of the subjects interviewed in this study as per Figure 8 below, indicated that the parent-teacher-learner relationship was not well nurtured, particularly the parents had either little or no control over their daughters. According to the data obtained, only 12 percent of the subjects indicated some sort of cordial relationship between the triage while the rest (88% were candid on the poor relationship existing between the parents and their girls as well as the learner and teacher relationship.

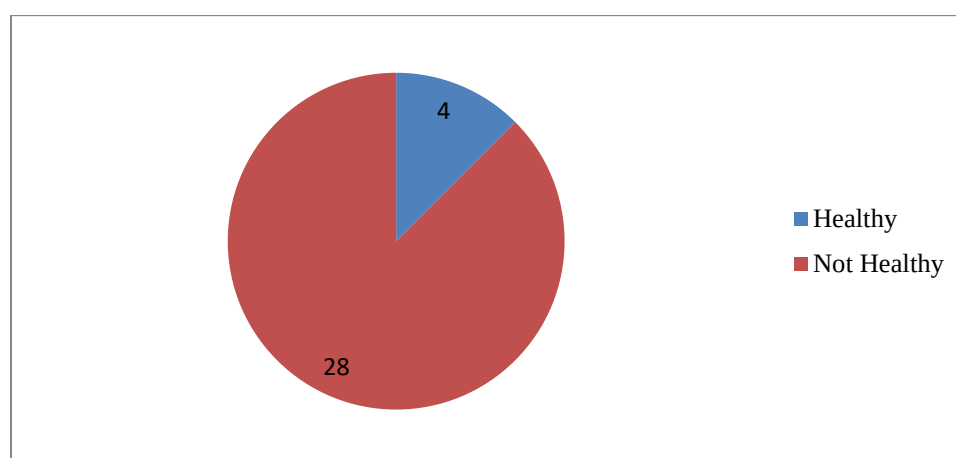


Figure 8: Parents-Teacher-Learner Relationship

Source: Field Data 2021

5.0 Conclusion

COVID-19 is a global pandemic with adverse effect on socio-economic activities among them education. The pandemic is caused by a virus transmitted mostly through contact with an infected person. In the year 2019 December the first case was reported in Wuhan District of China. Later the virus spread to other countries worldwide leading to closure of essential services such as education. In Kenya the Ministry of Education announced the closure of all learning institutions to curb the spread of the virus among the learners. Therefore, the study was conducted to determine the impact of COVID-19 break to high school girls in Migwani Sub-County. The COVID-19 break in the study was used to refer to the disruption of the school calendar from the time the Ministry of Education announced the closure of all learning institutions in Kenya to the time the Ministry again announced the resumption of classes.

The study was founded on two hypotheses: H_0 : There is no relationship between COVID-19 break and the impact on high school girls, and H_a : There is a relationship between COVID-19 break and the impact on high school girls.

Test of hypothesis: The study used Chi Square test statistic where the results were as follows: Chi Square calculated was **5.138** and Chi Square observed was **26.509** where the degrees of freedom was calculated as $(2-1)(38-1) = 1 \times 37 = 37$. Thus $df=37$. When $\chi^2_{\text{Observed}} > \chi^2_{\text{calculated}}$, we fail to reject the H_0 . At 95% level of confidence from the data, there is no sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a relationship between COVID-19 break and the impact on high school girls.

6.0 Recommendations

Although there might be a policy framework at the Ministry of Education stipulating the relationship between the teacher learner and parent, the study found out that this policy framework does not sufficiently address the issues raised by the teachers. Therefore, the high school principals need to come up with strategies on how to enhance the parent teacher and learner relationship. The parents need to take charge of their daughters by ensuring close contact where the parents can create rapport necessary for the daughters to have confidence needed to disclose their personal needs. Finally awareness programs are a necessary tool in addressing the triage relationship and they need to be frequent and adequately address the girls' needs.

REFERENCES

- Aqorau, T. (2020). COVID-19 and Solomon Islands: The first casualties and possible ramifications. DevPolicyBlog. Retrieved from devpolicy.org/covid-19-and-solomon-islands-the-first-casualties-and-possible-ramifications-20200409/
- Areba, G. (2020). COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on Kenyan Education Sector: Learner Challenges and Mitigation. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education Vol.4*.
- Bainton, N., & McDougall, D. (2021). Unequal Lives in the Western Pacific. In BAINTON N., MCDOUGALL D., ALEXEYEFF K., & COX J. (Eds.), *Unequal Lives: Gender, Race and Class in the Western Pacific* (pp. 1-46). Australia: ANU Press. doi:10.2307/j.ctv1h45mj4.5
- Bryman, A. (2015). Social Research Methods. ProQuest Ebook Central <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>
- Dingwall, R., Hoffman, L. M., & Staniland, K. (Eds.). (2013). *Pandemics and emerging infectious diseases: The sociological agenda*. ProQuest Ebook Central <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>
- Greenfields, T. & Greener, S. (2016). Research Methods for Postgraduates (3ed).
- Kothari, C. (2004). Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques. ProQuest Ebook Central <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>.
- Krubiner, C., Keller, J., & Kaufman, J. (2020). (Rep.). Center for Global Development. doi:10.2307/resrep29626.
- Walby, S. (2021). The COVID pandemic and social theory: Social democracy and public health in the crisis. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 24(1), 2243. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431020970127>.
- World Health Organization. (2020). *Maintaining essential health services: Operational guidance for the COVID-19 context* (pp. 22-49, Rep.). World Health Organization. doi:10.2307/resrep27978.5.