

DRUG USE CHALLENGES FACING STUDENT LEADERS IN DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KOSIRAI DIVISION, KENYA

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ABSTRACT: *Student leaders in school play a very important role in enhancing discipline among the students. However, they often face a lot of indiscipline challenges from the students, making it difficult for them to perform their management duties in school. Based on a study conducted in Kosirai Division, Nandi County, Kenya, this paper examines the drug use related challenges facing student leaders in discipline management. The study employed a descriptive survey design. Questionnaires, interviews and document analysis were used to collect data, which was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively and presented in form of frequency tables. SPSS also aided the data analysis process. A total of 183 students/student leaders, 50 teachers and 12 deputy principals were sampled in the study. The study findings indicated that there was use of drugs among high school students. The student leaders also said they encountered problems when dealing with students who use drugs. Consequently, these student leaders ended up performing poorly as they tended to use much of their time dealing with discipline problems amongst drug abusers. The prevalence of drug abuse among the youth is high and therefore there should be concerted efforts by the ministry of education officials, school management and parents in general to combat the use of drugs in schools and outside school.*

KEYWORDS: Drugs Use, Challenges, Student Leaders, Discipline Management, Secondary Schools

INTRODUCTION

While there is global interest in leadership and management, because of its perceived importance in developing and maintaining successful schools and education systems, there is much less clarity about which leadership behaviours are most likely to produce the most favourable outcomes. Awareness of alternative approaches of management is essential to providing a set of tools from which effective leaders can choose when facing problems and dealing with day-to-day issues (Bush & Glover, 2002; Bush, 2003).

Many Western countries have expressed concern over student discipline schools. Media coverage and complaints from teacher organizations have often highlighted serious incidents which have resulted in extensive research to analyse the reality and the extent of the problems (Munn, Johnstone & Sharp, 2004). The independent research group of the Scottish Executive Education Department conducted a survey of secondary school teachers in 1990, 1996 and 2004, using the same questions and the same schools. One of the aims of the survey was to compare disciplinary matters over time. The findings of this research were that the percentage of secondary school teachers who saw discipline as a serious or very serious concern was: 36%

in 1990; 34% in 1996, and 59% in 2004 (Munn *et al.*, 2004). The substantial increase between 1996 and 2004 does lend weight to the argument that disciplinary issues are a growing concern for educational authorities.

Drug Abuse Challenges

The World Health Organization (WHO, 1995) defines a drug as “any substance that when taken into the living organism may modify one or more of that organism's functions.” This definition is quite broad, encompassing illegal street drugs, legitimate medications such as tranquillizers, cough mixtures and laxatives, socially acceptable drugs such as caffeine, nicotine and alcohol, and also substances not normally associated with drug abuse such as glues, commercial solvents and aerosols.

Kenya has not been spared the pestilence of drugs; in fact, the country has come up from time to time as a transit point for hard drugs from Columbia heading to European capitals. Trafficking of hard drugs into developing countries has, therefore, not spared Kenya. Similarly, the drug consumption and dependence among secondary and college students has led to regular unrests and consequently wide ranging destruction of life and property in schools. A pilot survey carried out by Chesile (1996) has found that in most school compounds currently, there is a ready and wide variety of drugs. For instance, in Lugari District, the school records indicated that over 20 students have either been suspended or expelled from Lumakanda Secondary School for having used drugs in the same year (Chesile, 1996).

Other studies have shown that there are many contributing factors to drug abuse among students. In a school setting, drug abuse affects the children of the rich as well as those from poor families. Shoemaker (1984, p. 56) argues that drug abuse is caused by a combination of environmental, biological and psychological factors. Among the environmental factors, the most influential are family, peer association, school performance and social class membership.

In a speech delivered during the official closing of the African convention of Principals (ACP) in Kenya on 27th August, 2004, the then Minister for Education, Honourable George Saitoti, noted that some cities in Africa have been identified as either destinations or conduits for hard drugs. Drug peddlers and barons were known to target the youth as a lucrative market for their unethical business. He further noted that one of the root causes of some indiscipline cases in institutions could be traced to drug and substance abuse. For this reasons the war against drugs and substance abuse was one that Kenya could not afford to lose because failure to address this problem would lead to the destruction of Kenyan youth and thus the future of this country (NACADA, 2004). He appealed to all to join together to fight this menace.

Researchers have cited various reasons for students' abuse of drugs. The drug abuse in schools poses challenges to student leaders' in their daily activities of managing discipline in schools. A survey report released by NACADA in Kenya in 2004 says that young people aged between 10 to 24 years, whose parents use or sell alcohol and other drugs, are likely to abuse these substances. At times these young people, including students, who buy and sell drugs on behalf of their parents, are themselves exposed to substance abuse in due course of time.

The most common forms of drug use among students in schools are smoking and alcoholism. A College Alcohol Study (CAS) conducted by Wechsler, Lee, Kuo and Lee (2000) at the Harvard School of Public Health has found that two in five students had binged in the two weeks preceding the survey. Binge drinking was defined in that study as five drinks for men

and four drinks for women in a row. These statistics are consistent with data from 1993 and 1997 CAS studies as well, implying that drinking patterns among students have been fairly consistent over the past years. Additionally, one in five students were frequent binge drinkers, binging three or more times in the two weeks before the survey, or more than once a week, on average. The survey also found a significant increase in alcohol-related problems “including injuries, drunk driving, violence, and academic difficulties” from 1993 to 1999 (Reisberg, 1998).

Several studies have explored the role that parents play in the decisions students make about alcohol use. O’Conner (1998) has observed that accessibility of alcohol and family closeness to drugs increases the risk of students using alcohol and may lead to higher levels of substance abuse. According to Lutomia and Sikolia (2006), the spread in drug use by students has been promoted by certain factors in learning institutions, family and the society in general. Some of the factors as per the authors include easy access to cheap and readily available drugs and other substances in the country. Such drugs include bhang, which can easily be grown by students themselves.

Statement of the Problem

According to Hinkcox and Jacobson (1996), lack of coherent social values, changing moral ethics and complex social problems facing students have possible adverse influences on students' attitudes towards study and the nature of their subculture. The continued need to deal with disciplinary problems, far severe than they were decades ago, poses perpetual challenges to all school principals and the student leaders. Change in discipline management is the most important component of running an educational institution and no progress can be made without it.

Although student leaders help in discipline management, there are still cases of indiscipline in secondary schools which include drug abuse among students. According to Ogutu and Njogu (as cited in Ndi-Wa, 2011), in one school some boys who were smoking in their room were believed to have dropped a cigarette sparking fire in the school dormitory that destroyed school and students' property. On the same note, while giving an address on the International Day of the Family on 14th May 2005, the then sports minister Ochilo Ayako said that “parents need to play a more active role in the fight against drug abuse.” He noted that many youths in Kenya were exposed to drugs through advertisements on television. According to him, the mass media were glorifying smoking and alcohol abuse as indicators of success and stardom (Ogutu & Njogu, as cited in Ndi-Wa, 2011).

The above scenario shows that the trend of indiscipline and strikes in Kenyan secondary schools has been on the rise over the years with indiscipline as the main cause. The school management is the main player in maintaining school discipline but the student leaders or students' representatives play the key role in discipline maintenance since they understand the needs and expectations of the students. In management, dialogue is believed to be the best tool, and this is why the school management relies on student leaders to represent them in the grassroots. Student leadership in secondary education necessitates instituting responsible leadership in secondary education institutions (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MoEST], 2007). Student leaders have been facing a lot of challenges despite being a major link to the school management. The study therefore sought to establish the challenges facing the student leaders in the management of discipline in secondary schools.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The design was preferred because the study was concerned with the relationships that exist between the student leaders and the school management. The research was conducted in Kosirai Division in Nandi County, Kenya. The area was selected purposively because it had registered increased school management problems such as students' strikes. Kosirai Division had a total of 12 secondary schools with an estimate population of 200 students per school at the time of the study. The participants of the study were drawn from all the 12 schools. The targeted respondents comprised deputy head teachers, teachers, students and student leaders in Forms Three and Two. The author chose student leaders and students from Forms Three and Two because Form One students were still getting orientated to new life in secondary schools while Form Four students were very busy preparing for their national examinations.

The sampling frame for the study was a population of 1,692 respondents. The sampling procedure involved the use of purposive and simple random sampling techniques. All the twelve (12) secondary schools in Kosirai Division were purposively selected. The participants included twelve (12) Deputy Head Teachers who were purposively selected. Simple random sampling technique was used to select fifty-four (54) teachers and one hundred and fifty (150) student leaders and students. Data was collected using questionnaires, interview schedule and document analysis. Data was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Descriptive methods were employed and data presented in the form of frequency distribution tables that facilitated description and explanation of the study findings. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis. Quantitative techniques (frequency tables) were used for the presentation of quantifiable data that were presented textually using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Mean scores and standard deviations were used in analysing items that adopted a Likert format.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to establish the drug abuse related challenges facing student leaders in relation to discipline management in secondary schools in Kosirai Division, Nandi County. To achieve this objective, the respondents were asked to rate on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 their degree of agreement or disagreement with 6 statements on discipline management. The responses were scored at interval level and the means, standard deviation for each item and the overall mean for each respondent obtained. The resultant frequencies and percentages were as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Students and Student Leaders Responses on Use of Drugs

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)
Some students use drugs	20(14.5)	55(40)	6(4.3)	30(21.7)	27(19.5)
Student leaders encounter problems when dealing with students who use drugs	44(32)	47(34)	5(3.5)	23(16.7)	19(13.8)
Drug abuse is caused by peer pressure	80(58)	43(31)	3(2)	5(3.5)	7(5)
Drug abuse is caused by inadequate parental guidance	52(38)	59(43)	5(3.5)	9(6.5)	13(9)
Drug abuse is caused by stress and poor performance	30(22)	43(31)	11(8)	33(24)	21(15)
Drug abuse by students is caused by exposure to drugs	27(19.5)	77(56)	8(6)	12(8.5)	14(10)

Source: *Field Data (2011)*

From the results in Table 1 above, majority of the students, 75(54.5%), believed that some students in school used drugs while 57(41.2%) of them did not agree that students used drugs. Sixty-six percent, 91(66%), of the students agreed with the statement that student leaders encountered problems dealing with students who used drugs. On the other hand, 42(30.5%) students disagreed. On the causes of drug abuse by students, 123(89%) of the students believed that drug abuse was caused by peer pressure, compared to 111(81%), 73(53%) and 104(75.5%) who indicated inadequate parental guidance, stress and poor performance, and student exposure to drugs, respectively. Table 2 below shows Chi-square analysis of students and student leaders' responses on use of drugs.

Table 2: Chi-Square Analysis for Students' & Student leaders' Responses on Use of Drugs

	Some students use drugs	Student leaders encounter problems when dealing with students who use drugs	Drug abuse is caused by inadequate parental guidance	Drug abuse is caused by peer pressure	Drug abuse by students is caused by exposure to drugs	Drug abuse is caused by stress and poor performance
Chi-Square	46.420 ^a	45.333 ^a	96.058 ^a	163.884 ^a	117.870 ^a	21.420 ^a
Df	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Source: *Field Data (2011)*

From the findings presented in Table 2, there were significant differences on all the statements by both students and student leaders on drug abuse by students ($P=0.000$), since the p value was set at 0.01. This implied that students believed that some students used drugs, that student leaders encountered problems dealing with students who used drugs, that drug abuse was

caused by inadequate parental guidance, by peer pressure, by exposure of students to drugs, and by stress and poor academic performance.

The results presented in Table 3 below show the teachers' responses on the issue of drug abuse.

Table 3: Teachers' Responses on Students' Use of Drugs

Statement	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)
Some students use drugs	34(68)	6(12)	10(20)
Student leaders encounter problems when dealing with students who use drugs	45(90)	1(2)	4(8)
Drug abuse is caused by peer pressure	48(96)	0(0)	2(4)
Drug abuse is caused by inadequate parental guidance	45(90)	0(0)	5(10)
Drug abuse is caused by stress and poor performance	40(80)	4(8)	6(12)
Drug abuse by students is caused by exposure of drugs	45(90)	0(0)	5(10)

Source: Field Data (2011)

From Table 3 above, majority of the teachers, 34(68%), believed that students used drugs while 10(20%) were in disagreement. Ninety percent, 10(90%), of the teachers believed that student leaders encountered problems dealing with students who used drugs as compared to 34(68%) of students. On the causes of drug abuse, 48(96%), 45(90%), 40(80%) and 45(90%) of teachers believed that drug abuse by students was caused by peer pressure, inadequate parental guidance, stress and poor performance and exposure of drugs to students, respectively. Table 4 shows the Chi-square analysis on teachers' responses concerning students' drug abuse.

Table 4: Chi-Square Analysis on Teachers Responses on Students' Drug Abuse

	Some students use drugs	Student leaders encounter problems when dealing with students who use drugs	Drug abuse is caused by inadequate parental guidance	Drug abuse is caused by peer pressure	Drug abuse is caused by exposure of students to drugs	Drug abuse is caused by stress and poor performance
Chi-Square	9.680 ^a	50.000 ^a	19.360 ^b	14.680 ^b	32.080 ^a	22.160 ^a
Df	3	3	2	2	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.021	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000

Source: Field Data (2011)

From the findings in Table 4 above, there was a significant difference on most of the statement on drug abuse challenges ($p > 0.001$), except the statement that some students use drugs ($P = .021$). The teachers in Kosirai Division believed that some students used drugs, that student leaders encountered problems dealing with students who used drugs, that drug abuse was caused by inadequate parental guidance, by peer pressure, by exposure of students to drugs and by stress and poor performance.

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant correlation between students' use of drugs and student leaders encountering problems with students who use drugs. This was in

agreement with the findings of a study conducted by Chesile (1996) that in most school compounds, there is a ready and wide variety of drugs. For instance, in Lugari District, school records confirmed from that in the last five years, over 20 students had either been suspended or expelled from Lumakanda Secondary School for having taken drugs in the same year (Chesile, 1996). According to a study by Siringi and Waihenya (2001), 22% of secondary school students use drugs and from the studies conducted most students believed that high school students from Kosirai Division in general use drugs.

Another study by Kindiki (2009) has shown that the prevalent cases of indiscipline include drug abuse, fighting amongst the students, insubordination, sneaking from school, destruction of school property and stealing of other students' property. Some students are given too much pocket money by their parents. They, therefore, end up using this money to engage in anti-social behaviour such as drugs and alcohol abuse. This could be the case with Nandi North District schools as it became apparent that from the studies there are cases of indiscipline amongst the students in secondary schools especially those who use drugs.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Students in Kosirai Division secondary schools use drugs despite its illegality. Drug use and abuse by students leads to indiscipline cases in schools. These types of indiscipline pose a serious challenge to the efforts of student leaders in enforcing discipline among students in school. Most studies on drug abuse have fallen short of identifying the root cause of the problem. Therefore, future studies should examine the root causes of drug abuse by secondary school students. Additionally, the prevalence of drug abuse among the youth is high. This means there need for concerted efforts by the Ministry of Education officials, school management and parents in general to combat the use of drugs in schools and outside school.

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