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Effects of Drug and Substance Abuse on Academic  
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Subcounty, Kilifii County, Kenya




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## Effects of Drug and Substance Abuse on Academic Performance among Secondary School Students, Kauma Subcounty, Kilifii County, Kenya

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The study aims at investigating effects of substance abuse in Kauma Sub County of Kilifi County of the Coast Province. The Purpose is of the study is to uncover the effects of substance abuse and its relation to academic performance in Secondary schools in Kauma, with the purpose of recommending how to address the Situation.

**Methodology:** The study involves Random selection of Schools and random filling of questioners by learners and Teachers. It was pegged on Uri Bronfenbrenner's' Ecological Contextual Theory (1979). Which denotes that behavior is controlled by ecological environmental systems that affects positively or negatively the personality of man culminating to the totality of one's character.

**Findings:** The research found that the cultural norms of Disco Matanga has greatly contributed to Palm wine (Mnazi), Muguka/ Ghat and Marijuana abuse. Efforts by the Presidency to address the issue and stop the vice has met stiff resistance from locals and politicians for their own motives which were not captured in this research. The research also found that 70% of Secondary school students scored D plus and below in National Examinations.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice:** The research recommends collaborative efforts on addressing drug abuse in secondary school students and the use of Faith based organizations , academic institutions, Intercountry – National and NGO approaches in Guidance and Counselling with emphasis to co-curricular and art therapies to first educate and inform the population on the effects of drug Abuse, the economic strain on both county and national government on rehabilitation and apply the multi sectorial approach to scaffold the emotional, mental, physiological effects on health and academics with subsequent methods to address the issue including further research studies..

**Keywords:** *Alcoholism, Delinquency, Ghat Disco Matanga, Muguka, Truancy.*

## 1.0 Background to the Study

The history of human race has also been the history of drug abuse (Maithya, 2009). In itself, the use of drugs does not constitute an evil; in fact, some drugs have been a medical blessing. (Maithya, 2009) Since, time in memorial earliest times, herbs, roots, bark leaves have been used to relieve pain and help control diseases. History tells us that the Chinese used Opium as a cure of dysentery before the 18th century. European countries such as Britain and Holland were known to exchange opium growth in their colonies for tea and silk with China (United Nations, 1995). Unfortunately, certain drugs that initially produce enticing effects, such as sense of feeling good, elation, serenity and power have evolved into a problem of dependence and abuse.

1.1.1 State of Drug and Substance Abuse: Global Perspective Drug abuse is a global problem that poses a great danger to the lives of individuals, society and political stability and security in many countries (United Nations, 1998). According to the United Nations (2005), the use of illicit drugs has increased throughout the world and the major world trend is the increasing availability of many kinds of drugs among ever widening spectrum of consumers. Of major concern is that children seem to be targeted as the new market for the drug industry globally. Drugs and substance abuse has become the focus of research and preventive activities in the developed countries for decades (Muyabo, 1996). A study carried out by the London School of Economics in 1980 on students learning behavior revealed a relationship between drug abuse and poor academic results (Otieno, Balswick & Norland, 1994). Africa has not been spared from the abuse of drugs by the youth. The continent, over recent years has experienced an upsurge in the production, distribution and consumption of drugs with the youth and young adults being most affected (Asuni & Pela, 1986). Africa has huge young and vulnerable populations which has become the target market for the illicit drug industry. This constitutes 56% of the population aged between 14-19 years, which constitutes secondary school students. In Ethiopia it is reported that 82 per cent of the street children in Addis Ababa use some kind of a drug (United Nations, 2013). Besides, the threat of increasing consumption of illicit drugs amongst the young people and children, South Africa is becoming a major transshipment point in the international drug trade as well as a major producer of dagaa (Honwana & Lamb, 1998). Gilberto Gerra (2013), the chief of drug and preventive health branch at the United Nations office on drugs and crime pointed out that West Africa is completely weak in terms of boarder control, undermanned ports and the big drug cartels from Colombia and Latin America have chosen Africa as a way to reach Europe. The United Nations official (Gerra) added that when a country becomes a transit point it immediately becomes a consumption country. According to the United Nations (UN) statistics 2013, 37,000 people in Africa die annually from diseases associated with drug abuse. The UN estimates that there 28 million drug users in Africa (United Nations, 2013). An International conference on drug abuse in Kampala 2013 reported that young people in 3 consumption countries were the most vulnerable section of the population, especially those in the period of early and late adolescence who are mostly unable to resist peer pressure and start experimenting with drugs in schools or even outside school. The international conference on drug abuse in Kampala (2013) advocated for an immediate strong invention to reverse the trend.

1.1.2 State of



Drug and Substance Abuse in Kenya In Kenya, reports of young peoples' lives ruined by alcohol and drugs are rampant. The youth, especially, are vulnerable to the vice owing to peer pressure, media influence, poor guidance and role modelling (Kikuvi, 2009). This has taken root in schools leading to the high school drop outs and idleness. According to Amayo and Wangai (1994), drug consumption has led to unrest and widespread destruction of life and property in schools. Kenya was ranked among the top four African Nations notorious for consumption of narcotics by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (World report, 2005). The Kenyan airport of Mombasa has been identified in the report as the major transit point for drug trafficking in Africa. According to a National survey on the magnitude of alcohol and drug abuse conducted by National Campaign Against Drug Abuse (NACADA) (2012), the abuse of alcohol in the country is worrying. The facts and figures from this report indicate that 13 per cent of teenagers in the 10 to 11 years' age bracket have used an intoxicating substance mostly alcohol followed by cigarettes. In the 15 to 24-year bracket, a worrying 11.7 per cent are currently hooked in to alcohol, while 6.2 per cent are regular users of Tobacco products, of this group, 4.7 per cent chew miraa (khat) while 1.5 per cent smokes 4 bhang. Regrettably this age bracket constitutes secondary school going-age in Kenya. The sad reality presented by the figures and facts in NACADA'S 2012 survey on drugs that is 14.8 per cent of the respondents aged between 10 to 14 years old are completely oblivious of the risks associated with substance abuse. These statistics underline the need to educate our young people on dangers of alcohol and drug abuse. A number of studies have found a clear and consistent association between substance abuse and school achievement. This practice is not only a determinant to school success and motivation in learning but also on psychological and physical well-being among adolescents (Abot, 2005). The initiation into substance abuse in the early stages of life of the adolescents is positively associated to increased risk of early school dropout and an involvement in deviant adolescent behaviors and behavioral problems into adulthood, which are manifestation in learning among secondary school students (Abot, 2005). If left unaddressed, escalating rate of drug and substance abuse puts the country at a risk of losing generations as well as underdevelopment owing to the diversion of resources to address among others; basic needs for uneducated and unskilled youth, dependant young adults, increased health care needs among the youth abusing alcohol and drugs, the cost of policing will also be high due to crimes resulting from idleness and youth drinking habits, all those compounded will go a long way in frustrating the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) specifically the Education for All (E.F.A) goal, and the vision 2030 which envisages making Kenya industrial and mid-level income country.

5 1.1.3 Drug Abuse and Motivation to Learn Motivation is something that energizes, directs and sustains behavior; it gets students moving and points then in a particular direction (Beighler, et al, 1993). Students' motivation is reflected in personal investment and in cognitive, emotional and behavioral engagement in school activities (Fredrick et al., 2010). Virtually all students are motivated in one way or another. One student may be keenly interested in classroom subject matter and seek out challenging course work, participate actively in class discussions and earn high marks; another student may be more concerned with the social side of

school, interacting with classmates frequently, attending extracurricular activities almost every day. Still another may be focused on athletics, excelling in physical education classes. Motivation increases student's time on task which is an important factor affecting their learning achievement (Brophy, 1988) a motivated student makes a concerted effort to understand classroom material. The more motivated students are, the more they want to be accepted and respected by peers. Students who have little interests in academic achievement are at high risk of dropping out before they graduate from high school. Yet another student perhaps due to undetected learning disability or negative peer pressure and consequently indulge in drug and substance abuse may exhibit withdrawal symptoms, a shy temperament and uncoordinated behavior. Such a student may be motivated to avoid academics, social situations or athletic activities, pursue school tasks apathetically with an ultimate result of declining performing in academics. According to Ryan et al (2011) indicators of motivation in participation in school related activities include among of time spent on homework, rate of homework completion achievement of 6 high grades, school attendance and perceptions of the connectedness to school, teachers and peers. Kauma Sub County has posted declining results in Kenya National examinations compared to neighboring sub counties of Kilifi County. Factors that can be attributed to this trend is the problem of illicit brew, and the claim that Mnazi- Palm Wine is a cultural alcohol from palm wine with no additives. The region is a hub in gravel harvesting, and has the stone that is used to make cement. Furthermore, minor gemstones as titanium is mined. Customs from the Mijikenda Community dictate that when a family has a member dying of natural or other causes people bring resources together and alcohol is provisional and free for all. The Palm wine is an integral part of the community traditions and opposing such leads to dire consequences. Encouraging of Mnazi use by politicians has greatly over shadowed the Christian norms and Government effort to control Alcoholism. The Sub County Director of Education In charge of Kauma County Mr. Shemotte Omar', in his key note address to school heads in January 2024 listed alcoholism and Marijuana as cause of delinquencies among the youth in Kauma and begged faith based organizations to not only help in curbing the vice but to be vigilant and work with the State Department of Education, The Presidency and the County government to save the youth from self-destruction. He pointed at the Art of celebrating death by drug abuse that leads to sexual immorality as having long term defects to the human resource development of the community.

Joblessness, single parenthood and the place of palm wine in Community traditions has catalyzed the abuse leading to school dropout at a shocking rate. disco matanga where death is celebrated with sexual orgies. School going children in those households and the neighborhood get exposed and introduced to drug abuse at a very tender age. In secondary school it is not rare to find students nursing hangovers resulting from drinking sprees the previous night. The most prevalent illicit brew in the region goes by the native name "Kaluvu". Data available at the District Education office at Kauma Sub County show that in 2012 alone, 16 students from 5 secondary schools were an agenda for discussion in several District Education Board meetings facing eminent expulsion. Again during sports and other out of school activities, it is common to

meet students taking alcohol or being suspended for having taken drugs. In a recent Education Day, the District Education Officer urged that liquor licenses of those who sell beer to students, be cancelled by the relevant authority. It is against this backdrop that the current study sets out to study the effects of drug and substance abuse on participation in learning in Kauma Sub County of Kilifi County with a view of suggesting intervention measures to salvage the drug abuse menace in our Kenyan Secondary Schools

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of the study sought to:

- i) Identify the commonly abused drugs in secondary schools in Kauma Sub County.
- ii) Find the root cause of drug abuse in Kauma Sub County

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

- i) What are the commonly abused drugs by students in secondary schools in Kauma
- ii). What are the causes of drug abuse in Kauma Sub County of Kilifi County?

#### **1.6 Target Population**

The target population is senior secondary students in Kauma Sub County. The Sub county has 13 Senior Secondary Schools which were the then secondary schools prior to the inception of the CBC in 2018 that culminated to Junior Secondary Schools in the 24 Comprehensive schools. The Schools carry a total of 4000 secondary learners.

#### **1.7 Sample and Sample size**

The sample was obtained by random sampling through Rotary. Mugenda 2014 feels the method ideal as each school has an equal chance to participate and it is a sure way of eliminating bias. 13 pieces of paper were put in a bowl, with 5 having a 'YES' and the rest having a 'NO'. School heads were to pick and each with a yes to participate in the study.

$$13 * 30/100$$

$$= 13 * 3/10$$

$$=4.29$$

Rounded to nearest = 4 schools

The schools then gave the mandate to the guidance and counselling teachers who then were the sample. 4 male and 2 female teachers.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 introduction**

Drugs is a source of income even to the Nation. Alcohol, brewers, Cigarette Companies employ a multitude of workers and post huge profits. Yet Doctors spend long hours treating drug related diseases, rehabilitation as families suffer great losses. Young people who persistently abuse

substances often experience an array of problems, including academic difficulties, health-related problems, poor peer relationships and involvement with the juvenile justice system. Additionally, there are consequences for family members, the community, and the entire society like conflict between friends, family breakdown, violence, gangs, drug trafficking among others. The issue of alcoholism and its effects has worried not only the provincial administration, but Human Resource, Medics and Educators. Are there safe Substances whether used, or abused? What is the philosophy of making huge profits in one hand and making huge losses that are irreversible on the other hand?

### **2.1 Effects of Drugs on students.**

Declining grades, absenteeism from school and other activities, and increased potential for dropping out of school are problems associated with adolescent substance abuse. Hawkins, Calatano and Miler (1992) had research finding that low level of commitment to education and higher truancy rates appear to be related to substance use among adolescents. Again drugs abused effect the brain, this result in major decline in the functions carried out by the brain (Abot, 2005). Drugs affect the student's concentration span, which is drastically reduced and boredom sets in much faster than for non-drug and substance abusers. The student will lose interest in school work including extra curriculum activities. Most of the psychoactive drugs affect the decision making process of the students, creative thinking and the development of the necessary life and social skills are stunted. They also interfere with the awareness of an individual's unique potential and interest thus affecting their career development (Kikuvi, 2009). Cognitive and behavioral problems experienced by alcohol-and Drug-using youth may interfere with their academic performance and also present obstacles to learning for their classmate (United Nations, 2005). Drug abuse is associated with crime maintenance of an orderly and safe school atmosphere conducive to learning. It leads to destruction of school property and classroom disorder. Drug and substance abuse have far reaching ramifications, for instance, according to the survey by NACADA (2012) with a sample of 632 children, it was found out that 6% have ever engaged in sex while on drugs ( 7.3% for boys and 4.4% for 23 girls).The median age at sexual debut being estimated at 11 years. An assessment of the situation during the first sexual intercourse indicates that 30% had sex unwillingly. Further, about 20% were given incentives to lure them in to sexual act, with a further 8% reporting having taken drugs before their first sexual encounter. This early introduction into illicit sex goes a long way in impacting negatively on their self-esteem, exposing them to dangers of early pregnancy contracting STIS and AIDS, declining academic performance and ultimately dropping out of school altogether (Maithya, 2009). 2

### **2.1 Causes of Drug Abuse**

The Bronfenbrenner theory attributes environmental factors as the root cause of behavior or delinquencies. He begins with the family, the family and the School, the family-school and the Church and the customs that all demand and confuse the individual. Simba, (2020) describes the family as the main cause of alcohol abuse in that dysfunctional households, broken families,

divorces all stress the child and the child looks for solace. This solace that may be provided by peers through peer pressure may lead the individual to sink deeper and deeper into alcoholism. On National Television address on 17<sup>th</sup> March the Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya, His Excellency Rigathi Gachagua reinterred to kill his political career by fighting the Alcohol menace in the Country the Deputy head of State borrowed heavily on section 53 of the constitution of Kenya (2010) which underlines that the child takes top priority in matters that affect the total wellbeing of the Nation. The deputy President says that God will ask him of his position in the Country if he lets the country sink into the Alcohol Syndrome that has swallowed millions of Kenyan Youth and if Alcoholics would not vote for him, then so be it. Maithya, (2009) points that the art of alcohol use seen as a life style portrayed by tail blazing actors in the film industry is counterproductive to society. This is evident that there is a social gap that has made youth of secondary school age degenerate into alcoholism and drug abuse.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

The research employed descriptive methodology. This is because a lot of data can be obtained and questions can be paraphrased when misconstrued or misunderstood. Creswell (2014) describe the method as ideal hen doing such a problem.

### **4.0 FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 How students started abusing drugs**

Instrument validity and reliability: Three self-reported outcome measures were also included in the battery of instruments administered to learners as snowballed by the teachers. One was the Level of Use Questionnaire based on alcohol intake, when they started use, how often they get alcohol and what were the critical times alcohol is provisional. The second was if parents used alcohol, whether palm tapping is a family business, and if the learners are involved in the transportation, storage and sell of alcohol another was the Stage of which students cannot do without using drug related substances. The third instrument was based on when miraa/ghat was used, the effect of using Muguka and alcohol, when marijuana, Muguka and palm wine become accessible will little parental control, and if the culture allowed use of alcohol in children including effects on study. Each of these is a single-item instrument that cannot be easily checked for internal consistency reliability. However, test-retest reliabilities in the pilot stage students and teacher's teachers shown reliabilities to typically be higher than .7 Subjecting the items to SPSS 2.2 produced Cronbach's Alpha = .84. This means that reliability was very high.

The result show that 70 percent of boys used alcohol, 40% had a family business of palm wine tapping or took part in the selling of Mnazi and initiation was gradual. 90% said they were introduced to marijuana and Muguka during disco matanga. Friends and colleagues were responsible for initiating form one students into Muguka. The science of belonging or not being left out 68 % percent blamed friends for being hooked. 43 percent of girls blamed parents who had palm wine at home and sent them to fill their Mboko/ glasses with alcohol, as they tried out sips hence got hooked. 80% percent said traditions, culture and the celebrating of death got them



involved into substance abuse as palm wine and Muguka. Learners noted that the students who were admitted in Faith based schools and those of parents who attested to salvation had better control as they feared the parents and the repercussions if found to be taking alcohol

#### **4.1 Effects of Drug Abuse in Schools on participation in learning**

The fourth objective sought to find from students the likely effects of drug abuse on students' participation in learning. The findings on the effects of drugs abuse on participation in learning among students in the schools are indicated in Table 4.15 as expressed by the principals and students. Table 4. 15: Principals reports on Effects of drugs abuse on participation in learning among students in the schools

Effects	Mean	Standard Deviation
School dropout	3.424	0.298
Strained relationship with other students	3.005	0.464
Lack of interest in studying	2.789	0.457
Low concentration span	2.594	0.493
Declining grades	2.578	0.49
Lack of interest in extra curriculum activities	2.387	0.298
Theft	2.354	0.493
Bullying	1.647	0.661
Truancy	1.231	0.298

The results on the effects of drugs abuse on participation among students in the schools in Table 4.15 indicate that the effect of drugs abuse on participation in learning among students in the schools was severe on school dropout, strained relationship with other students, lack of interest in studying, low concentration span and declining grades as expressed by a mean of 3.424, 3.005, 2.789, 2.594 45 and 2.578 respectively. The study also found that effect of drugs abuses on participation in learning among students in the schools in terms of interest in extra curriculum activities, theft and bullying as expressed by a mean of 2.387, 2.354 and 1.647 respectively was low. In addition, the study found out that effect of drugs abuses also included truancy as expressed by a mean of 1.231. These findings correlate with those of Hawkins, Calatano and Miler (1992). More information on the influence of drug abuse on participation on learning was provided by students.

## **5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

It is safe to conclude that the Ecological Contextual Theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner has been perfectly proved in this research, particular on the role of the environment on behavior. Drug abuse starts in the home environment, then school environment, then community environment and the ecological systems are intertwined in an intricate way leading to a maze that is difficult to wriggle out of. From the findings we can fairly conclude that drug abuse particularly in Marijuana and Mnazi and Muguka have taken toll on learning, academic achievement and schooling and the social life in Kauma Sub County. The effects have led to high school dropout rate, strained relationship with parents, teachers and fellow students, early pregnancies, diminished interest in studying and work and petty crimes and delinquent behaviors. The findings have been reflected in speeches by the MP for Kilifi County and Women Representative. Honorable Gertrude Mbeyu, who doubles up as a Child Psychologist.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

The researchers recommend that:

1. Community based initiatives on youth education on effects of drug abuse, how to abstain from perpetual drug use and addiction and best practices on detaching selves from alcohol abuse be used to curb the menace and rewards be offered to those who were successfully rehabilitated. Moreover, access to alcoholic drinks should be minimized by involving the community through a multi sectorial approach to solving alcoholism in adolescence.
2. School holiday tuition be re-introduced but co curriculum activities be emphasized. This should include sports, Games, Music and Art Therapy. Support can be enlisted from H.E Mungaro, the governor who has been instrumental in stopping and management of Muguka and Ghat- Poisonous herbal drugs grown in Eastern province used as a cash cow to destroy the Kenyan population. Policy: Secondary Schools should empower the Guidance and Counselling departments of the school by sponsoring Guidance and Counselling Courses for all teachers so that the G&C in charge is not overwhelmed by a backload of cases. Teacher attitude on students that have walked outside norms should be changed by studying ways and means to take all learners on board and understand the root course with the intent of addressing the issue
3. Research be done on intercountry collaborations, National Government and Faith based organizations can work in cohorts to defeat the giant and work on productive ways to generate income among the youth. The effort can be made simple by enlisting help from the National University and the Satellite Private University in Kilifi, Pwani and Mount Kenya Universities respectively where research has been done and readily available and it's a matter of domesticating the findings and the recommendations. Further Research: The KEMRI need to carry out research on the Effect of Drug and substance abuse on child health in relation to academic benefits or losses in secondary schools in Kauma Sub County, and suggest recommendations for the National Government in Collaboration with the County Government of Kilifi, in addressing mental health among secondary school students.

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