

# Effects of Drug Abuse on Academic Performance among Students of High Schools in Nakuru Town East Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** Many schools in Kenya are experiencing low academic performance due to drug abuse and poor teacher-student relationship. Drug abuse among students of high school leads students to have behaviour problems like stress, fatigue, anxiety, bullying and even committing murder among others. This study investigates the effects of drug abuse among students of high schools in Nakuru Town East Sub County in Nakuru County, Kenya. The specific objectives were to determine the effects of drugs abuse among the students of high school students in relation to their academic performance in Nakuru Town East Sub County, Nakuru County and to establish the control mechanisms used by school management in Nakuru Town East Sub County, Nakuru County in controlling drug abuse among the students of high school. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. Stratified, purposive and simple random samplings were used to select the study sample. Data was gathered using a structured questionnaire. Data was summarized and described using frequency counts, mean and standard deviation. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 24.0 computer programme aided in data analysis. The results indicated that the effects of drug abuse on students' academic performance in high schools included; school indiscipline, behaviour problems like stress, fatigue, anxiety, bullying and even

committing murder, impairment of cognitive development and strikes in schools. The findings further showed that the control mechanism used by school administration in controlling drug abuse among the students of high school include: peer counselling section, putting more emphasis on “drug resistance skills” or “drug refusal skills” on students and involving students to participate in the prevention programme and creation of school disciplinary code. This paper recommends that students be provided with peer counselling programmes to mitigate the use of drugs among the students.

**Key words: Effect, Drug and Substance Abuse, Students, Drug Control, Academic Performance.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse is a global problem which has created health problems and danger in our societies and more so among the high school students. Health problems include mental illness, cancer of the lungs among others and social problems like students dropping out of school, juvenile delinquency, and anti-social behavior. Mental illness has also risen in our streets of which drug abuse is a known major contributing factor. Concern has been drawn to the fact that the factors leading to the victims’ exposure are quite common in schools; this includes the consumption of dangerous drugs such as cannabis sativa popularly known as bhang, heroin and cocaine during cultural and other festivities either at schools or homes during sports or athletic competitions among students (Siringi, 2001).

Other factors that lead students to abuse drugs include students’ consumption of drugs during examination for the purpose of alertness. Adolescent periods are the times of attracting the opposite sex which most of them cannot ordinarily do without the use of some drugs. During social gatherings, the timid types purposely take some drugs to enable them become bold. The abuse of these drugs which leads to addiction among these Post-primary school students gradually progress to cause a host of evil happenings in our society such as incessant occurrence of road traffic accidents as a result of the effects of these substances. In other cases some students breakdown during examinations leading to failure and eventual drop-out from school. Others become rude and arrogant to teachers and parents and occasionally causing riots and chaos in their schools while some grow up to become criminals (Winters and Henly, 1993).

According to Agwusike (1990), drug abuse is the use of drugs above the prescribed dosage and for the purpose other than for the original prescription. Winters and Henly (1993) also defined drug abuse as self-treatment of physical ailment which could result from ignorance. The society of doctors and pharmacists are worried at the unscrupulous ways in which the drugs are sold to the public in our markets, and chemists which are contributory factors to drug abuse.

Further, Drug addiction and drug abuse is the chronic or habitual use of any chemical substance that alters the state of body or mind for other than medically warranted purposes (Ndom and Adelekan, 1996). Traditional definitions of addiction, with their criteria of physical dependence

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and withdrawal and often an underlying tenor of depravity and sin have been modified with increased understanding; with the introduction of new drugs, such as cocaine, that are psychologically or neuropsychological addicting; and with the realization that its stereotypical application to opiate drug users was invalid because many of them remain occasional users with no physical dependence (Johnston, 2000). Addiction is more often now defined as the continuing, compulsive nature of the drug use despite physical and or psychological harm to the user and society and includes both licit and illicit drugs, and the term “substance abuse” is now frequently used because of the broad range of substances including alcohol and inhalants, that can fit the addictive profile (Cookson, 1992). Psychological dependence is the subjective feeling that the user needs the drug to maintain a feeling of well-being; physical dependence is characterized by tolerance, that is, the need for increasingly larger doses in order to achieve the initial effect, and withdrawal symptoms when the user is abstinent.

High school students are especially vulnerable to the behavior as they are more inclined to experiment with the substances or be influenced by their peers to join them in the habit among other sources of motivation (Cookson, 1992). It has been widely observed that drug abuse occurs more frequently in young people than in other age groups. The risk factors for drug use often occur before entry into the workforce. The drug abuse problems of the community are, therefore, brought into the workplace. The age group with the highest frequency of drug use is often 18- 35 years, although wide variation exists between countries. Thus the point of maximum benefit of prevention programmes may occur before or at the point of entry into the labor market. Employers can make major contributions to the prevention of drug abuse, helping themselves and the community in the process. Effective workplace initiatives to prevent drug abuse should begin in the community and be directed at young persons who are potential workers (Smith, 2007). However, this can only be appreciated where there is sufficient information to warrant and guide the intervention measures, meaning that more collaborative effort which is currently lacking among the stake holders should be encouraged.

Globally, results from 2010 monitoring the future survey a nationwide study on rates of substance use in the United States show that 48.2% of 12<sup>th</sup> grades report having used an illicit drug at some point in their lives. Regionally, in Zambia, the study findings among students found that while up to 10% of female students experimented with cannabis, only male students tended to become regular users. In this study 58% of males and 57% females had at some time taken alcohol while 32% of males and 10% of females had at some point taken cannabis (Cookson, 1992). Nationally, in Kenya, studies show that more than a fifth (22.7%) of primary school children take alcohol, a figure that rises to more than three-quarters (68%) for university students across all age groups have been exposed to alcohol, tobacco, miraa, glue sniffing, bhang, heroin and cocaine.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Drug abuse has affected many high school students and this combined with their different expectations, goals and values of students wanting to fulfill in their duration in school can influence positively or negatively their academic performance. Studies conducted have shown

the use of drug and substance abuse is a major factor affecting students' academic performance. Statistics suggest that the habit is on the increase in many schools and with the rate of new abusers outpacing the prevention and rehabilitation strategies set up to address them. This behavioral phenomenon has been labeled deviant by many and has attracted parents, teachers and government concerns considering its impact on student lives and academic performance. Drug abuse is rampant in places like Nakuru although their impact among high school students has not yet been documented. This study therefore sought to investigate the effects and control of drugs and substance abuse among the students of high school on their academic performance.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of drug abuse among students of high schools in Nakuru Town East Sub- County in Nakuru County, Kenya.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- i. To determine the effects of drugs abuse among the students of high school students in relation to their academic performance in Nakuru Town East Sub County, Nakuru County.
- ii. To establish the control mechanisms used by school management in Nakuru Town East Sub County, Nakuru County in controlling drug abuse among the students of high school.

### **Research Questions**

- i. What are the effects of drugs abuse among the students of high school students on their academic performance in Nakuru Town East Sub County, Nakuru County?
- ii. What control mechanisms do school management in Nakuru Town East Sub County use in controlling drug abuse among the students of high school?

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Effects of Drug Abuse among High School Students**

Drugs properly administered have been societal medicinal blessing. Unfortunately certain drugs produce enticing side effect for example euphoria, a sense of feeling good, elation, serenity and power. What begins as a measure of relaxation often evolves in time to a problem of dependence and abuse (Muraguri, 2004). Drug abuse means the non-prescriptive use of psychoactive chemicals to alter the psychological state of individual, which results in altered functions. Such drugs may destroy the health and productive life of a person.

Drug abuse has become a stumbling block to the students learning behavior which is an essential element in education practice (Blandford, 1998). It has been noted generally that school indiscipline is on the rise due to drug abuse and many incidences related to this make the headlines in the daily press. One of the worst cases in student indiscipline and drug abuse was in Nyeri County where hostel cubicles belonging to four prefects were burnt by fellow students causing the prefects' deaths (Siringi, 1999).

Drugs abuse lead students to have behaviour problems like stress, fatigue, anxiety, bullying and even committing murder. Students under the influence of drugs could even beat up their teachers, rape them or kill their colleagues (Siringi, 2003). In a secondary in Nandi-North, 20 students set a classroom on fire using petrol at night after drinking. In Tigania Sub-County, Miraa chewing had formed a counter-culture within the school with both teacher and students being habitual chewers of the (Miraa) Khat. This hinders them from improving their academic performance (Wanja, 2010).

A student who is involved in drugs cannot perform well academically because there is impairment of cognitive development which in turn reduces academic achievement and disrupts academic progression. Students who abuse bhang regularly are twice as likely to receive marks below average and drop out of school in the long run (UNDCP, 1992). School academic calendars are also disrupted especially when there is unrest and students are sent home for a while. This affects the performance of all students due to the fact that the breakup of the school routine impedes their progress. Reflections of indulgence in drug use and abuse are self-neglect, academic deterioration of children in school who have repeated performance in families (Ghodes, 2003).

Advanced brain scan imaging has proven that the human brain is not fully developed at puberty, as previously thought with maturation occurring as late as twenty four years (Eisenstein, 2009). Common drug use has the effects on the brain that impact academic learning which includes; difficulty in concentrating; inability to process information and problem with working memory. Getting intoxicated can have negative impact on cognitive development function; that is, concentration, memory, attention for forty eight hours. This means that the ability to study is impaired hence could give negative impact on the ability to perform in exams (Kinyua, 2011).

Drug abuse has Social and emotional implication: drug use among students with multiple risk factors is more likely to lead to addiction and affect their academic standing. The people whom students associate with and how they behave are often visible indicators of risk trying drugs as well as possible signs of current drug use. Ngesu (2008) argued that the teenagers that use drugs become part of anti-social group who are less likely to value education, structure and social property

Other outcomes of drug abuse have been strikes in schools characterized by violence, destruction of property, rape and sometimes death, for instance the case of St. Kizito mixed secondary school in Meru County where male students invaded the girls dormitory and violently raped 72 girls, nineteen girls lost their lives and school property was destroyed (G.o.K., 2001).

### **Control of Drug Abuse among High School Students**

According to Botvin (2000), drug control and prevention efforts in schools can be divided into four general approaches namely; Information dissemination, Affective education, Social influence and Competence enhancement. Drug abuse is caused by lack of knowledge about the dangers of using drugs-young people should be made to make logical and rational decisions through methods which should include fear arousal technique or scare technique to avoid drugs. However, these have not been very successful due to other factors such as poor role models. Example a review of grandfather of 70 years who has smoked all his life will set a poor role model.

The focus of Affective Education approach is on increasing self-understanding and through activities e.g. values clarification and responsible decision making improving interpersonal relations and fostering effective communication, peer counselling, assertiveness and increasing students' abilities to fulfil their basic needs through existing social institutions (Swisher, 1979) as quoted by (Plotnik, 1999). This arises from the media peers and the family. There should be emphasis on "drug resistance skills" or "drug refusal skills". The students are taught the requisite information and skills to recognize, avoid or respond to high risk situations, in which they will have a high likelihood of experiencing peer pressure to use drugs students are taught what to say and say it in the most effective way possible, in addition, students are taught how to respond to influences from the media to use drugs.

The other method is correcting normative expectations, that is, correcting the misperception that many adults and most adolescents use drugs. This method involves having students participate in the prevention programme to organize and conduct classroom, school wide, or local community surveys on drug use.

The review is the use of peer leaders as programme providers. Peer leaders are selected because of their role as opinion leaders. They are individuals who appear to have high credibility with the participants in the prevention programme. The rationale here is that peer leaders often have high credibility with adolescents than do teachers and other adults.

Sharing of school administrative responsibilities have been advocated if co-operation and team spirit are to be encouraged in schools and good academic performance ensured. Teachers and students should be involved in creating of school disciplinary code that enumerates what school considers as misbehaviour and what punishment teachers and principals can administer Obot (2005). So principals and teachers should co-operate in fighting drug abuse in secondary schools and reduce indiscipline.

The involvement of students has been viewed as an approach which can influence them into accepting and showing commitment towards that policy. Oketch (2008) found that students are rarely involved in the formulation of rules. The study revealed that in all schools, the head teacher, deputy, and teachers made rules. According to Mwiria, (1995) early involvement of

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students in decision making, which affect them is good for their future and that of the country. They should have meaningful participation in matters which affect them.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design which basically enquires into the state of affairs as it exists without questioning why it exists (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The study was carried out in Nakuru Town East Sub-County in Kenya. Nakuru County was chosen by the researcher purposively because it meets the criteria of having many secondary schools and teachers and where drug abuse is high among students. It is also an urban center. The target population included all secondary schools within Nakuru Town East Sub- County. According to 2017 records in Nakuru Town East Sub- County Education office, there were 20 secondary schools. The sample size was determined by using Krejcie and Morgan (1976) formula as cited by Kathuri and Pals (1993). Stratified random sampling and purposive sampling were used to select the sample. The study, therefore surveyed 200 respondents comprising of 150 abusers who were students and 50 teachers. Ten public secondary schools in the district were purposively sampled for the study. Data was collected through the administration of a questionnaire to both students and teachers. The questionnaire contained rating scale questions, open ended and contingency questions to provide greater insight into the respondents' feelings and recommendations. The researcher visited the selected schools sought permission from the heads of the institutions, explained to the teachers and the students (drug addicts) the purpose of the study and its importance and administered the questionnaire. The data obtained was mainly quantitative and was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics mainly frequency counts, means and percentages. The analysis was aided by the use of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 24.0.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### Effects of Drugs abuse on Academic performance of High school Students

The first objective sought to determine the effects of drugs abuse among the students of high school students in relation to their academic performance in Nakuru Town East Sub County, Nakuru County. The results are summarized as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Effects of Drugs abuse on Academic performance of High School Students

Statement	Mean	Std Dev
School indiscipline is on the rise due to drug abuse	3.96	0.637
Drug abuse leads students to have behaviour problems like stress, fatigue, anxiety, bullying and even committing murder.	3.35	0.863
Students who abuse drugs beat up their teachers, rape them or kill their colleagues.	3.91	0.818
Drug abuse leads to impairment of cognitive development	3.78	0.783
The outcomes of drug abuse have been strikes in schools characterized by violence, destruction of property, rape and sometimes death.	3.61	0.901

**Overall Mean****3.72**

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From the findings majority of the respondents strongly agreed that school indiscipline is on the rise due to drug abuse. This was shown by a mean score of 3.96. Respondents also strongly agreed that drug abuse leads students to have behaviour problems like stress, fatigue, anxiety, bullying and even committing murder as shown by a mean score of 3.35. It was also revealed that students who abuse drugs beat up their teachers, rape them or kill their colleagues. This was shown by a mean score of 3.91. Further findings showed that a student who is involved in drugs cannot perform well academically because there is impairment of cognitive development as depicted by a mean of 3.78. Similarly the respondents strongly agreed that the outcomes of drug abuse have been strikes in schools characterized by violence, destruction of property, rape and sometimes death.

The overall mean of 3.72 indicates that most respondents were in agreement with the statements implying that the stated effects of drug abuse affected the academic performance of high school students in Nakuru Town East Sub County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

### Control mechanism of drug abuse among the students in high schools

The second objective sought to establish the control mechanisms used by school management in NakuruTown East Sub County, Nakuru County in controlling drug abuse among the students of high school. The results are summarized as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Control mechanism of drug abuse among the students in high schools

Statement	Mean	Std Dev
Our school puts emphasis on “drug resistance skills” or “drug refusal skills”.	3.32	1.249
Students are involved to participate in the prevention programme to organize and conduct classroom, school wide, or local community surveys on drug use.	3.65	1.07
Students are involved in creating of school disciplinary code that enumerates what school considers as misbehavior and what punishment teachers and principals can administer.	3.85	1.048
Our school has a peer counselling section under guidance and counselling department.	4.12	0.591
There is focus of affective education approach in our school which increases students self-understanding	3.91	0.621
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.77</b>	

The respondents strongly agreed that school puts emphasis on “drug resistance skills” or “drug refusal skills” as indicated by a mean of 3.32. On the same note the respondents agreed that students are involved to participate in the prevention programme to organize and conduct classroom, school wide, or local community surveys on drug use as shown by a mean of 3.65. The respondents also agreed that students are involved in creating of school disciplinary code that list what school considers as misbehavior and what punishment teachers and principals can administer as revealed by a mean of 3.85. The respondents strongly agreed to with mean of 4.12 that schools have a peer counselling section under guidance and counselling department which advice students on the vice of drug abuse. Respondents held the opinion (mean 3.91) that there is focus of affective education approach in schools which increases student self-understanding.

The overall mean of 3.77 indicates that most respondents were in agreement with the statements implying that the reasons stated were the control mechanism used by school administration in controlling drug among the students of high school in NakuruTown East Sub County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

### V. CONCLUSIONS

The study showed that the effects of drug abuse on students’ academic performance in high schools includes; school indiscipline, behaviour problems like stress, fatigue, anxiety, bullying and even committing murder, impairment of cognitive development and strikes in schools that are characterized by violence, destruction of property, rape and sometimes death. The findings further showed that the control mechanism used by school administration in controlling drug abuse among the students of high school include: Emphasis on “drug resistance skills” or “drug

refusal skills”, involving students to participate in the prevention programme, involving students in creating of school disciplinary code that list what school considers as misbehavior and what punishment teachers and principals can administer, having a peer counselling section under guidance and counselling department and also focusing of affective education approach which increases students self-understanding.

### Recommendations

This paper recommends that substance abusers need to be enabled to access information about their problem, its impacts and the way out through counseling programs. The communities around the school compounds, parents should be more proactive in ending this problem by sensitizing these teenagers on the drug problem and also by giving them alternatives. They should also arrange for counseling programs and recreational activities like sports etc. The government and other authorities need to compel the law enforcement agencies to be more vigilant in preventing the flow of illegal substances in schools and areas within the school compounds.

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