

**SANITATION AND HYGIENE IN PUBLIC BOARDING SCHOOLS IN CHONGWE, ZAMBIA: WHAT
DO PUPILS KNOW? DO THEY CARE?**

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Abstract

This study investigated the state of sanitation facilities, and knowledge on sanitation and hygiene practices among pupils at Chongwe Secondary School (CSS) and Mukamambo II Girls Secondary School (MGSS). Reported communicable diseases among pupils which might affect their ability to attend classes regularly and better school performance necessitated the need for this study. Data collection was conducted using questionnaires administered to 121 randomly sampled pupils from the two schools. Stratification of the sample was such that 74 and 47 were randomly sampled from CSS and MGSS, respectively. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis, descriptive statistics and chi-square test of association. Results indicated that sanitary utensils such as toilets, hand washing facilities and drinking water points were highly inadequate for the population of students catered. Majority of learners had knowledge of sanitation and hygiene issues experienced at the school, however, some felt that toilets were too dirty and lacked adequate water and that cleanliness of the classrooms and surroundings was unsanitary. The safety and cleanliness of water used by pupils was also a source of concern. Most girls attested to having missed classes during menstruation periods as sanitary pads were not readily available and water was inadequate. Some pupils from CSS cited incidences when a leakage in the sewer line supposedly led to the contents of the sewer pipes finding their way into the water. It was concluded that pupils perceived the sanitation of their schools as of low quality. The lack of pupil satisfaction as regards the provided sanitation facilities could be a factor in pupils adopting unhygienic practices, decreased class attendance and low academic performance. In order for boarding schools in Chongwe District to attract and retain healthy learners, it is recommended that schools need to prioritise sanitation issues and teachers need to educate pupils on good hygiene practices. There is also need for regular inspections of sanitation facilities by the teachers-on-duty, health environment personnel and officers-in-charge of standards in secondary education at Ministry of General Education.

Keywords: Sanitation, Hygiene, Water, Pupils, Toilet, Chongwe

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