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Research Paper

Activities used by Secondary School Teachers to Address the Menace of Drug and Substance Abuse in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

For some decades, students have been given lessons about drugs in schools in belief that education about drugs can change their behavior. There is a social consensus that drugs can be eliminated. The purpose of this study was to look into activities used by teachers at secondary school level to address the menace of drug and substance abuse in selected secondary schools in Kenya. The study was based on social learning theory. The research was conducted in Nandi County schools in Kenya. Twenty-four randomly selected schools out of 235 county schools were engaged in the study. A sample size of 1292 respondents was obtained using purposive and simple random sampling techniques. The participants included Deputy Principals, Counselors, and teachers teaching Life Skills subject, students and Focus Group Discussions. The data instruments utilized included questionnaires and structured interviews. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequency tables and percentages. The findings of this study revealed that drug abuse in schools was a challenge that needed to be addressed by all stake holders in education. Outsiders were found to be secretly selling drugs to students during festivities such as music and games. Teachers and school security officers in most schools did not bother to check on student luggage on arrival during opening and midterms which became an easy leeway of getting drugs into schools. The research findings would be useful to schools, parents, research practitioners and school administration.

Key words: Activities, teachers, secondary school, drugs and substance abuse

1. Introduction

For some decades now students have been given lessons about drugs in school in the belief that education about drugs can change their behavior. There is a social consensus that drugs must be eliminated. Some educators, however, question the goal of behavior change and propose a more oriented approach to drug reduction in schools. It is worth noting that school is not about repairing all social, but is about repairing the evil of ignorance that may bring an end to drug abuse in schools. The fact is that schools do not have it in their power to stop smoking, drinking, sex or poor eating patterns. They do have it in their power to improve student knowledge and skills and to encourage the development of defensible values (Gottfredson & Wilson (2003).

Students can be powerful agents for change when they are encouraged to undertake anti-drug action. Teachers need to encourage and facilitate them to undertake anti-drug action either in conjunction with the school, student groups and clubs or individually through such activities as writing letters to favorite sporting teams and stars asking them not to use drugs or endorse tobacco or alcohol products, writing to film, television and magazine producers and editors to object to tobacco and alcohol advertising and promotion, promoting non-smoking male and female role models and seek to establish non-smoking as the normative behavior for most people, surveying local businesses that make inhalant products easily accessible to young people to buy or steal, creating anti-drug art project for display around the school, using school newsletter or magazine to promote drug free messages, helping to revise the existing school policy or curriculum, participating in local community parades and festivals with drug-free messages, planning a culturally appropriate youth health day, designing and painting an anti-tobacco/ alcohol/ drug mural in the school, supporting drug-free celebration, formals, social and cultural events, dances and festivities, providing active support for youth drug prevention campaign and strategies. Teachers use sport to prevent youth drug and substance abuse in schools.

The U.S Department of Education (1986) recommends that school officials set up clear and consistently enforced drug use policies that specify offenses, consequences, and procedures including the notification of police. It further posits that security measures, be put in practice to eradicate drugs from the learning institutions and functions and comprehensive drug and substance curriculum from kindergarten through grade 12 be put in place. Equally important is that teachers need to be considered for appropriate training in the program. Lachance (1985) notes that school systems broadly place together two approaches to deter drug and substance abuse (DSA). One aspect stresses discipline in terms of what school personnel ought to do when drug abuse is found in the school. The other aspect is education that is educating students on drugs and assisting them to generate skills and positive attitudes that will distance them from drug.

Grenada, on the other hand, has established the National Schools Policy on Drugs (NSPD, 2016) that is to be implemented in schools. Accordingly, the policy is intended to address student alcohol and drug use and the attendant problems. The policy has four principals: To promote a healthy lifestyle among students, free from drug use, to provide a mechanism for the appropriate identification of alcohol, tobacco, and drug-related problems, and early intervention among students, to provide firm consistent and equitable disciplinary measures regarding tobacco, alcohol, related or drug related infractions and to provide support services to students with an identified tobacco, alcohol or substance abuse concern or problem.

Disciplinary procedures stipulate that the use, possession, sale, and distribution of alcohol, tobacco products, hemp, controlled drugs or mood-altering substance in the school environment will not be tolerated and is a breach of school rules. All drug-related matters which involve students must be dealt with in a confidential manner. Among developmental issues contracted by teachers to combat drug abuse among students is resilience, which refers to the ability to avoid negative

outcome despite being exposed to a high-risk environment for drug and substance abuse.

In Kenya, one of the head teachers' management tasks is to foster good school-community relations. Such relations are useful in yielding valuable information on threats such as DSA in the school. The Head teacher implements educational systems and procedures in a school, takes care of students' welfare and provides a friendly environment for teaching and learning (Mullins, 2005).

According to Mbiti (2007), the principal is directly involved in establishing the rules of behavior, the penalties to be applied and the approaches to be used in enforcing discipline among the students. However, these rules of behavior and penalties have not been clearly stipulated. The current research aims at finding out the strategies being applied, the challenges and the possible solutions.

2.0 Methodology

The study adopted a post-positivism paradigm, qualitative and quantitative research and descriptive survey methods. The field survey method was used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The schools that participated in this study were selected from the strata using purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques. A sample of 24 secondary schools were randomly selected for this study. The sampling matrix comprised of 24 Deputy Principals, 24 Counselors, 24 teachers handling essential life skills and 1002 students. One hundred and twenty students participated in focus group discussion. The total sample size was 1292 respondents. Data was collected using open and closed ended questionnaires. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequency, tables, graphs, pie charts and percentages.

3.0 Results

3.1 Students' Response on Activities used by Teachers in Drug Abuse

Table 3.1 shows that 723 (74.6%) responses from students opined that class teachers do not discuss the problem of drug abuse during class meetings and 26

(2.9%) agree, 10 (1.1%) strongly agree, while none was undecided and 243 (21.4%) strongly disagreed. On the issue of whether teachers attend workshops on the teaching of essential life skills 648 (66.3%) disagreed, 331 (31.2%) strongly disagreed, 20 (2.2%) agreed and none strongly agreed. 720 (69.9%) were of the opinion that teachers in their schools showed students that they were caring and were concerned about their welfare, 295 (27.2%) strongly disagreed, 6 (0.7) were undecided, 20 (2.2%) strongly agreed and none strongly agreed. 671 (69.8) of student responses were of the opinion that they didn't receive support from teachers on all matters while in school, 295 (27.2%) strongly disagreed, 16 (1.8%) undecided, 20 (2.2%) disagreed and none strongly agreed.

Table 3.1: Student's Response on Activities used by Teachers in Drug Abuse

Statement		SD	D	U	A	SA	Total
Class teacher discusses the problem of drug abuse during class meetings	F	243	723	0	26	10	1002
	%	21.4	74.6	0	2.9	1.1	100
Teachers attend workshops on the teaching of essential life skills	F	331	648	4	20	0	1002
	%	31.2	66.3	0.4	2.2	0	100
Teachers in our school show students they are caring and are concerned about their welfare	F	295	720	6	20	0	1002
	%	27.2	69.9	0.7	2.2	0	100
All students receive support from teachers on all matters while in school	F	295	671	16	20	0	1002
	%	27.2	68.8	1.8	2.2	0	100

Key: SD=Strongly Agree, D=Disagree, U=Undecided, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, %=Percentage, F=frequency

3.2 Deputy Principals' Response on Activities used by Teachers on Drug Abuse

The study results revealed in table 3.2 showed that 20 (83.3%) of the Deputy Principals responses were of the opinion that class teachers discussed the problem of drug abuse during class meetings, while 15 (62.5)% of them were of the view that teachers rarely attended workshops on the teaching of essential life skills, 20

(83.3%) were of the opinion that teachers in their school rarely showed students they were caring and were concerned about their welfare, and 5 (21.8%) of them were of the opinion that the students received support from teachers in all matters while in school.

Table 3.2 Deputy Principals' Response on Activities used by Teachers on Drug Abuse

Statement	S	D	U	A	SA	Total
	D					
Class teacher discusses the problem of drug abuse during class meetings	F 0	0	0	20	4	24
	% 0	0	0	83.3	16.7	100
Teachers attend workshops on the teaching of essential life skills	F 0	20	0	4	0	24
	% 0	83.3	0	16.7	0	100
Teachers in our school show students they are caring and are concerned about their welfare	F 0	2	5	15	2	24
	% 0	8.3	21.8	62.5	8.3	100
All students receive support from teachers on all matters while in school	F 0	5	2	11	6	24
	% 0	21.8	8.3	45.8	25	100

Key: SD=Strongly Agree, D=Disagree, U=Undecided, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, %=Percentage, F=frequency

3.3 Life Skills Teachers' Response on Activities used by Teachers on Drug Abuse

The study results in table 3.3 reflects that 10 (41.6%) of the Life Skills teachers' responses were of the opinion that class teachers discussed the problem of drug abuse during class meetings, 12 (50%) disagreed and 2 (8.3%) were undecided and none (0%) strongly disagreed or strongly agreed. Four (16.7%) were of the view that teachers go for workshops on the teaching of life skills in schools, while none did not strongly disagree or strongly agreed or were undecided. Twenty (83.3%) of the respondents were of the view that teachers did not attend workshops on the

teaching of essential life skills. Fifteen (62.5%) of life skills teachers were of the opinion that teachers in their schools showed students that they were caring and were concerned about their welfare while 2 (8.3%) were not. Five (21.8%) were undecided, while 2 (8.3%) strongly agreed and none did not strongly disagree that teachers showed students they were caring and concerned about their welfare. On the issue of whether all students receive support from teachers on all matters while in school, 11 (45.8%) agreed, 6 (25%) strongly agreed and 2 (8.3%) were undecided while 5 (21.8%) disagreed and none strongly disagreed.

Table 3.3: Life Skills Teachers’ Response on Activities used by Teachers on Drug Abuse

Statement		SD	D	U	A	SA	Total
Class teacher discusses the problem of drug abuse during class meetings	F	0	12	2	10	0	24
	%	0	50	8.3	41.6	0	100
Teachers attend workshops on the teaching of essential life skills	F	0	20	0	4	0	24
	%	0	83.3	0	16.7	0	100
Teachers in our school show students they are caring and are concerned about their welfare	F	0	2	5	15	2	24
	%	0	8.3	21.8	62.5	8.3	100
All students receive support from teachers on all matters while in school	F	0	5	2	11	6	24
	%	0	21.8	8.3	45.8	25	100

Key: SD=Strongly Agree, D=Disagree, U=Undecided, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, %=Percentage, F=frequency

3.4 Counselors’ Response on Activities used by Teachers on Drug Abuse

The study findings in table 3.4 showed that 8 (33.3%) of the Counselors responses were of the opinion that class teachers discussed the problem of drug abuse during class meetings, 10 (41.6%) of the respondents disagreed, 1 (0.24%) strongly agreed, 5 (8.3%) were undecided and none strongly disagreed. 4 (16.7%) were of the opinion that teachers in their schools attended workshops on the teaching of Essential Life Skills subject and 18 (75%) disagreed while none strongly disagreed, were undecided and strongly agreed. 15(62.5%) of the respondents were of the

opinion that teachers in their schools showed students that they were caring and were concerned about their welfare, 2 (8.3%) strongly agreed, 5 (20.8%) were undecided, 2 (8.3%), disagreed and none strongly disagreed. There was no respondent who agreed or strongly agreed that all students received support from teachers on all matters while in school, 10(41.6%) were undecided, 2(8.3%) disagreed and 12(50%) strongly disagreed.

Table 3.4: Counselors' Response on Activities used by Teachers on Drug Abuse

Statement		SD	D	U	A	SA	Total
Class teacher discusses the problem of drug abuse during class meetings	F	0	10	5	8	1	24
	%	0	41.6	8.3	33.3	0.24	100
Teachers attend workshops on the teaching of essential life skills	F	0	18	0	4	0	24
	%	0	75	0	16.7	0	100
Teachers in our school show students they are caring and are concerned about their welfare	F	0	2	5	15	2	24
	%	0	8.3	21.8	62.5	8.3	100
All students receive support from teachers on all matters while in school	F	12	2	10	0	0	24
	%	50	8.3	41.6	0	0	100

Key: SD=Strongly Agree, D=Disagree, U=Undecided, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, %=Percentage, F=frequency

3.5 Focused Group Discussions Responses on Activities Used By Teachers on Drug Abuse

The study findings in table 3.5 showed that the FGDs responses were of the opinion that class teachers did not discuss the problem of drug abuse during class meetings, 17 (14.2%) were undecided, and 71 (52%) disagreed. 10 (8.3%) respondents strongly disagreed that teachers attend workshops on the teaching of Essential Life Skills, 52 (43.3%) disagreed, 40 (33.3%) were undecided on whether teachers attended workshops or not and 18 (15.4%) of the responses were of the opinion that teachers attend workshops, while none strongly agreed. 41 (32%) of the FGDs strongly disagreed that teachers in their schools showed students that

they were caring and were concerned about their welfare, 50 (42%) disagreed, 9 (7%) were undecided, while 20 (16%) agreed and none strongly disagreed. In the case of whether all students received support from teachers on all matters while in school, 33 (27.5%) strongly disagreed while 68 (56.6%) just disagreed. 19 (15.8%) were undecided and there were none who agreed or strongly agreed.

Table 3.5 Focused Group Discussions Responses on Activities Used by Teachers on Drug Abuse

Statement		SD	D	U	A	SA	Total
Class teacher discusses the problem of drug abuse during class meetings	F	32	71	17	0	0	120
	%	26.6	59.2	14.2	0	0	100
Teachers attend workshops on the teaching of essential life skills	F	10	52	40	18	0	120
	%	8.3	43.3	33.3	15.4	0	100
Teachers in our school show students they are caring and are concerned about their welfare	F	41	50	9	20	0	120
	%	32.	42.	7	16	0	100
All students receive support from teachers on all matters while in school	F	33	68	19	0	0	120
	%	27.5	56.6	15.8	0	0	100

Key: SD=Strongly Agree, D=Disagree, U=Undecided, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, %=Percentage, F=frequency

4.0 Discussion and Conclusion

4.1 Discussion, Interpretation and Conclusion of the Findings on Student's Response on Activities Used by Teachers in Drug Abuse

The study revealed that, the majority of the teachers did not discuss the problem of drug abuse during class meetings. Teachers also do not give students the support they need on all matters while in school, and neither do they show students that they are caring and concerned about their welfare nor do they attend workshops on the teaching of Essential Life Skills. This disables most of the teachers in their execution duties since they are less equipped with skills on how to handle the predicament of the ravaging drug abuse in secondary schools. This

has placed the programs of drug abuse in an awkward state in schools since they appear toothless in the wake of the destructive drug pandemic among the learners at secondary school level in Kenyan schools.

The findings further showed the teachers had not embraced a number of activities with the seriousness they deserve for example, sports, drama, ball games, debates and guidance and counseling for the purpose of reducing drug abuse in secondary schools. Purposely, these activities are intended for competition outcomes among other schools and not to help students get out of abusing drugs. The deputy principals, guidance and counseling and life skills teachers as well as students were all in agreement that these activities employed were meant to reduce drug abuse in secondary schools but unfortunately, they have yielded much fewer positive results which means, other means ought to be devised to arrest drug abuse in secondary schools in Kenya.

4.2 Discussion, Interpretation and Conclusion of the Findings on Deputy Principals' Response on Activities used by Teachers on Drug Abuse

The study revealed that, majority of the teachers were reluctant in discussing the problem of drug abuse during class meetings; more so students hardly receive support from teachers in all matters while in school, similarly, the study further exposed that, teachers rarely showed students that they care or are concerned about their welfare. The findings further showed that teachers do not attend workshops on the teaching of Essential Life Skills subject due to constraints beyond their reach. The findings as well depicted that teachers had not embraced a number of activities such as sports, drama, ball games, and debates for the purpose of deterring drug abuse public in secondary schools. These are issues that the Ministry of education and school authorities should make a priority and strengthen them for the removal of drug abuse from schools so that learners are placed in an enabling environment that led to the realization of sound academic results as well as peace and stability in public schools in Nandi County and by extension, Kenya in general.

4.3 Discussion, Interpretation and Conclusion of the Findings on Life Skills Teachers' Response on Activities used by Teachers on Drug Abuse

Majority of the Essential Life Skills teachers were in agreement that students didn't receive any discussion on the problem of drug abuse during class meetings from teachers, or received any support from teachers on all matters while in school, but majority indicated that they showed students that they cared and were concerned about their welfare, however, they rarely attended workshops on the teaching of Essential Life Skills. This is an issue that is seriously wanting from the Ministry of Education and school authorities. They need to revamp the life skills subject and update teachers of the subject by all means possible so as to equip them with skills that will enable them deal with drug abuse adequately and bring drug abuse pandemic in secondary schools to an end in the foreseeable future and be assured of a stable and healthy nation.

The findings further showed that teachers had not embraced a number of activities such as sports, drama, ball games debates and guidance and counseling to reduce drug abuse in secondary schools. Majorly these activities are intended for competition purposes among other schools. They are not purely intended to deter students from abusing drugs. The deputy principals, guidance and counseling and life skills teachers as well as students were all in agreement that these activities employed were meant to reduce drug abuse in secondary schools, but regrettably these have yielded far much fewer positive results which means, other methods ought to be formulated to arrest drug abuse in public secondary schools in Nandi County, more so in Kenya.

4.4 Discussion, Interpretation and Conclusion of the Findings on Counselors' Response on Activities used by Teachers on Drug Abuse

From the results, majority of the teachers did not discuss the problem of drug abuse during class meetings, they did not give any support to students on all matters while in school, similarly, teachers did not show students that they were caring and were concerned about their welfare, as well teachers did not attend workshops on the teaching of Essential Life Skills subject. This has resulted in poor

handling of life skills subject in that has led to the rapid escalation of drug abuse in secondary schools.

The findings further showed that the teachers had not embraced a number of activities such as sports, drama, ball games, debates and guidance and counseling to reduce drug abuse in secondary schools. Majorly these activities were purely intended for competition purposes among secondary schools in Kenya. They were not intended to deter students from abusing drugs. The Deputy Principals, guidance and counseling and life skills teachers as well as students were all in agreement that these activities employed have not yielded any positive results which means, other methods ought to be framed to arrest drug abuse in secondary schools in Nandi County and the entire nation.

4.5 Discussion, Interpretation and Conclusion of the Findings on Focused Group Discussions Responses on Activities Used by Teachers on Drug Abuse

From the findings, the Focus Group Discussions were discontented that teachers did not discuss the problem of drug abuse during class meetings, do not attend workshops on drug abuse except for any, few, likewise for whether teachers showed the students that they were caring and concerned about their welfare. Focus Group Discussions completely denied that teachers ever gave them any support on all matters while at school. This is quite disappointing since teachers as mentors to students are supposed to be close to them at all times for effective guidance on school matters. This scenario creates a big rift between teachers and students that paves way for a loophole for the infiltration of harmful drugs into schools.

The findings further showed that teachers had not embraced a number of activities such as sports, drama, ball games, debates and guidance and counseling for the purpose of reducing drug abuse in secondary schools. Majorly, these activities are intended for competition purposes among other schools. They are not geared toward deterring students from abusing drugs in secondary schools. The Deputy Principals, Guidance and Counseling and Life Skills Teachers as well as students

were all in agreement that some of these activities employed were meant to reduce drug abuse in secondary schools. Unfortunately, these have yielded far much less positive results which means, other methods need to be formulated to arrest, the ever ferocious drug abuse in secondary schools in Nandi County and by extension the entire country.

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The authors declares that there is no conflict of interest.

Ethical approval

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