

## An Investigation of the Levels of Drug Use among Secondary School Students in Kitui District, Kenya

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### ABSTRACT

*Gone are days when it was thought that drug abuse was a Western World phenomenon. The abuse of drugs among students is not only an African issue but also a Kenyan problem. Frequent media reports in this country on drug abuse show that the vice is becoming worrying. This research was carried out in the old Kitui district which is now part of the Kitui County. The objectives of the research were to investigate the sources of drugs of abuse among secondary school students in Kitui district and to establish the factors influencing drug use in the same district. The design of the study was descriptive survey which enabled the researchers to gather information, summarize, present, and interpret for the reasons of clarification. Out of the twenty-nine (29) boys' and girls' boarding schools, six (06) were purposively sampled representing 20.7 %. Some twenty-five (25) form four students were randomly sampled from each school. The questionnaires were scrutinized for validity by the university supervisors, suggestions given and corrections made. For reliability purposes, the questionnaires were pilot-tested in a boys' boarding school as well as a girls' boarding school. Data was analyzed using frequency distributions, tables and percentages. It was established that sources of drugs included fellow students as well as structures near the schools such as shops, bars, kiosks, and villages. It was also established that students abused drugs due to stress, peer pressure, stimulation and to read for many hours to pass exams. To curb drug abuse vice, it was suggested that those buildings near schools should be demolished, guidance and counselling be done in schools, and tough measures on drug trafficking and peddling be taken among other measures.*

**Keywords:** Kitui district, Secondary Schools, Drug Abuse, Drug Use, Sources Of Drugs

### INTRODUCTION

There is a big challenge in determining the total figure of students who abuse drugs both in urban and country-side schools. On the other hand, it is agreed that a lot of youths in our schools know different brands of psychoactive substances which are readily available in Kenya (Karechio, 1996). On Friday the 29<sup>th</sup> of August, 2014, President Uhuru Kenyatta witnessed destruction of Kshs 1 billion heroin at the Kenyan sea. He warned drug traffickers that they would not be allowed to continue the illegal trade at the expense of the Kenyan youth (Chai, 2014). It is not known as to how many such ships have escaped into this country loaded with similar cargo.

Various studies have been carried out recently under the general theme of the abuse of drugs in schools: (Maithya, 2009; Otieno, 2009; Mbalu, 2012; Korir, 2013; Chesang, 2013; Maundu, 2013; Oteyo, 2013; Chebukaka, 2014; Ngirachu, 2014; et cetera). These studies also included non-schooling youth and according to the above studies and others, drug abuse indicators continue to show an upward trend in both urban and rural areas, especially in the use of substances such as alcohol, *cannabis sativa* (bhang), *khat* (miraa), tobacco et cetera,

which are readily found in most places in Kenya. This escalating trend was confirmed by this research.

People have used drugs from time immemorial in form of substances such as leaves, roots and herbs. This was for instance to alleviate pain or manage certain sicknesses. There is no evil in using drugs so long as they are used properly. In fact they are medical blessings for the people using them. However, a number of drugs may give excitement or make people feel high such that they may cause drug dependency or drug abuse (Karechio, 1996). In fact it is said that alcohol is the oldest drug known to human beings, for instance, the Egyptian wall writings, which were among the oldest forms of written communication, showed pictures of people drinking wine. It was not until the Egyptian writing symbols were decoded that the meaning of some of the wall paintings was revealed. Those writings surprisingly warned of dangers of alcohol abuse in that language (Hall, 1994).

Nevertheless King Solomon, the wisest king ever ruled, saw the deceit of alcohol in his wisdom when he wrote:

*Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper.* Proverbs 23: 31- 32 (Maxwell, 1982).

This means that drugs such as alcohol have never been a blessing since time immemorial and hence a continued problem to the society.

## **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

In the month of August, 2014, a ship was reported to dock in Mombasa carrying an abnormal cargo of drugs of abuse. The President (Uhuru Kenyatta) witnessed the destruction of the ship and its condemned cargo in the sea (Chai, 2014). This could have been a tip of the iceberg. It is possible that many ships with similar cargo have escaped into Kenya through the sea. It was not clear as to how far drug problem had prevalence in the research district being a rural area. There was need to confirm other researches done on the topic of drug abuse. Not only to verify their findings but also to add literature into the body of knowledge in this field. Until this study was done, it was not possible to know whether drug use among students was escalating or diminishing. Therefore this study was conducted to address such riddles.

## **PURPOSE OF STUDY**

The study district has not witnessed researchers in drug abuse recently except for Mbalu (2012), no other known recent study that has ever been done in Kitui district. So the purpose of this research was to investigate the sources from which drugs came and the factors influencing drug abuse among secondary school youths in the district. The study confirmed facts from other researchers on the phenomenon of drug abuse as it is seen in the literature review. This research added great wealth into the information bank of the field of drug use in schools. The suggestions given to alleviate drug menace in schools are vital to all stakeholders of education in this country.

## **OBJECTIVES**

This study had two objectives which were to:

1. Investigate the sources of drugs of abuse among secondary school students in Kitui district
2. Establish the factors influencing drug use in secondary schools in Kitui district.

The research targeted at achieving these objectives in the entire process, and it did.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research questions which were directly derived from the research objectives were:

1. What are the sources of drugs of abuse among the secondary school students in Kitui district?
2. What are the factors influencing drug use in secondary schools in Kitui district?

These were the two questions which were answered by the research in the results analysis section.

## **STUDY RATIONALE**

In the study, matters highlighted in the statement of the problem, the study objectives as well as the research questions were looked into and analyzed. Specifically, the research aimed at establishing the sources of drugs which are abused by secondary school students and the factors that influenced the behaviour. The findings will add useful information to researchers and help the education sector in this country to improve on the discipline and performance in the national exams. There are no known researches conducted in this district except for Mbalu (2012) who is cited in the study literature. So the researchers were justified to carry out this study.

Using sub topics, the researchers were able to give suggestions to alleviate the drug menace in schools in the district. Armed with the findings of this study all stake holders of education in this country will manage a better system of schools.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Drug Abuse**

Drug abuse is the habitual use of a drug for a reason other than for which it is intended. It involves bad use of a drug for example alcohol, tobacco, *cannabis* and others (Maithya, 2009). A study conducted in Nairobi, Kiambu, Kitui, Vihiga, Coast and Kisumu, among other areas in Kenya revealed that there was high frequency of abuse of alcohol and tobacco. The sample came from secondary school youths and school leavers. The conclusion reached was that youths abused drugs alarmingly. The suggested solution was to give education on drugs and their effects (Oteyo, 2013). This study established that drug availability, to certain extent, resulted into drug abuse. It was found that some factors such as stress and peer pressure influenced drug taking among learners.

### **Sources of Drugs**

NACADA and KESSHA appointed a group to do research on the issue of where drugs abused by students came from. It was established that the drugs came mainly from the fellow students, parents, slums and black market among others (Maundu, 2013). According to Chesang (2013) drugs abused were accessible almost in every house. The drugs were obtained all over the place always, for instance in the social gatherings, bars and kiosks as well as over the counter. Students were simply supplied with drugs by fellow students and these could be bought in the schools.

In the Coast, tourism industry was catapulting drug availability together with teenage sex. Tourists passed drugs to the youths which slowly found their way into schools (Korir, 2013). Mbalu (2012) indicated that drug availability and trafficking was in parks, streets, schools, homes and social gatherings such as parties. And Maithya (2009) concurred that drugs were

easily available in schools. According to Otieno (2009) many learners who used drugs were coming from homes with family members also abusing drugs. These members consisted of people like the parents and siblings as well as the extended family living with them. Chebukaka (2014) found out that availability of drugs was among the causes of drug abuse at 38.0 %.

### **Factors Influencing Drug Abuse**

According to Abudu (2008) some adolescents will experiment drugs then stop the habit immediately. Others will keep on using drugs without stopping. There are others who will get addicted. The latter will graduate into taking hard drugs and consequently harm themselves. Eventually, the whole society will be gradually damaged since the addicted youths are part of the community. Youths abused drugs to have good time with friends, experiment, to feel good, relax and due to boredom.

Ngesu et al (2008) found out that there was availability of alcohol which was easily sneaked into schools mixed with juice. The main reason to take drugs was peer pressure. Most of the subjects indicated that too much peer pressure made them abuse drugs. Drug taking helped them to be either accepted by peers or appear more influential than others.

Maithya (2009) did a research in Machakos district. She found out that the commonest reason for taking drugs was curiosity which scored (19.4 %), to be accepted by peers (17.1 %), ignorance of the consequences of drug use (16.0 %), accessibility to drugs (11.7 %), low cost of drugs (9.8 %), unnecessary pocket cash (9.3 %), to boost brain power (8.7 %) and following the examples of teachers and parents (8.0 %).

According to Otieno (2009) the drug abusers enjoyed the good feelings elicited by the substances. Some were experimenting; others were influenced by friends and relatives while medicinal use and stress were reasons for taking drugs. There is availability and trafficking of drugs in schools and this has increased drug taking among the secondary school students, a thing which should be discouraged (Mbalu, 2012).

Maundu (2013) concurred with Were (2003) that drugs assisted the young people to stay away from hassles and troubles of life as one way of defense mechanism. She found out that students took drugs to remain 'high' for longer periods as well as to satisfy their curiosity. There are sensations and profound feelings which make them feel more comfortable and get inner peace. She established that amphetamines and *khat* (miraa) would help students to stay awake and study for exams.

According to Chesang (2013) some youths in this country use drugs due to "pleasure principle"; they do not undergo any stress. They come from well up families so money is not a problem to them. The research also established that youths take drugs due to inadequate personality and to forget their problems.

Availability of drugs which is catapulted by tourist has been cited as a reason to abuse drugs. Research conducted in the past shows that a category of tourists who visit Kenya solely come to look for virgins and drugs. Both sex and drugs become part and parcel of "feel good" tourism (Korir, 2013). Chebukaka (2014) listed down reasons for drug abuse. Peer pressure scored 87.0 %, followed by experimentation 69.0 % and depression 52.0 %. Other reasons were for instance, to gain courage (46.0 %), family history (45.0 %), and availability of drugs (38.0 %) there were other miscellaneous reasons which scored 29.0 % in that research.

The fact that a ship docked in Mombasa carrying a cargo of drugs worth more than Kshs 1 billion is an indication of availability of drugs in this country. The President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, expressed annoyance by witnessing the disposal of the ship in the Indian Ocean

(Chai, 2014). This research confirmed findings of other researchers cited above. However, it was established that stress was the commonest reason for abusing drugs unlike findings from the above researchers. This was not the case with other researches mentioned in this study although stress was among the reasons for abusing drugs, it was not the commonest.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

Once the researchers reached a school, there was random sampling of one form four class since all schools had several streams. From the sampled class, there was further random sampling of twenty-five students who were used in the study. These were separated and given questionnaires to fill after explanations. This research focused on getting insights as to where drugs come from as well as establishing the factors influencing the vice among students. The study adopted descriptive survey to gather information.

This approach (descriptive survey) shows and gives reports on the manner issues are, and tries to explain such issues for instance, behaviour and attitudes among others (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). The design was selected because it is flexible in the field during research. The questionnaires were issued and collected at the same time by the investigators.

It is said that survey is possibly the best method a social scientist and others who are concerned with original data aiming at describing a too large population (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). The researchers were left alone with respondents without influence from the school teachers. This created confidence among the subjects. The method was suitable because the aim of the study was to ascertain sources from which drugs came and the factors that influence drug taking.

**Study Location**

This research was conducted in the old Kitui district, now part of Kitui County in Eastern part of the Republic of Kenya. In describing the research site we may include a detailed geographical location for instance the district under which it falls, neighbouring districts and the province in which the study area is located (Mutai, 2001).

**The Sample**

The study was conducted in Kitui district which has twenty-nine boys’ and girls’ boarding schools. The total number of schools is sixty-eight (68) but only boarding schools were sampled for this research. The table below shows the percentage of schools sampled by gender. Only form four students were involved in questionnaire filling because of their experience in school life. Only one form four class was randomly sampled in each school. Each school gave twenty-five students through random sampling to whom questionnaires were administered by the researchers. Table 1 below shows the percentage of schools sampled by gender.

**Table 1. Percentage of schools sampled by gender.**

	<i>Number of Boarding Schools</i>	<i>Schools Sampled</i>	<i>Percentage of the Sampled Schools</i>
Boys	11	04	36.4%
Girls	18	02	11.1%
Total	29	06	20.7%

As it is shown above, out of twenty-nine boys’ and girls’ boarding schools only six (6) were purposively sampled representing 20.7 %.

### **The Data Collection Instruments**

The data collection instruments for this research were self-administered questionnaires with both closed and open ended questions. There were questionnaires for form four students, school counselors, deputy Headteachers and Headteachers. The questionnaires had instructions to be read before filling. The first section was to solicit the subjects' background information such as age, gender, type of school, religion, et cetera. Questionnaires for all teachers were used to ascertain information given by their students and therefore used as complimentary documents.

### **The Data Collection Procedure**

Logistical issues were considered before going to the field to collect data. Such issues were for instance, obtaining research permit from the authorities, pre-testing research instruments, obtaining a letter of approval from the university, obtaining a letter of introduction to schools from the district education personnel, et cetera. The schools which were sampled were visited in advance for familiarization.

The researchers started data collection by visiting the schools. One reason was to give questionnaires to teachers to fill at their own pace after introducing themselves through the principal's office. The second reason was to arrange a meeting with the schools for at least a double period with a form four class or after school hours, for the filling of questionnaires. During the first visit, the researchers random-selected one form four class which was used and knew the number of students in that class. The school administrations gave him teachers to coordinate the activity.

The second visit was paid to collect teachers' questionnaires and admit questionnaires to the students. Before the visit the researchers had written and folded some pieces of papers written "yes" and "no" depending on the total number of students in that particular form four class register. Only twenty-five pieces of papers had "yes" and the rest "no". The researchers allowed the students to pick the papers and those with "yes" (twenty-five students only) were incorporated in the study as samples from that school. The twenty-five form four learners with "yes" papers were separated from others to another room and explained the aim of selecting them then were issued with the questionnaires. The researchers collected questionnaires there and then, which assured them a 100 % return rate.

### **The Data Analysis Procedure**

The collected data was validated, edited and then coded. The questionnaires were checked for return rate and filling of all questions – both open and closed ended. Frequency distributions were used to determine the number of times information occurred. This was later put into percentages and APA table formats drawn. The data analysis was based on the research objectives and questions which were answered and discussed accordingly.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Sources of Drugs**

In regard to this objective, the students were asked to mention the places where drugs abused in their schools came from. They were also asked as to who supplied the drugs and if the people neighboring their schools were involved in supplying drugs, and if they did, how did they do it. Another question was whether students brought drugs from home and where did they obtain them from. After putting frequency distributions into percentages, table 2 below was drawn.

**Table 2. Places where Drugs Abuse were available**

<i>Sources of drugs</i>	<i>Frequency percentages</i>	
	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
Local homes and villages around the schools	38.8 %	8.0 %
Shops and bars around the schools	25.3 %	30.0 %
Kitui town	18.2 %	10.0 %
Students' homes	11.8 %	10.0 %
Peddlers and other sellers	4.7 %	6.0 %
Across the school fence	1.2 %	0 %
Students who did not know	0 %	36.0 %

Boys identified local homes and villages around their schools as the commonest places where drugs were easily available. This is in line with the Task Force, "Varied types of drugs and narcotic substances are readily available in some localities where schools are situated" (MoEST, 2001:63). Students would sneak into these villages in the night or during the weekends and obtain these drugs easily and cheaply. Sneaking is one of the commonest discipline problems associated with drugs.

Girls scored 8.0 % compared with the boys 38.8 %. One possible reason was that since the problem of drug abuse was not prevalent among them, they did not imagine that people would travel all the way into the villages to look for drugs. Instead, they would buy them from the local shops and bars and this is why they had scored 30.0 % in these areas as indicated on the table 2 above. Security in girls' schools is always strong such that they would not have chance to sneak while in boys' schools there is laxity to a certain degree. The control in girls' schools has made them imagine that other students (boys) had the same control and therefore could not move out of their schools.

The cultural background in the study area does not encourage females to loiter aimlessly and particularly in the night. Such women would be considered to be looking for men and hence prone to rape. No parent would entertain this behaviour among their daughters. Shops and bars around the schools are significant places from where drugs are obtained. Possibly villagers and other people supply these places with such drugs. Students can easily sneak into these shops and bars which are normally conspicuously built around the schools. It is easier for even the girls to sneak into these shops than to go to the villages, and this is why they scored 30.0 % in this question.

Kitui town scored 18.2 % and 10.0 % from the boys and girls respectively. The schools studied were in a radius of less than twenty (20) kilometers from Kitui town. Boys came to town whenever they had an outing or for co-curricular activities. The district co-curricular activities always took place in schools around the town, particularly in the Kitui High School. At the Kitui bus stage, there are all sorts of kiosks selling *khat* (miraa), cigarettes, and other drugs. Obviously, drug abusers know where to obtain which drug from the town. Students had been seen smoking openly in the streets of Kitui town in full school uniform whenever there were functions like drama, music festivals, athletics and so forth.

Table 2 continues to show that some students brought drugs from their homes. This may mean that they bought those drugs on their way back to school from town or shops around their schools. Also the table indicates that there were peddlers and others who sold drugs to students but this is addressed in table 3 regarding who did the supplying. Since the question was open ended, students might have confused the word “places” with the word “people”. This table revealed that drugs were obtained across the fence to a smaller degree. This was so because after obtaining drugs from all other sources shown on this table, it would have looked foolish for the students to get drugs across the fence. This means that the other sources supplied them with whatever drugs they wanted.

Needlessly to say, across the fence is near bars, shops and villages, so the three places can be put together for the purpose of simplicity and clarity. Villages and shops/bars around schools had already been identified as position one and two respectively. Nevertheless, girls did not see this area as a source of drugs because of the nature of their low participation in drug abuse. All the boys identified sources but 36.0 % of the girls did not know where to obtain the drugs. This was so because the drug abuse issue is not as bad in girls as it is among the boys. Still in the issue of sources of drugs, students were asked to identify who supplied the drugs to them and the results were tabulated in table 3 below.

**People who Supply Drugs to the Students**

Looking at table 3 below, the boys identified villagers as the chief suppliers of drugs. This is in line with table 2 whereby villages and local homes were identified as the major places where drugs were obtained from.

**Table 3. People who Supply Drugs to the Students**

<i>Who supplies drugs to students?</i>	<i>Frequency Percentage</i>	
	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
Villagers	42.1 %	23.3 %
Students	34.2 %	36.7 %
Visitors	18.4 %	26.7 %
Workers	5.3 %	6.7 %
Teachers	0 %	3.3 %
Parents	0 %	3.3 %

Why did the girls notice that villagers were significant in supplying the drugs? A possible answer is that they thought of villagers travelling to schools to supply drugs rather than students going to the villages after having sneaked from school. However, according to them, students (36.7 %) and visitors (26.7 %) were the major suppliers of drugs to students. This is so because it is easier for the students to pass or share drugs with fellow students. Both boys (34.2 %) and girls (36.7 %) acknowledged that students were rich source of drug supply.

This was so because the commonest drugs abused in the study area namely: alcohol, tobacco and miraa, all are social drugs and can be shared in the spirit of socialization and looking for the interest of the peer group. It has been observed that a drug abuser for example, would smoke a cigarette half-way and pass it to the other smoker. This is why the students were featured as significant people in drug supply. Drug abusers tend to be generous when it comes to sharing of drugs, possibly in the spirit of African socialism.



Still on this table, visitors who visit the youths in schools were identified as significant in supply of drugs. These may have been visitors who posed as parents and relatives of the students. Such visitors are frequent over the weekends and odd hours even without permission from the school authorities.

The school workers were also mentioned in this table. The Commission of Inquiry into Devil Worship in Kenya established that the communities around learning institutions and the employees therein (workers) contributed to drug abuse. The Commission was told of a case of a school in Eastern Province where students went on rampage after taking tea which was drugged by the cooks (Pawak, 2000). In this research, it was established that people who work in learning institutions could be a source of supply of drugs of abuse to the learners to a certain degree of significance. In this table, boys did not believe that teachers and parents could be sources of drugs. In fact, they punished them for the vice. All they could think of was other drugs other than the medical prescriptions. They did not remember that the teachers and parents could give them medicine when they fell sick and these were termed as drugs.

On the contrary, girls indicated that teachers and parents could give those drugs. The more logical explanation was that these were medicinal drugs given to them by teachers, matrons and parents when they fell sick. The fact that girls did not know places where to get drugs (36.0 % in table 2) indicated that the only drugs they could think of were medicinal and teachers or parents could dispense them.

### **Factors Influencing Drug Abuse**

Several questions were posed to capture these factors. Students were asked to give reasons why they or others took drugs et cetera. After compiling the responses in Table 4 below, the results were as follows:

**Table 4. Percentage of Responses to Reasons for Drug Abuse**

<i>Reasons for drug abuse</i>	<i>Percentage responses</i>	
	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
Stress	25.4 %	27.7 %
Sleep/pleasure	23.0 %	27.6 %
Peer pressure	19.7 %	20.7 %
Stimulation/feel high	19.2 %	12.0 %
To read for many hours	12.7 %	12.0 %

Both boys (25.4 %) and girls (27.7 %) expressed that stress was the major reason why students abused drugs in schools. This reason has scored in other researches in the literature review although it was not the commonest one. Many a time students find themselves in a situation of stress. One reason for this is the amount of school academic work. The KCSE syllabus is heavily loaded whereby candidates take a minimum of seven (7) subjects. Another reason is demands from teachers such as the need to obey school rules. For instance a student is supposed to wake up as early as 4:30 am and sleep at as late as 11:00 pm. Students have to groom themselves as well as wash their clothes among other duties. Parents are not left behind. They want their children to score high grades in school. There is generally a tight school schedule that makes learners get stressed.

Another reason captured in the table above was sleep and pleasure whereby boys scored 23.0 % and the girls 27.6 %. Drugs like valium are sedatives. They make people sleep soundly and forget their problems. “These are drugs which reduce excitement or functional activities or make one drowsy without actually inducing sleep” (Karechio, 1996:22). This table shows that students took drugs to make them read for many hours. Drugs like *khat* (miraa) can mask fatigue and one get exhausted without knowing. As for the girls, drugs taken were observed to be tea leaves and coffee which made them stay awake and read for many hours especially during the examination period.

Peer pressure scored 19.7 % from the boys and 20.74 % from the girls. Indeed, several cited researches have indicated that this is the commonest reason for abusing drugs. The words ‘stress’ (which was found the commonest reason to use drugs in this study) and ‘peer-pressure’ (which scored highly in other researchers cited here) can be synchronized so that they can be used synonymously. This means that young people in schools are subjected to heavy workload and other external pressures such as the adolescence pressures, after which they turn to drugs for consolation; the drug life made others follow them as peers. So this means they got stressed first before they looked for solutions from their peers who abused drugs, as it is put, “Stress may simply mean being subjected to external forces or pressures, and can be either positive or negative depending upon the effect of the external force” (Melgosa, 2001:19). To combine stress with peer pressure, students should be shown how to handle stress and the need to choose good friends or peers. If there is no stress, there is no drug taking and consequently there will be no peer pressure to follow what others are doing (abusing drugs).

To ascertain results in table 4, the researchers extracted information from the boys who used drugs regularly (addicted). The results were tabulated in table 5 below.

**Table 5. Reasons for Using Drugs from the Addicted Boys**

<i>Reasons for Drug Abuses</i>	<i>Boys Addicted to Drugs</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Stress	14	37.8 %
Sleep/pleasure	11	29.7 %
Peer pressure	05	13.5 %
Stimulation/feel high	04	10.8 %
To read for many hours	03	08.1 %

Looking at table 5 above 37.8 % of the boys who were found to be addicted to drugs abused them due to stress. Another 29.7 % abused drugs due to sleep or pleasure, 13.5 % due to peer pressure, 10.8 % due to stimulation or feel high and lastly 8.1 % abused drugs for the purpose of reading for many hours. It was established that the same pattern was followed in table 4 and therefore established that the order of preference was significantly correct.

All the reasons established in this study were also found in other researches mentioned in the literature review. The significance in this study was that it attempted to put the reasons for drug abuse in to order of preference. The information was cross checked and ascertained in table 5 whereby no other known researches that ascertained their findings to raise the level of their significance (of the findings). This study has established that stress is the most significant reason or factor that causes young people in secondary schools to abuse drugs.

Once they are stressed, they find a way of reducing the pressure in the mind. This makes them turn to drugs especially if their peers are doing the same.

This research synchronized the words 'stress' and 'peer-pressure' in such way that they can be used synonymously. This means that when students are stressed, they take refuge into drugs following what their peers are doing.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the research findings, the researchers arrived at some conclusions reflecting on the study objectives and research questions. The drug of abuse availability in the study district is not a problem. This could have catapulted the abuse of the same among the students in the study district. The main places where drugs can be easily accessed by students include, unfortunately, the school environment, for instance the fellow students and school workers are sources of drugs. Villages, shops, kiosks, and bars which border schools are dangerous places where drugs are easily accessed by the students. Factors influencing drug use were established. Stress was the major cause of this vice, unlike other researches whereby it took less significance.

The factors that have been established in this research are manageable only if all concerned parties play their part. Such people are mostly the teachers who are trained to handle adolescents in secondary schools. The teacher spends more time with the learner than the parent or care giver. The school administrators should activate guidance and counselling departments in their schools as well as engaging the religious sponsors with the spiritual angle of the school. Together it is possible to win this battle, and where there is will, there is way.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To control the sources of drugs, suggestions have been put into the following sub headings according to the research findings.

**School Surroundings:** It has been established that one source of drugs used by students is the neighbouring environment. It is recommended that regular inspections in local homes, villages, shops and bars be done by County authorities. Indeed, efforts should be made to make sure that there are no shops, bars, kiosks and questionable structures around school vicinities.

**Trafficking and Peddling:** The law enforcement agencies should make sure that drugs are not available in schools by controlling the transportation and selling of the same in towns where schools are located. The literature in this study has shown that large cargo of drugs can penetrate the country through Mombasa port in the Indian Ocean. The Government should punish drug smugglers heavily.

**Parents, Teachers and School Workers:** There should be good role modeling from parents, teachers and school workers. This has a great psychological impact on the growing youths. Young people tend to follow what adults are doing. Schools should employ faithful workers and keep monitoring them closely. Parents who take drugs like alcohol or tobacco should not do so openly. Some parents and teachers send learners to shops to buy drugs for them; this should be discouraged.

**Guidance and Counseling:** This department in schools could be a solution to drug use. There should be a counselling committee in schools to monitor drug abuse among other issues. This committee can work along with the discipline committee to complement each other. Speakers can be invited to give talks on drug use.

**Stress:** Unlike other researches, this was the commonest reason for students to use drugs. The school administration should ensure that the school routine is flexible, friendly and balanced. There should be adequate time to relax, have fun and engage on some entertainment. Some schools are known to wake up their students at 4:00 am to read but they end up dozing in class instead of reading, and even extending their sleep in the class room. The routine should allow adequate time for sleeping and discourage students from extending the preps the whole night (trans-night). Parents should not put too high and unrealistic expectations and demands in terms of academic performance of their children. Some students have been reported contemplating suicide when they could not meet their parents' demands. Some activities like the Christian Union, YCS and other school clubs can reduce stress to minimal.

**Sleep/Pleasure:** If students are stressed, they will have insomnia (sleeplessness) as a symptom of stress. So this should be investigated along with the reasons for getting stressed. As for pleasure, there are many ways of getting it apart from drugs. For instance, good entertainment like music and drama produced locally by the students in the schools can give a lot of pleasure as well as creativity and hence learning. This will be a good way of combining academic work with pleasure which is psychologically recommended.

**Peer Pressure:** Guidance and counselling departments in schools should encourage peer counselling to confront peer pressure. They can help students choose friends right from form one. They should preach against the doctrine of 'I should do what others do to be accepted by them'. This is a psychological issue which teachers are aware of from their educational psychology training. In fact all teachers including class teachers should help build healthy friendship among the students. This will make students behave logically but not emotionally.

**Stimulation or Feel High:** Again, it could be the duty of the teachers and the guidance and counselling department to advise the students that there is no need of taking drugs to make them feel high. This feeling is only for a short time and may lead into addiction and drug dependency. The students can be directed to other ways and means of feeling good for instance in games, drama, music and comedies. They should have happiness but not camouflage it with feeling high.

**Read for many Hours:** Still the guidance and counselling department and the teachers can advise the learners to plan their time well such that they do not read only when examinations are near or on. There are some students who waste time in school only to read during the exam time. Preps are always there and must be utilized properly. Students who read for many hours may end up getting stressed and therefore take drugs for consolation. Such students destroy their sleep pattern.

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