

## Relationship between Implementation of Safety Standards and Guidelines for Drug and Substance Abuse, and Student Safety in Public Mixed Boarding Secondary Schools in Kenya

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### ABSTRACT:

The objective of this paper was to find out the relationship between implementation of Safety Standards and Guidelines for Drug and Substance Abuse and student safety in public mixed boarding secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya. The target population was made up of 16 principals, 18 deputy principals and 2130 Form 4 students drawn from all 16 public mixed boarding secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The sample size for students comprised of 327 Form 4 students. A census approach was used whereby, all the 16 principals and 18 deputy principals were used for the study. The population of the study was clustered into 9 sub counties. Stratified sampling technique was used to categorize the population into three strata namely principals, deputy principals and Form 4 students. The principals and deputy principals were selected using purposive sampling technique, while the students were selected using simple random sampling technique. Data from students was collected using questionnaires and observation checklist, while that from principals and deputy principals was collected using interview schedules. Prior to use, the instruments were subjected to validity checks with the help of university supervisors and reliability tests guided by the 0.7 Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient level. Data analysis was done using tools in the SPSS version 22. Analysis involved computation of descriptive statistics: frequencies and percentages, and inferential statistics: Pearson Correlation and Regression coefficients. The data was then presented in tables and textually.

**Key Terms:** Implementation, safety standards and guidelines for drug and substance abuse, student safety, public mixed/boarding Secondary Schools.

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## Introduction

According to (EMCDDA) European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (2014), the main drugs abused in the world today range from the socially accepted ones like alcohol, tobacco, Miraa and caffeine to the outlawed ones such as heroin, cocaine and cannabis sativa (bhang). The long intake of these drugs leads to drug addiction. Drug addiction is a disease that impairs the structure and function of the brain. Harroff-Tavel and Nasri (2013), attributed drug abuse among youth to the feelings elicited by the drugs, influence from friends and kins, experimentations, medicinal use and stressful lives. Drugs are introduced at very early ages of between 10-14 years (Kyalo, 2010). Research shows that psychotropic drugs are introduced to 37 per cent of people aged between 10 and 14 years and nearly 75 per cent of those aged below 19 years across the world, thus spreading the unpronounced negative effects to development since these ages consist of young people who could otherwise change the look of nations (Barasa, 2013). Drugs and Substance is a key aspect of student safety that has caught the attention of many governments.

The safety of schools is a fundamental and essential component of the learning process (Grover, 2015). Consequently, governments both developed and developing have put in place safety standards and guidelines for schools to help address safety in schools. Countries have enacted laws to ensure that learners are safe in schools. Examples include The Education Act (1996), the School Premises (England) Regulations 2012 (SPRs) Act in the United Kingdom, and in South Africa the Child Care Act, 1983 (Act 74 of 1983); the Domestic Violence Act, 1998 (Act 116 of 1998); the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), and the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act 85 of 1993) help in promoting student safety. These Acts are all to a larger extent, concerned with protecting the physical and psychological integrity of

learners. One common concern addressed in these laws is the concern of drug and substance abuse.

Drug and substance abuse among students have been associated with crime and indiscipline cases in schools across the world. For instance, according to Musu-Gillette et al. (2018), there were cases of violent deaths among students in the United States. School officials in Canada, Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, Argentina, Israel, the United Kingdom, Vietnam, South Africa, Trinidad – Tobago and Kenya all have safety concerns which include gang violence, terrorism and murder cases within learning institutions (Dorn, 2016). This is a concern in most countries in Africa. For instance, according to Nthate (2017), drugs, substance abuse, resultant crime, and violence have become a common feature of many South African schools. Incidents are often captured on social media when videos go viral. Individual incidents grab headlines, spark outrage and condemnation but what are the underlying causes of violence at school and what should be done to make schools the safe havens they should be? This therefore indicates that the problem of student safety could still be a challenge in South African schools despite various Acts put in place to address safety matters.

In Kenya, Safety Standards Manual for schools was developed in the year 2008 following experienced unprecedented insecurity, leading to internal displacement of over 300,000 people, and many of them school children (Safety Standards Manual, 2008). Among the concerns addressed by the Safety Standards and Guidelines in Kenya is safety in physical infrastructure. Despite the Safety Standards and Guidelines in Kenya, the problem of student safety is still an issue of concern (Nakuru County Education Office, 2019; Kemunto, et al., 2012). Nakuru is one area that appears to have received little attention in research yet the figures at the County Education office indicate rising cases of lack of safety in public mixed boarding secondary

schools as shown in the Table 1. The figure shows an increasing trend in the number of incidences reported in public mixed boarding secondary schools in Nakuru County and this is a worrisome trend.

**Table 1: Number of Cases of lack of safety in public mixed boarding secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya.**

Year	Number of incidences	Incidences
2014	11	Fires in schools, rape cases, accidents, food poisoning, drugs and substance abuse, congestion, coupling, fights, injuries in the field, lack of school title deeds, unsafe beds, un even play grounds, inadequate storage facilities pregnancies, strangers in school compound, attacks by outsiders, electric shocks, poor sanitation, poorly cooked meals, theft, unsafe disposal of sanitary wear, poorly cooked meals, contaminated food and lack of privacy in girls' sanitation.
2015	15	
2016	22	
2017	28	
2018	39	

Source: Inspection Reports, Nakuru County Education Office (2019).

The concern in this paper relates to the relationship between implementation of Safety Standards and Guidelines for drug and substance abuse and food safety on student safety in public mixed boarding secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya. The paper is driven by the complexity associated in managing student safety in mixed boarding schools among the students passing through the adolescent stage in life. According to Table 1, the incidences of lack of safety have been reported increasingly from 2014 to 2018. Muasya (2017) observes that one great concern in schools is drug and substance abuse. Despite a decade of school Safety and Standards Manual, the UWEZO (2015) report shows that Kenyan schools, Nakuru included are far from achieving safety standards (Kang'ethe, & Cierra, 2017). This therefore indicates that the safety of the learners in schools in Nakuru County may not be guaranteed. Yet, lack of safety in school can lead to psychological stress.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

Globally, student safety is one of the goals behind efforts to bring about school safety. Student safety is prerequisite in the acquisition of quality education and learners' attainment of educational goals. Drugs and substance abuse is one the factors that have been mentioned in past studies which affect or determine student safety. In some of the developed nations such as USA and Britain as well as developing nations such as Kenya there have been cases that affect student safety in high schools and secondary schools (Caroll, 2018). In Kenya, Muasya (2017) points out that repeatedly the Kenyan public is alarmed by atrocious acts of senseless violence in public secondary schools. While there have been low incidences of student injuries in schools, it can be argued that it has become the subject of heightened concern, awareness and attention among government, schools students and the public in recent years. Educators cannot ignore the safety of the students' environment. School safety concerns are fast becoming an

important part of any dialogue about improving school-wide academic performance.

MOE (2008) defines a drug as any chemical that changes or modifies one or more body functions. Drug use, misuse or abuse has major implications on the health of individuals. Drug abuse is the chronic habit of using a drug for a reason other than for what it is intended. Frequent drug abuse can lead to drug dependency or addiction of individuals. School Safety Standard No.6 in the Safety Standards Manual for schools in Kenya is on safety against Drug and Substance Abuse. The safety standard stipulates that the school should endeavor to create a safe and caring environment where learners and staff know the dangers of drug abuse, and strive to make the school a drug free environment. The Safety Standards Manual proceeds to give drug instructions that focus on how the drug menace in schools can be addressed. For instance, it states that the teachers should in the subjects they teach enlighten the learners about the drugs and dangers of drug abuse. It further highlights how the instructions on drugs should be enriched through. Some of the methods and techniques given are the school and learners displaying posters promoting campaign against drug abuse.

Cheloti and Gathumbi (2016) studied the effectiveness of the school community in curbing Drug and Substance Abuse (DSA) among secondary school students in Kenya. The study employed descriptive survey design. The study sample consisted of 35 head teachers and 407 students. Questionnaires were used to collect Data from head teachers and students. It was established that students obtain drugs from the school community. Lack of cooperation from parents and guardians was frustrating DSA intervention efforts in schools. Even though the study revealed that students obtained drugs from the school community, the scholars did not study whether Safety against Drug and Substance Abuse Guidelines had been implemented and how they influenced student safety.

According to the Republic of Kenya (2008) cited by Nyakundi, et al. (2012), the causes of insecurity in schools can be categorized as either internal or external. External school factors refer to factors outside the school but which have great influence on discipline of students. These factors include drug and substance abuse, varied types of drugs and narcotic substances that are readily available in some localities where schools are situated. Such drugs and substances are bhang, marijuana, tobacco, changaa, kuber, and glue. Furthermore, rejection of head teachers by the community, insecurity within and outside the school, peer group influence, devil worship, and child labor all have led to indiscipline in schools. Other factors are the unauthorized visitors and human rights awareness where students agitate for unreasonable demands on the school administration and the role of the mass media both print and electronic. In light of Nyakundi et al. (2012) work, it is clear that drugs and substances have found their way in to secondary schools. This makes it very necessary that school leadership should ensure the implementation of the set Safety Standards and Guidelines. More so as it was in their study, it was not clear if the guidelines on drugs and substance abuse were having an influence on student safety.

Njoki (2013) studied the extent of drug and substance abuse in secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The key findings from the study were that drug abuse among students was common; both boys and girls have abused drugs with the majority being in boys' schools. The greatest ratio of drug abusers to non-abusers among the sampled schools is aged between 16 and 18 years. In addition, it was established that there is a significant relationship between drug abuse and age. In addition, use of drugs by other family members and easy access to drugs greatly led to drug abuse by the learners. However, Njoki's study did not look into the Safety Standards and Guidelines for Drug and Substance Abuse and whether these guidelines had an

effect on student safety. This study explored this and narrowed down to public mixed boarding secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya.

Ochieng and Koech (2008) carried out a study on the challenges facing student leaders in management of discipline in secondary schools in Kosirai Division, Nandi District, Kenya. The study found that in most of the schools, there were use of drugs amongst high school students and that student leaders encounter problems when dealing with students who use drugs. This also posed as a security risk to those other students not on drugs. Students’ safety was not therefore guaranteed under such conditions. This is the same year when the Safety Standards and Guidelines were introduced. Therefore, the current study was to generate useful information on the influence Safety Standards Guidelines for Drug and Substance Abuse on student safety.

**RESULTS**

**Relationship between implementation of Safety Standards and Guidelines for Drug, and Substance Abuse Enlightening learners about the Dangers of Drugs**

The results presented in Table 3 show that 68.7 per cent of the students in sub county schools, 84.7 per cent of those in county schools, and 87.7 per cent of those in extra county schools agreed that teachers in their subjects teach and enlighten learners about dangers of drugs. This implied that teachers in majority of the schools made an effort to enlighten the learners on the dangers of drugs. This was an important safety measure, for this helped students stay away from drugs and harmful substance. The results were similar to those in study by Muoti (2014), where it was established that in most schools the teachers had made efforts to educate the students on the dangers associated with drug and substance abuse.

**Table 2: Enlightening learners about the Dangers of Drugs**

		Category of the School					
		Extra County		County		Sub County	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Teachers in their subjects teach and enlighten learners about dangers of drugs	Strongly disagree	4	6.1%	2	2.6%	2	1.5%
	Disagree	4	6.1%	10	12.8%	39	29.8%
	Agree	27	40.9%	36	46.2%	23	17.6%
	Strongly agree	31	47.0%	30	38.5%	67	51.1%

**Use of External Agencies in enriching Learners with Information about Drugs**

The results in Table 3 show that 45.7 per cent of the students in sub county schools, 69.2 per cent of those in county schools, and 64.1 per cent of those in extra county schools agreed that learners in their school have been enriched on matters of drugs through use of up to date information that is made available by external agencies, while the rest of the respondents disagreed. This implied that many students agreed that learners in their schools had been enriched on matters of drugs through use of up

to date information that is made available by external agencies. However, the students who disagreed, point to the fact that not all students in the public mixed boarding secondary schools had been enriched on matters of drugs through external agencies. This is a challenge because if the learners lack knowledge on the negative effects of drugs means that they may blindly get themselves into the vice. The results in sub county schools are contrary to those in a study by Muoti (2014) who observed that the students still needed to be enlightened on effects of drug abuse by external experts as some of the teachers were also using

some of these drugs and substances. The findings from the interview schedule of the principals and deputy principals on the sources of information on drugs and substance abuse that are used to enlighten the learners showed that

articles from NACADA and some Non-Governmental Organizations were the main sources of information on drugs.

**Table 3: Use of External Agencies in enriching Learners with Information about Drugs**

		Category of the School					
		Extra County		County		Sub County	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
The learners have been enriched on matters of drugs through use of up to date information that is made available by external agencies	Strongly disagree	19	29.7%	18	23.1%	5	3.9%
	Disagree	4	6.3%	6	7.7%	65	50.4%
	Agree	29	45.3%	40	51.3%	35	27.1%
	Strongly agree	12	18.8%	14	17.9%	24	18.6%

**Use of various Methods and Techniques in enriching Learners with Information about Drugs**

It was established as shown in Table 4 that, 40.4 per cent of the students in sub county schools, 44.7 per cent of those in county schools, and 54.9 per cent of those in extra county schools agreed that instruction on drugs has been enriched through use of various methods and techniques such as brainstorming, displaying magazines or newspaper articles, posters or narrating of experiences, while 43.3 per cent disagreed. The results suggest that many students were of the opinion that instruction on drugs was not

adequately done and thus, this measure could not be expected to adequately contribute to student safety especially on drug and substance abuse. When the learners are not given an opportunity to participate in curbing the vice then they may not fully understand its effects. The results resonate with the observations by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2004) that the use various methods and techniques such as brainstorming, displaying magazines or newspaper articles, posters or narrating of experiences helps the affected persons fully understand the side effects of drug and substance abuse.

**Table 4: Use of various Methods and Techniques in enriching Learners with Information about Drugs**

		Category of the School					
		Extra County		County		Sub County	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Instruction on drugs has been enriched through use of various methods and techniques such as brainstorming, displaying magazines or newspaper articles, posters or	Strongly disagree	18	29.0%	26	34.2%	11	8.4%
	Disagree	10	16.1%	16	21.1%	67	51.1%
	Agree	22	35.5%	22	28.9%	24	18.3%
	Strongly	12	19.4%	12	15.8%	29	22.1%

narrating of experiences

agree

### Displaying of posters promoting campaign against drug abuse

The findings in Table 5 indicated that majority of the schools (71.4%) had not displayed posters promoting campaign against drug abuse. If the posters have not been displayed it means that learners fail to see the seriousness of the campaigns. Since seeing is believing, then it means

the learners would take such campaigns for granted as the presence of such posters is a continuous reminder that they should stop or never engage in drug and substance abuse. The results were contrary to those in a study by Ronoh (2014) whereby it was found that use of posters was widely used by educational institutions to pass messages about drugs and substance abuse to students.

**Table 5: Displaying of posters promoting campaign against Drug Abuse**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	4	28.6%
No	10	71.4%
Total	14	100.0%

### Learners Participation in creating a drug free school environment

The results presented in Table 6 show that 37.4 per cent of the students in sub county schools, 41 per cent of those in county schools, and 37.5 per cent of those in extra county schools agreed that at their school, learners have an opportunity to suggest ways that contribute to creating a drug free school environment, while the rest of the students disagreed. This implied that many of the students in all the three categories of schools still felt that they were

denied the opportunity to suggest ways that contribute towards creating a drug free school environment. Allowing students to give suggestions and participate in the creation of a drug free environment is a sure way of making the schools safe for students. The results are similar to those in a study by Njeri and Ngesu (2014), whereby it was found that providing learners with an opportunity to suggest ways that contribute to creating a drug free school environment was found to be very effective.

**Table 6: Learners Participation in creating a drug free school environment**

		Category of the School					
		Extra County		County		Sub County	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Learners have an opportunity to suggest ways that contribute to creating a drug free school environment	Strongly disagree	20	31.3%	22	28.2%	11	8.4%
	Disagree	20	31.3%	24	30.8%	71	54.2%
	Agree	14	21.9%	22	28.2%	17	13.0%
	Strongly agree	10	15.6%	10	12.8%	32	24.4%

**Learner Sensitization on Ways of Counteracting Peer Pressure to use Drugs**

The results in Table 7 revealed that 46.6 per cent of the students in sub county schools, 82 per cent of those in county schools, and 65.7 per cent of those in extra county schools agreed that in their respective schools, the learners have been sensitized on ways of resisting peer pressure to use drugs, while the rest of the students disagreed. This implied that in most of the sub county schools sensitization on ways of resisting peer pressure to use drugs was not done. However, this was not the case in county schools and

extra county schools where over 60 per cent of the schools appear to have taken seriously learner sensitization on ways of resisting peer pressure to use drugs. Peer pressure contribute a lot to the students’ behavior and if they have not been sensitized on how to resist peer pressure then they face the risk of being influenced negatively. The findings are in agreement with those in a study by Ronoh (2014), where it was established that sensitization to students was one of the approaches adopted to help students resist peer pressure to use drugs.

**Table 7: Learner Sensitization on Ways of Counteracting Peer Pressure to use Drugs**

		Category of the School					
		Extra County		County		Sub County	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
The learners have been sensitized on ways of resisting peer pressure to use drugs	Strongly disagree	19	29.7%	6	7.7%	6	4.6%
	Disagree	3	4.7%	8	10.3%	64	48.9%
	Agree	25	39.1%	42	53.8%	27	20.6%
	Strongly agree	17	26.6%	22	28.2%	34	26.0%

**Level of Student Participation in the Fight against Drug and Substance Abuse**

The results from the interview schedule administered to principals and deputy principals show that students participated in the fight against drug and substance abuse in the following ways. They served as peer counselors among themselves and through their elected student leadership. Some students served as religious and motivational speakers and helped other students change their harmful drug usage habits. One deputy principal stated as follows: “There are identified students who perform very well the role creating awareness to their school mates about the dangers of drugs and substance abuse”. The respondents (principals and deputy principals) also indicated that they utilized family groups that comprised of teachers, parents and 1 – 8 students per family. Some students played the role of informing the

administration on happening related to drug and substance abuse. One principal stated that there are cases where these students volunteer information and report those who are using drugs and harmful substances.

**Role of Guidance and Counseling Department Concerning the Issues of Drugs and Substance Abuse in your School**

The results from the interview schedule administered to principals and deputy principals show that Guidance and Counseling Department played a critical role of arranging sessions with identified drug and substance abusers, trying to talk them out of this behavior. One deputy head principal stated, “They are very useful, as they usually talk both to the affected students and suspected ones, and help them to stop using the harmful drugs and Substances”. The respondents indicated the Guidance and

Counseling teachers arrange for guest speakers on periodic basis, usually, experts on drug and substance abuse matters to talk to all the students and explain to them the dangers of drugs and substance abuse. One principal stated as that: “After talking to the affected students, they go a step further and refer them to professional help”.

**Teaching Learners on Issues relating to Drugs**

The results in Table 53 revealed that 41.2 per cent of the students in sub county schools, 63.2 per cent of those in county schools, and 60.7 per cent of those in extra county schools agreed that issues relating to drugs have been taught to them, and that they have been talked to on legal

implications and rehabilitation by law enforcement agencies, social services or health professionals, while the rest of the students disagreed. This implied that most school managers in county and extra county schools had made efforts to talk to students in the legal, health and social implications of drug abuse, and thus promoted this aspect of school safety. This was not however, the case in the sub county schools, where there is a challenge. The results are in agreement with Ronoh (2014) who mentioned that learners in educational institutions were taught on the legal implications of drug and substance abuse by law enforcement agencies, social services or health professionals.

**Table 8: Teaching Learners on Issues relating to Drugs**

		Category of the School					
		Extra County		County		Sub County	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Issues relating to drugs have been taught to us, legal implications and rehabilitation have been talked to us by law enforcement agencies, social services or health professionals	Strongly disagree	13	21.3%	14	18.4%	7	5.3%
	Disagree	11	18.0%	14	18.4%	70	53.4%
	Agree	23	37.7%	30	39.5%	38	29.0%
	Strongly agree	14	23.0%	18	23.7%	16	12.2%

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

**Conclusions:** The study concludes that implementation of Safety Standards and Guidelines for Drug and Substance Abuse does not have a statistically significant relationship on student safety in public mixed boarding secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya. This was because many students were of the opinion that instruction on drugs was not adequately done. With limited information, safety against drugs and harmful substance was compromised. Furthermore, the students felt that they were denied the opportunity to suggest ways that contribute to creating a drug free school environment.

**Recommendations:** The study recommends that: The school management should consider making arrangements and organizing forums in which students can be adequately instructed on drugs and substance abuse. The school should consider giving students the opportunity to suggest ways that contribute to creating a drug free school environment. The school management should consider putting stringent measures in place to ensure that regulations put in place to address the concern of drugs and substance abuse are adhered to. The school management should consider ensuring that instruction on drugs and harmful substance has been enriched through use of various methods and techniques such as

brainstorming, displaying magazines or newspaper articles, posters or narrating of experiences. The school management should consider adopting an inclusive approach of ensuring adherence to Safety Standards and

Guidelines for drugs and substance abuse. For instance, Learners should be given an opportunity to suggest ways that contribute to creating a drug free school environment

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