**PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION AND STUDENT INDISCIPLINE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN FAFI SUB COUNTY, GARISSA COUNTY.**

**ABSTRACT**

It is challenging to accurately determine the extent of drug abuse among public secondary school student’s rural areas of Kenya. However, it is widely acknowledged that many young individuals have encountered various psychoactive substances available in the country. The research thesis therefore sought to investigate parental engagement in drug abuse and student indiscipline among public secondary schools. This study utilized an explanatory correlation research design, which is both qualitative and quantitative. The target population for the study included the 7 principals, 7 HoDs of the guidance and counseling department, 63 other teachers and 28 student leaders in secondary schools in Fafi Sub-County, Garissa County, Kenya. To select the desired sample the study used purposive sampling method to include all the 7 principals, 7 HoDs of the guidance and counseling department, and 28 student leaders in secondary schools in Fafi Sub-County, Garissa County, Kenya. For the teachers, a simple random method was used. Semi- structured questionnaire was used for collection of data from student leaders and teachers whereas an interview schedule was used to collect data from the principals and HoDs of the guidance and counseling department. Qualitative data was organized into thematic categories according to the study objectives and then analyzed thematically. Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively using frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation and inferentially using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Analysis with the help of Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS Version 27). The findings revealed that parental engagement in drug abuse significantly related with student indiscipline in public secondary schools p-value less than 0.01. Correlation coefficient, r, was -0.741. Therefore, to enhance student discipline in public secondary schools, the study recommends for improvement parental engagement. The research findings will benefit policy makers in the MOE to understand the prevailing situation regarding the relationship between parental engagement in drug abuse and student indiscipline in public secondary schools. The findings of this study will also be valuable for administrators and policymakers in implementing measures to curb drug abuse in schools. It will help improve intervening educational programs and provide insights for the development of more efficient initiatives. Additionally, the study will serve as a foundation for future research in this field, promoting a drug-free school environment and enhancing student discipline, thereby raising the overall standards of education in the country.

Introduction

**BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

It is challenging to accurately determine the extent of Drug abuse in public secondary school students in rural areas of Kenya. However, it is widely acknowledged that many young individuals have encountered various psychoactive substances available in the country. Past studies on drug abuse have indicated that the misuse of drugs begins during pre-adolescence and intensifies during the years of teenage when most of the young people are now in the secondary school (Santrock, 2001; Melgosa, 2008).According to United Nations (1992) individuals who use drugs, like others, seek validation of behavior from the peers, persuading them into joining the drug abuse habit so as to gain acceptance. The impact of peer pressure, whether negative or positive is largely dependent on the peer group quality. Regrettably, peer pressure much as it can lead to uphold acceptable behavior within a group can also lead a vulnerable individual astray. A study of secondary schools in Nairobi conducted by NACADA (2010), revealed that most drug users’ friends were also in drugs. There exists a correlation between an individual's drug use with the individual friends’ drug usage (Karugu & Olela, 1995; Mutua, 2011).

Drug use has existed throughout human history. People have used various plants, such as herbs, roots, barks, and leaves, to alleviate pain and treat illnesses. When Drugs are used appropriately, they can be beneficial to human well-being. However, some drugs produce appealing side effects like elation, euphoria, power and serenity but over time, these evolve into drug dependence and drug abuse problems (Karechio, 1996). Substance and drug abuse is a significant global problem. According to a report by the World Health Organization in 2002, tobacco-related cases caused approximately 4.9 million deaths worldwide (Republic of Kenya, 2003). The report projected that by the year 2030, the number of deaths annually from tobacco-related causes would rise to 10 million people, with seven out of ten million of these deaths occurring in developing countries, including Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 2003). At the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, Drugs worth 45 million Kenyan shillings were seized and subsequently destroyed by the high court. The seized Drugs included 29.09 kg of heroin worth 29 million shillings, 130 grams of cocaine worth 1.3 million shillings, 140,000 mandrax tablets worth 14 million shillings, and 7.5 kg of cannabis sativa (bhang) worth 700,000 shillings according to Ndirangu (2000).

Drugs influence on students' indiscipline has been extensively recognized with Kiarie (2005) noting drug abuse as a main driver of secondary school students’ unrest, resulting in low academic performance and high indiscipline case. This situation is concerning because effective management plays a crucial role in maintaining discipline both in schools and in other organizations (Digolo et al., 2004). Accordingly, Digolo et al. (2004) present discipline as an integral aspect of human behavior that helps control individual's reactions in various circumstances and also regulate people interactions with others. In Kenya, many schools continue to struggle in maintaining discipline as indiscipline persists leading to national examinations mass failures. In many schools which have had student riots, strike and violence, drug abuse has been identified as a major contributing factor to these issues (GoK, 2001). Within Kenya, drug and substance abuse is increasingly becoming an escalating problem. Masita (2004), offer that nearly each youngster in Kenya has experimented with Drugs at some point, particularly cigarettes and beer. Though hardcore Drugs regular users is smaller in number compared to cigarette and alcohol users, the study argues that a significant concern arises from the fact that with time, large proportion of the youth eventually get addicted, posing threats to their personal safety and health while also causing concerns to friends and families.

Efforts have been made to combat Drug abuse in Kenya, such as the campaign to ban smoking in public places. "No Smoking" signs are prominently displayed in many public offices with MoH proposing a bill that would prohibit smoking while in public. Under this bill, individuals smoking in public were to face penalties of fines and jail terms (Ngilu, 2006). However, that bill has not yet been officially enacted. The Minister believes that the highly effective approach to addressing Drug abuse is to raise awareness about the dangers posed by drugs to the individuals using them, their families, and society as a whole. In response to global warnings about Drug abuse, NACADA advocates for establishment of an authority to control drugs nationally with authority of enforcing drug trafficking laws (Kaguthi, 2006). Kaguthi (2006) points out that despite the strong emphasis on religious education among youth, the majority still engages in drug abuse and run the risk of destroying their lives before reaching adulthood. He also argues that majority of students in secondary school are currently experimenting with usage of Drugs. Against this backdrop, the current study aimed to critically examine parental engagement in Drug abuse prevention and student indiscipline in public secondary schools in Fafi sub-county, Garissa County.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The issue of drug abuse in Kenyan schools is indeed a serious and persistent problem, despite efforts by stakeholders, including the government and the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and ministry of education, to address the issue, drug abuse in public secondary schools and associated problems such as indiscipline case has persisted. The TSC assigns principals the responsibility of establishing rules, determining penalties, and implementing disciplinary approaches to address student behavior. Additionally, many teachers have been appointed as Heads of Departments (HODs) of guidance and counseling to provide valuable advice to students and discourage drug abuse (Tabifor, 2000).However, the problem persisted. And it has created an environment conducive to violence since it gives abusers a non-existent sense of power and superiority. This could help explain the occurrence of student rebellion and property destruction, in schools. As far back as 1996, the then Principal Secretary (PS), Mr. Simon Lesirma, warned that students in secondary schools were becoming easy targets of the hardcore drug dealers, emphasizing the role of school administration in protection of students’ discipline and urging them to strengthen guidance and counseling programs.

The National Agency for the Campaign against Drug Abuse (NACADA) has reported an increase in drug abuse and associated undesirable behaviors among Kenyan secondary school student over the years (NACADA, 2010). This has resulted in indiscipline, strikes, students sneaking out of school, and ultimately unwanted behavior. These issues have also had a negative impact on academic performance. Several factors and groups have been blamed for usage of drugs among students in secondary schools. The parents have been specifically blamed for drug use in schools as they do not supervise their children adequately, therefore, making them become delinquents. Given the persistent nature of drug abuse in schools, the study aimed to investigate the measures employed by school administration to curb drug abuse and promoting discipline in secondary schools. By understanding the strategies implemented by school administrations, it is hoped that effective approaches can be identified to address the problem and create a safer and more conducive learning environment for students.

**RESEARCH** **OBJECTIVE**

To evaluate parental engagement in drug abuse prevention and student indiscipline in public secondary schools in Fafi sub-county, Garissa County, Kenya.

**THEORETICAL REVIEW**

The study was supported by The Problem Behavior and Deviance Theory. According to this theory, the interconnectedness of demographic social structure, the social environment, and personality systems generates a dynamic state that can predict individual behavioral changes (Jessor&Jessor, 1978). This theory posits that certain social- psychological characteristics contribute to a propensity for problem behavior, including a lower emphasis on achievement and a higher emphasis on independence, increased socialization, greater deviance tolerance, reduced parental support and control, stronger influence from friends and more exposure to models.

**EMPIRICAL LITERATURE**

Children's attitudes, values, and behavior can be greatly influenced by their families (Maithya, 2009). NIDA (2018) study shows that in the US, about 90% of the youth believe. Their parents will strongly condemn their use of substances, including tobacco, cigarette, Alcohol, or marijuana. More to the point, among youths 12-17 who believed that the reaction of their parents to their substance use would be very negative, the likelihood of their substance use decreased compared to the personages who believed that their parents would feel moderately negative or neither positive nor negative about their substance use. Smoking one or more packs of tobacco cigarettes a day: Of youths who believed their parents would disapprove of their smoking a pack of cigarettes a day, 4.6 percent were smokers. The group, who shared the belief that their parents did not highly object to it, had 31.9 percent who smoked 7 times as much in contrast in a great comparison. Similar variations existed in the use of marijuana. Of youth who thought there was strong disapproval of marijuana, 4.3 percent used, whereas of youth thinking their parents were not strongly against marijuana, 31 percent used the drug. It shows that even parents who fail to establish rules of conduct to their children have high probabilities of drug abuse.

The actions of children are socially influenced through the teaching of their various family members during the process of socialization; to effectively inculcate obedience in social norms. Cheloti and Gathumbi (2016) proved that the absence of parent and guardian involvement was thwarting the efforts to curb drug and substance abuse in schools. The conclusion of the study was that school community could not be used effectively in DSA intervention and therefore the study recommended that head teachers should work in collaboration with parents in order to curb use of drugs in schools. A study conducted by Maithya and Marais (2015) aimed to study how the issue was addressed with strategies and suggest prevention and intervention. The sampled population was composed of students, classroom teachers and parents of the sampled secondary schools within Machakos County, Kenya.

Among the key findings of the study was that, drug abuse is prevalent among students, both male, and female, second that drug abuse is strongly associated with family members who use/abuse drugs, and third, the free accessibility of drugs to the students. During the process of socialization, parents and other family members teach their children their way of behavior to eventually impose compliance with social rules. A poll by Nacada (2012) covered all the Kenyan counties. Based on their survey, approximately 7.2 percent of children who have ever taken alcohol have a parent or a close family member who uses drugs hence parents are usually role models to their children. Because these findings are an extrapolation of data in 47 counties, secondary school students might not be the sole target audience of these findings.

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**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Descriptive research design was employed in the study, analyzing parental engagement in drug abuse prevention and student indiscipline in public secondary schools in Fafi sub-county, Garissa County, Kenya. This design is involved with data collection from a population so as help conclude on the current position of the target population in respect of some variables (Kothari, 2008). By use of this descriptive survey, the researcher answered question regarding the topic under study. The study target population comprised of the 7 principals, 7 HODs of the guidance and counseling department, 63 other teachers and 28 student leaders in secondary schools in Fafi sub-County, Garissa County, Kenya. To select the desired sample, the study used purposive sampling method to include all the 7 principals, 7 HoDs of the guidance and counseling department, and 28 student leaders in public secondary schools in Fafi Sub-County, Garissa County, Kenya. For the other teachers, a simple random method was used to select 30% of 63 teachers in public secondary schools in Fafi Sub County making a total of 19 teachers. Quantitative data obtained from teachers and student leaders was analyzed descriptively using frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation and inferentially using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Analysis with the help of Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS Version 27). Qualitative data obtained from interview guides used for principals and HoDs guidance and counselling was organized into thematic categories according to the study objectives and then analyzed thematically. Findings were presented in charts and tables.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This researcher distributed 47 questionnaires to the teachers and student leaders out of which, 38 were filled and returned. This represents gave a response rate of 80.85% which was good. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) guides that a response rate at least 70% is good. The objective assessed the extent of parental engagement and the influence of parental engagement on student indiscipline in public secondary schools in Fafi Sub-County. Descriptive statistics on the components of parental engagement was done and findings are as presented in the table below.

Table 1 : Components of Parental Engagement

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| PTA active in supporting the school | 38 | 2.00 | 4.00 | 3.2895 | .98387 |
| School organizes academic days | 38 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 3.1053 | 1.03426 |
| Parents attend academic days | 38 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 3.2368 | 1.02494 |
| Schools offer timely communication and feedback to parents | 38 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 3.2632 | 1.20100 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 38 |  |  |  |  |

All components of parental engagement were rated average, with the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) being particularly notable for its active role in supporting the school, receiving the highest rating with a mean score of 3.2895. This suggests that, while overall parental engagement may be seen as moderate, the PTA stands out as an important and effective avenue for fostering collaboration between parents and the school. The involvement of the PTA likely plays a key role in supporting school initiatives and enhancing the school environment, highlighting the value of continued or increased parental participation in school activities.

**CORRELATION ANALYSIS**

The null hypothesis that there is no significant statistic relationship between parental engagement and student discipline in public secondary schools was tested using correlation analysis, the test being conducted through SPSS software at 95% confidence level.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Student Indiscipline | Parental Engagement |
| Student Indiscipline | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.741 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | N | 38 | 38 |
| Parental Engagement | Pearson Correlation | -.741 | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |  |
|  | N | 38 | 38 |

**Table 2 : Pearson’s Correlation Analysis of the parental engagement and Students Indiscipline**

The decision criteria were that a p value >0.05 would be an indicator of evidence in support of the null hypothesis and would thus lead to acceptance of null hypothesis whereas p value <0.05 would be an indicator of lack of evidence in support of the null hypothesis and would thus lead to non- acceptance of null hypothesis. From Pearson’s Correlation Analysis, the correlation coefficient, r, was found to be - 0.741 which indicated a high negative relationship between parental engagement and student indiscipline in public secondary schools. P-value statistic (sig)= 0.000 was produced. Since the p-value generated, 0.000 is less than 0.01, the study rejected the third null hypothesis thus concluding that the relationship between parental engagement and student indiscipline

The Pearson’s Correlation Analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of -0.741, indicating a strong negative relationship between parental engagement and student indiscipline in public secondary schools. This suggests that as parental involvement increases, levels of student indiscipline tend to decrease. The p-value statistic (sig) produced was 0.000. Since this p-value is less than the 0.01 threshold, the study rejected the third null hypothesis. Therefore, it was clear that the relationship between parental engagement and student indiscipline in public secondary schools is statistically significant. This finding highlights the importance of parental involvement in promoting positive student behavior and reducing indiscipline.From the interview schedule, all principals and HoD guidance and counselling offered that parents are regularly engaged and can help in the fight against drug abuse in their school. However, more engagement was noted as necessary to create rapport between teachers, parents and students.

**CONCLUSION**

In terms of parental engagement, all components were rated average, with the Parent- Teacher Association (PTA) being particularly noted for its active role in supporting the school, receiving the highest rating with a mean score of 3.2895. This suggests that while parental engagement overall is moderate, the PTA stands out as a key factor in fostering collaboration between parents and the school. The Pearson’s Correlation Analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of -0.741, indicating a strong negative relationship between parental engagement and student indiscipline in public secondary schools. This suggests that higher levels of parental engagement are associated with lower levels of student indiscipline. Additionally, the p-value statistic (sig) of 0.000 was produced. Since this p-value is less than the 0.01 significance level, the study concluded that the relationship between parental engagement and student indiscipline is statistically significant. This finding highlights the critical role of active parental involvement in reducing student indiscipline within schools.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the findings that parental engagement highly and negatively influences student indiscipline in public secondary schools, this study makes the following recommendations: Schools should enhance collaboration between parents and teachers through regular Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, joint planning sessions, and feedback forums. This collaborative effort helps align home and school expectations regarding student behavior. Schools should establish and maintain clear, consistent communication channels with parents, such as newsletters, mobile apps, class WhatsApp groups, and parent-teacher calls. Frequent updates about student progress and behavior help build trust and foster shared responsibility. Schools should create opportunities for parents to be more involved in school life, including participating in school events, mentorship programs, discipline awareness days, and classroom support activities. Active engagement reinforces positive behavioral expectations. The Parent-Teacher Association should be empowered and involved in school discipline policies and decision-making. This formal involvement ensures parents feel responsible and accountable for maintaining school discipline standards. School administrators should promote a culture where discipline is viewed as a shared responsibility between parents, teachers, and students. Mutual respect and partnership should be emphasized through inclusive planning and regular consultations.

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