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THEME: Strengthening Research and Innovations for Climate Adaptation and Sustainable Development

Gender and regional differences in environmental knowledge and attitude in Kenya: Implications for climate change adaptation interventions

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Abstract

Kenya is experiencing high rates of environmental degradation. Environmental education is among the interventions implemented by the government to mitigate environmental degradation. This has been achieved by including environmental conservation related in the high school curriculum. Also, additional emphasis has taken the form of extra curriculum activities such as environmental clubs, for instance, wildlife clubs. There is however paucity of research on environmental attitudes among high school teachers, and whether environmental attitudes among teachers correlate with pro-environmental behavior. The goal of this research was to investigate gender and regional differences in environmental attitudes and

knowledge among school teachers. Data were collected using closed ended questions from a sample of 59 teachers from Machakos, Kiambu and Turkana counties. Closed ended questionnaire from a sample of 60 high school teachers. Environmental attitudes were measured using the revised New Environmental Paradigms (NEP) scales. We measured how participants viewed seriousness of environmental problems, how participants viewed government efforts to conserve environment, participants' self-reported pro-environmental behaviour, i.e., support government conservation policy, and self-reported pro-environmental behaviour in terms of volunteerism towards local community conservation efforts, using a 15-items, 13-items, 5-items, and 8-items, respectively. Scores on the revised NEP Scale did not correlate significantly with scores on a 15-item measure of the perceived seriousness of national environmental problems. Scores on the revised NEP Scale correlated significantly (.32) with a 13-item measure of the perceived government's efforts to address environmental problems. Scores on the revised NEP Scale correlate significantly (.33) with a 5-item measure of support for pro-environment policies (the higher the NEP score, the more support for the policies); scores on the revised NEP Scale correlate significantly (.28) with an 8-item measure of (self-reported) pro-environmental behaviors (more behaviors are reported by those with high NEP scores). Finally, results of two-factor multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) between-subjects design with gender and region as the independent variables show that the interaction effects on all the combined five dependent variables, are not statistically significant. The main effect for gender on perceived seriousness of environmental problems, statistically significant, F (2, 53) = 2.29, $p < 0.10$. Follow post-hoc analysis reveal the males have higher revised NEP scores compared to females. Results further reveal statistically significant main effect for region on self-reported) pro-environmental behaviors (more behaviors reported in Machakos County, followed by Turkana, with lowest in Kiambu. These findings are have implication of participatory approaches designed to promote environmental conservation, including climate change adaptation.

Key words: Environmental attitudes, pro-environmental behavior, revised new environmental paradigm scales, high school teachers, Kenya