**Parental Responsibility on Drug Abuse Prevention and Student’s Indiscipline Among Public Secondary Schools in Fafi Sub County, Garissa County, Kenya**

**ABSTRACT**

It is challenging to accurately determine the extent of drug abuse among public secondary school student’s rural areas of Kenya. Given the persistent nature of drug abuse in schools, this study was conducted to examine parental responsibility on drug abuse prevention and student’s indiscipline among public secondary schools in Fafi Sub County, Garissa County, Kenya**.** This study utilized an explanatory correlation research designs as it employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The target population for the study included the 7 principals, 7 heads of departments 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 heads of departments of the guidance and counseling department, and 28 student leaders in secondary schools in Fafi Sub-County, Garissa County, Kenya. The teachers, who participated in the study, were selected using 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 heads of departments 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<0.01. Correlation coefficient; r =-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

Keywords: *Drug Abuse Prevention, Parental Engagement, Parental Responsibility, Student Indiscipline*

Introduction

It is challenging to accurately determine the extent of drug abuse among public secondary school students in rural areas of Kenya (Kamenderi et al., 2020). However, it is widely acknowledged that many young individuals have encountered various psychoactive substances available in the country (Jaguga et al., 2022). Past studies on drug abuse have indicated that the misuse of drugs often begins during pre-adolescence and intensifies during the teenage years, when most young people are in secondary school (NACADA, 2019).

Individuals who use drugs, like others, often seek validation of behavior from their peers, which persuades them to join the habit in an effort to gain acceptance (Muhia , 2021). The impact of peer pressure, whether negative or positive, is largely dependent on the quality of the peer group. Regrettably, while peer pressure can sometimes reinforce acceptable behavior, it can also lead vulnerable individuals astray (Laursen & Veenstra, 2021).

A more recent national study conducted by NACADA (2019) across eight regions in Kenya revealed that most students who used drugs had close friends who were also users, affirming the strong correlation between an individual’s drug use and their peer group's behavior. This finding aligns with studies in counties like Kiambu and Makueni, which underscore peer influence as a critical driver of substance abuse in rural public secondary schools (Muhia , 2021; Muthoka & Mwenje, 2020).

Drug use has existed throughout human history (Balkrishna et al. 2024). People have used various plants, such as herbs, roots, barks, and leaves, to alleviate pain and treat illnesses (Feyisa et al, 2024). When used appropriately, drugs can be beneficial to human well‑being (Awolola et al, 2021). However, some drugs produce appealing side effects, elation, euphoria, power, and serenity, which over time can evolve into drug dependence and abuse problems. Substance and drug abuse is a significant global problem (Chindo, 2022). According to World Health Organization (2023) data, tobacco kills more than 8 million people each year, including approximately 1.3 million non-smokers suffering from second-hand smoke exposure, with around 80% of users living in low- and middle-income countries (World Health Organization, 2023).

In Kenya, at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, drugs worth 45 million KenyanShillings were seized and destroyed. The haul included 29.09 kg of heroin (valued at 29 million KES), 130 g of cocaine (1.3 million KES), 140,000 mandrax tablets (14 million KES), and 7.5 kg of cannabis sativa (700,000 KES) (National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse [NACADA], 2022).

Drugs influence on students' indiscipline has been extensively recognized with noting drug abuse as a main driver of secondary school students’ unrest, resulting in low academic performance and high indiscipline case (Okumu, 2024). This situation is concerning because effective management plays a crucial role in maintaining discipline both in schools and in other organizations. Accordingly, 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 (Ishiaka, 2025). In Kenya, many schools continue to struggle in maintaining discipline as indiscipline persists leading to national examinations mass failures (Kariithi, 2024). In many schools which have had student riots, strike and violence, drug abuse has been identified as a major contributing factor to these issues. In Kenya, drug and substance abuse is an increasingly serious problem. According to Muthoka and Mwenje (2020), nearly every young person in the country has experimented with drugs at some point. Although the number of regular users of hard drugs is smaller compared to those who use cigarettes and alcohol, the study by Kamenderi et al. (202) highlights a significant concern: over time, a large proportion of youth eventually become addicted. This addiction poses serious threats to their personal safety and health, while also causing distress to their families and friends.

Efforts have been made to combat Drug abuse in Kenya, such as the campaign to ban smoking in public places (Macharia et al. 2022). "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 (National Council for Law Reporting – Kenya (NCLR), 2024). 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 (NACAD, 2024).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. .However, the problem persisted, creating 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, 2024). 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, 1991). 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 deviant role models (Jessor & Jessor, 1977).

**EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW**

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 Chapiai, Kimani, and Rop (2021) investigated the influence of parental behavior on drug and substance abuse among secondary school students in Kinango Sub-County, Kenya. Using a cross-sectional mixed-methods design, they sampled 384 students along with school leaders. The study found a 20.3% prevalence of substance abuse and established a significant link between parental substance use or permissiveness and students’ drug involvement. The findings, interpreted through Erikson’s social development and Bandura’s social learning theories, emphasized the importance of parental modeling. The authors recommended that parents demonstrate abstinent behavior and that schools enhance guidance and counseling services.

Similarly, Odhiambo, Sifuna, and Kombo (2020) explored the influence of parenting styles on drug abuse among girls in Nakuru County secondary schools. Using a descriptive survey design with 371 female students and school staff, their analysis revealed that poor parental guidance, excessive pocket money, and weak parent-child relationships contributed to drug abuse among girls. The study underscored the critical role of parenting in either mitigating or facilitating substance abuse.

In a related area, Ibrahim, Warfa, and Mumo (2025) examined how indiscipline affects academic performance in public secondary schools in Garissa Township. Their descriptive cross-sectional study of 235 respondents identified that social and economic effects of indiscipline had significant negative correlations with academic performance. Contrarily, the school environment’s effect on indiscipline showed a positive correlation with academic outcomes. They concluded that while social and economic factors associated with indiscipline harm academic performance, aspects of the school environment can positively influence student achievement.

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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.

**RESULT 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 (Ngulube et al, 2024). 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. However, the effect is negative to imply that positive parental engagement results into student maintaining discipline.

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. Specifically, positive parental engagement improves student discipline 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.

**Consent**

As per international standards or university standards, Participants’ written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

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