

ABSTRACT

Poor sanitation is associated with poor health outcomes in populations, loss of school days, low academic performance and stunting in children. Kenya loses 0.9% of its Gross Domestic Product, KES 27.4 billion, annually due to poor sanitation. This indicates that failure to invest in sanitation may be costly. Busia County is among the counties that currently require education on importance of using standard sanitation facilities. Despite the knowledge of the needs for efficient sanitation facilities, investment in sanitation is still low with sanitation coverage at 32% and over 15% of the population still practising open defecation. Investing in sanitation may be influenced by several factors including culture, cost, affordability, financial capabilities with disease prevention being the most potent motivator. The aim of this research was to establish factors that affect the willingness and ability to invest in sanitation by households in Busia County with a target population of 287,577 residents. A total of 421 residents were sampled for the study; 197 were from Butula and 224 from Teso South sub-counties. The assessment was done with a focus on demographic, socio-cultural, economic and financial factors in different households using quantitative methods that target the heads of households. The research adopted a cross-sectional design and used systematic random sampling to select residents to be administered with questionnaires. The variability of the responses is presented in charts and graphs and the variability's tested using the Z-scores. Logistic regression was used to identify factors influencing investment in sanitation where odds ratios were used to establish the strength of associations between critical variables and investment in sanitation. While 88.1% of the study population owned a latrine, the rest (11.9%) practiced open defecation. There was high willingness to invest in sanitation (87.5%). Twenty-three percent were able to invest in sanitation. Disease prevention (91%) and sanitation knowledge (98.3%) were the most significant social and demographic factors considered by the interviewees before investing in sanitation. Financial factors with great significance were household income and employment status. Findings from this study may be useful as a basis for informed sanitation intervention strategies for government and development agencies that target to enhance communities' willingness and abilities to invest in sanitation. It may be a driver of increasing the sanitation coverage in Busia County and beyond.