

## **Perceived Causes of Deviant Behavior among Secondary School Students in Kebete Sub County, Kiambu County, Kenya**

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### **Abstract**

**Background:** A smooth teaching-learning process is highly dependent on how the learner and the teacher relate. It is also influenced by how learners get along among themselves. The relationship among learners and between learners and teachers can be affected by factors that are home related, school related, mass media/social media related, parenting styles, among others. The objective of this study was to identify causes of deviant behavior among secondary school students in Kiambu County.

**Materials and Methods:** The exploratory approach using survey design was employed. Purposive/judgmental sampling was used to select all schools and all the principals. Deputy Principals, class teachers and guidance and counseling teachers in Kabete Sub County. A questionnaire with a list of possible causes of deviant behavior was administered to the teachers. Data was analyzed by use of descriptive statistic using tables and frequencies.

**Results:** Majority of the teacher cited major causes of deviant behavior among the students as media/social media (80%), overprotection at home (79%), broken homes (70%) and overloading at school (65%), family conflicts (58%), poverty (57%), parental negligence and exam pressure (55%) and fear and failure (50%).

**Conclusion:** Majority of the teachers perceived that most causes of deviant behavior were home-related.

**Key Words:** perceived; deviant behavior; perceived causes.

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### **I. Introduction**

Deviant behavior is behavior what contradicts the norm. Many secondary school teachers in Kenya are faced with the problem of adolescent students who deviate from the school/social norms. This could be in terms of general behavior or even in the way they relate to teachers and other students (Gatongi, 1997). Examples of deviant behavior include: vandalism, disobedience, drug abuse, truancy among others. Efforts by the teachers to help stop such deviant behaviour among students has been in vain. This has therefore raised a lot of concern among the teachers and all other stakeholders since in such a situation, little learning could be going on.

According to Educational International (2001), education is to a large extent, a matter of a learning process which takes place through interaction between the teacher and the student. When this process works well, real learning takes place. It is important therefore, to investigate causes of deviant behavior among the secondary school students with a view to finding a permanent solution to this problem to create a conducive learning environment and hence achieve educational goals.

### **II. Statement of the Problem**

The Kenyan government and other stakeholders in the education sector have made huge efforts to ensure that the teaching-learning process is smooth. However, this process has not been totally successful. The presence of a smooth learning-teaching process has been hindered by deviant behavior emanating from the students. Teachers in secondary schools have reported deviant behavior such as: stealing, fighting, truancy, bullying, vandalism, cheating in exams, drug abuse/smoking, and sexual immorality among others. If the causes of such deviant behavior is not identified, the efforts to curb them by the government and other stakeholders in the education sector may be in futility. The results will be poor academic performance and school drop-out which translates to lack of qualified labor force in the country and increased crime rates; and consequently, the country may not achieve her economic and development agenda. It is therefore important that causes of deviant behavior among students are investigated.

### **III. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify causes of deviant behavior as perceived by teachers among secondary school students in Kebete Sub County, Kiambu County, Kenya.

#### **IV. Objective of the Study**

The objective of this study was to investigate causes of deviant behaviors perceived by teachers among secondary school students in Kabete, Sub County, Kiambu County.

#### **V. Literature Review**

##### **5.1. Causes of Behavioral Problems**

Most causes of deviant behavior among student are traced back to their family background. The dysfunctional families, divorce, overprotectiveness, parental negligence among others, all determine the character of a child. Other causes could be related to school environment and social media. These causes are discussed below:

##### **5.2 Parental Styles and Skills**

Children's first influence on behavior is from their parents: thus, parents are the most influential people in a child's life. According to Psychoanalytic Theory, Freud, (1963) explains that every human being has potential to developing deviant behavior; however, this can be prevented through the process of identification where we tend to base the way we think, act and feel on other individuals who are successful in gaining satisfaction from life.

Authoritarian and permissive parents differentially influence children (Buehler, 2002). Authoritarian parents are demanding with low responsiveness. They provide little warmth acceptance and involvement in their relationship with their children (Winsler & Aquilino, 2005). Such parents fail to portray attitude that favor positive development of their children. Permissive parents on the other hand are less demanding and are highly responsive. They are warm and nurturing (Pettit, et al, 1997). This, however, doesn't lead to well-adjusted personality of their children as these parents are highly responsive to their children's emotional needs and fail to set boundaries or are not consistent in enforcing already set boundaries.

Permissive parenting is positively and significantly correlated to promiscuous and don't care attitude and poor academic performance and tendencies to cheat in exams among young people in Nigeria (Akinsola, 2010; Igbo and Ihenjiene, 2014; Opiyo et al, 2018). Similarly, a study by Karinga (1998) on deviant behavior of Kenyan secondary school students in Kaloleni Sub County, of Kilifi County, 88.9% of head teachers and 70% of class room teachers cited home background as poor parenting as the major cause of deviant behaviour.

Parental attitude that favors the development of a well-adjusted personality are characterized by showing understanding, love and interest in a child as an individual. Some parents are so busy that they get home exhausted from work and they end up giving in to every demand of their children. Parent have therefore little control of their children which leads to children being exposed to uncensored television programmes and pop music which teach them behavior that is socially unacceptable. Many children go unpunished for their mistakes simply because the parents do not want to upset them.

##### **5.3. Broken Homes and Discordant Marriages**

Family is the first socializing agent that a child encounters. A child's initial behavior is acquired from the caregiver and the people who surround it-the family. The family in which a child grows up in therefore determines if the child will be mal-adjusted or well-adjusted in the wider society. Broken homes are family structure divided by divorce, separation or death (Regoli and Hewit, 2000). Such families are unable to operate as proper primary socializing agent and therefore contribute to juvenile delinquency. Breakage of a family has adverse consequences on children. They are prone to special difficulties such as susceptibility to common colds, criminality, and drug abuse to poor performance in school. Children from broken marriages also have adjustment problems, low self-esteem and early engagement in sexual activities (Saikia, 2016). A study by Tomuletiu et al (2012) showed that children from dysfunctional families had higher irrationality level than their peers from organized families.

##### **5.4. School related causes**

School environment has also been blamed for deviant behavior among secondary school students. Adolescent are susceptible to emulating deviant behavior when they associate with other adolescents who are already deviant. In social learning theory, Albert Bandura (1977) underscores the importance of observing and modeling behavior, attitudes as well as emotional reactions of other people. Therefore, students may engage in deviant behavior as a result of observing their friends in school engage in them. Too much assignment and demand for excellent achievement from parents and teachers have been found to lead to deviant behavior when students realize they cannot cope with/achieve the demands (Nkhata & Mwale, 2016).

### **5.5. Modeling and Media**

A child observes adults and older children go about their day to day activities. For instance, if they observed adults whom they look up to behave aggressively they could easily imitate the aggressive behavior Bandura, (1963). According to Holford (2004), when parents discipline children in a violent manner, children may turn out to be violent. He goes on to say that parents have been replaced at home by television as they are too busy to spend time with their children. Television is known to hinder development of concentration skills of children who watch a lot of it. This is due to quick change of programmes between 10-25 minutes with adverts in between. The child cannot concentrate on a single task at school or home for a lengthy period of time. Television also hinder proper emotional development and attention problems in children who watch too much of it (Courage & Setliff, 2009). Too much and unmonitored TV watching may lead to unlimited exposure to violence ad unlimited adult content among the young people who go ahead to imitate it.

Some studies both locally and internationally have investigated on various causes of modeling and deviant behavior. Internationally, Bandura et al, (1961; 1963) found out that children who had seen violent models, exhibit much more aggressive speech and action than did children who had seen neutral models. Furthermore their aggressive behavior clearly imitated the behavior of the violent adults. The study suggested that deviant behaviour such as aggression could be as a result of imitating models.

## **VI. Research Methodology**

### **6.1. Study Design**

The study employed exploratory approach using descriptive design to investigate the causes of deviant Behavior exhibited by secondary school students in Kabete Sub County. The design made it possible for the researcher to get the fact by use of a sample.

### **6.2. The Target Population**

The target population of the study was the 21 private secondary schools and 14 public secondary schools in Kebete Sub County, Kiambu County with a population of about 4025 pupils and 515 teachers, 35 guidance and counseling teachers, 35 principal and 35 deputy principals.

### **6.3. Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

Purposive/judgmental sampling was used to select all secondary schools, all principals; all deputy principals; all class teachers and all teachers in charge of guidance and counseling in Kabete Sub County. This sampling technique was chosen because the number of principal deputy principals, class teachers in Kabete Sub County is only 140 and. This technique is suitable for a small number and will ensure the study achieves realistic findings which are generalizable to the population. It would also allow for use of descriptive statistics (Reddy & Kannmani, 2016). Therefore, the sample size for this study included: 35 principals, 36 deputy principals, 35 class teachers and 35 guidance and counseling teachers. This yielded a total of 140 teachers.

### **6.4. Data Collection Instrument**

The data collection instrument used in the study was a questionnaire prepared for the teachers. The teachers, questionnaire consisted of two parts. Part I sought the personal details of the teacher. Part II sought the opinion of the teacher on the perceived causes of the deviant behavior among their students. It contained a list of 15 possible causes of deviant behavior, from which, the teacher was required to tick what they perceived to be the causes of deviant behavior among their students.

### **6.5. Pilot Study**

The piloting phase involved 16 teachers from 4 schools; 2 private schools and 2 public schools. The piloting sample was identical to the actual sample in the study so as to have meaningful observation (Orodho, 2004). The aim of piloting was to reveal unclear directions, insufficient space for response, clustered questions and wrong phrasing. It would also reveal if the intended analytical techniques were appropriate.

Test-retest reliability measure was used to establish the reliability of the research tools. A Pearson's product moment formula for test-retest was used to compute the correlation co-efficient.

### **6.6. Data Collection Procedures**

The main data collection covered more schools in the actual selected sample in the study. Data collection was done with the assistance of the discipline masters/mistresses in the school. The questionnaire was administered to the principals, deputy principals, class teachers and teachers in charge of guidance and counseling.

### 6.7. Data Analysis

The return rate of the behavioral questionnaires from both teachers and pupils was 100%. The data collected were carefully organized according to research objective that guided the study. Frequency and percentages were computed. Findings were then presented in frequencies and percentages.

## VII. Research Finding and Discussion

### 7.1. Causes of deviant Behavior among Secondary School Students

To determine causes of deviant behavior among secondary school students, teachers were required to tick against what they perceived as possible causes from a list of 15 causes of deviant behavior provided. They were also asked to suggest any other possible causes not in the list provided. Table 4.1 shows the perceived causes by the teachers.

**Table No. 1.** Teachers perceived causes of Deviant Behavior among students

	Public schools		Private schools		Total	
	No.	%	No.of pupils	%	No.of pupils	%
<b>Home related causes</b>						
Broken homes						
	35	62.5	63	75.0	98	70.0
Family conflicts	42	75.0	42	50.0	82	58.6
Poverty	28	50.0	42	50.0	80	57.0
Parental negligence	35	62.5	42	50.0	77	55.0
Conflict between home and school rules	28	50.0	21	25.0	49	34.7
Pressure from parents	21	37.5	21	25.0	42	29.7
Overprotection from home	48	87.5	63	50.0	111	79.0
Absent parents	35	52.5	63	75.0	98	70.0
Discordant marriages	21	37.5	21	25.0	42	29.7
<b>School related causes</b>						
Exam pressure	35	50.0	42	50.0	77	55.0
Overloading (subjects/assignments)	28	62.5	63	75.0	91	65.0
Peer pressure	14	25.0	21	25.0	35	25.0
Harsh teacher	14	25.0	21	25.0	35	25.0
Fear of failure	28	50.0	42	50.0	70	50.0
<b>Media</b>						
Media modeling	49	87.5	63	75.0	112	80.0
<b>Other causes suggested</b>						
Personal inadequacies	14	25.0	42	50.0	56	40.0

Majority of the teachers perceived that deviant behavior among their students was mainly caused by: media modeling (80%), overprotection from home (79%) and broken homes (70%). This corroborates with a study of psychological problems in primary school pupils by Mugambi (2000). The researcher found that the major home-related causes were divorce, broken homes and family conflicts. It also corroborates with the findings by Courage & Setliff (2009) that TV hinder development of concentration skills and leads to poor emotional development in children.

Other causes that were reported by between 65% and 50% of the teachers were: overloading/assignments, family conflicts, poverty, parental negligence, exam pressure and fear of failure in school. The main school-related causes were cited as overloading(subjects/assignments), exam pressure and fear of failure in that order.

In a different category, personal inadequacies were perceived by 40% of the teachers to be a cause to deviant behavior among secondary school students. Other causes suggested by teachers included pupils being orphaned by the HIV/AIDS scourge, language barrier between teachers and pupils.

## VIII. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

### 8.1. Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study. It also provides the conclusions drawn from the finding and the recommendations of the study based on the findings.

## 8.2. Summary and Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to identify causes of deviant behavior among secondary school students in Kabete Sub County of Kiambu County. In line with the objective of this study, the findings revealed that there are various causes of deviant behavior among secondary school students. However, media, overprotection, broken homes and absentee parents, overloading in school, exam pressure are major causes of deviant behavior among secondary school students.

## 8.3. Recommendations

### 8.3.01. Home-related Causes

To ensure smooth teaching-learning process in school and good relations between teachers and pupils and among students, the government in collaboration with school administrations needs to sensitize the parents on the need to live in harmony at home to ensure an all-round well-adjusted child development among children. The stakeholders in education should organize seminar for this purpose.

### 8.3.02. School-related Causes

The educational system should be designed such that an individual learner is assessed on their own abilities to avoid exam pressure. Currently, the curriculum is so exam oriented, therefore, instilling fear of failure in the learners. The government should look into the overloaded curriculum with the intension of reducing further the workload in it. Teachers on their part should try to give learners manageable assignment rather than overload them.

### 8.3.03. Media and Modeling

The parents ought to be in charge of the TV programmes that their children watch. They should watch programmes that require parental guidance with their children so that they can explain the negative effects and caution them against imitating models from such programmes; for instance programmes that contain violence or immoral content.

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