

CONTRIBUTION OF COMMUNITY TO DEVIANT BEHAVIORS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN TRANS-NZOA WEST SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

By

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ABSTRACT

Deviant behaviors among secondary school going populations, the world over, are of concern to educators, counselors and psychologists. This is because of the potential of deviant behaviors at the adolescent stage to undermine the achievement of both personal and national goals. Your social environment including your family, friends, school, and neighborhood influence your behavior. This study assessed the contribution of social institutions (community) to deviant behaviors among secondary school students. The study was anchored on the Social-control Theory by Travis (1960) and Attachment Theory by Bowlby and Ainsworth (1991). Descriptive survey design was used because the deputy head teachers' guidance and counseling teachers' and students' attitudes were sought. The target population was 6529 respondents. The sample size was 661 respondents. Simple Random Sampling was used to select the schools and the students. Stratified Sampling was used to select the zones then Purposive Sampling was used to select deputy principals and guidance and counseling teachers. The researcher used questionnaires and behavior assessment tool as the instruments to collect qualitative and quantitative data necessary for this study. The study was carried out in Trans-Nzoia West Sub-County. Reliability was established by test-retest method in a pilot study done in the neighboring sub-county. Validity was established by giving the instruments to the experts in research field. Content validity was adopted for this study. Descriptive techniques of data analysis such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations were used. To establish the relationship, Spearman's rank was employed while t-tests were used to test for significance. The data was subjected to Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 17 for further analysis. The study revealed the following: that the frequency of deviance in schools is low in the study area. The community contributes to deviant behaviors by having poor neighborhoods, high rates of violence lack of community norms and a culture of impunity in the society. Also, there is a significant negative relationship between community and deviant behaviors among students. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education should ensure that each school has a counseling room and all guidance and counseling teachers be exposed to workshops and seminars to enable them be effective in their work.

Keywords: Attachment, Community, Delinquency, Deviant behavior, Indiscipline.

Background to the Study

Deviant behaviors among secondary school going populations the world over, are of concern to educators, counselors and psychologists. This is because deviant behaviors at the adolescent stage have the potential to undermine the achievement of both personal and national goals. The danger to

achievement of goals stems, largely from the varying control responses that are often elicited with regard to deviant behaviors (Karega, 2012).

Deviance describes actions or behaviors that violate social norms, including formally enacted rules as well as informal violations of social norms. The departure of certain types of behavior from the norms of a particular society at a particular time and violation of certain types of group norms where behavior is in a disapproved direction and of sufficient degree to exceed the tolerance limit of the community (Macious& Gerber, 2010).

Social institutions have been shown in various studies to be contributing to the occurrence of deviant behaviors. The community as a social institution has been shown to contribute to deviant behaviors. Research by Colder et al. (2002) showed that children living in neighborhoods characterized by socioeconomic disadvantage and high rates of violence are at increased risk of experiencing and utilizing aggressive behaviors in the school setting. Gorman-Smith and Reardon (2008) found that living in a disadvantaged neighborhood may be associated with many poor outcomes for youth, including delinquency, violence, substance use, lower academic achievement, problems with social competence, and mental health. Berburg and Thorlindsson (2005) sought to assess the effects of internal and external values and perceived norms on aggressive behavior. The authors found a significant relationship between the neutralization of aggression within community norms and aggressive behavior amongst both male and female respondents

In Nairobi, survey on effects of violence of the youth by UNICEF (2005) found that young people are left to take care of themselves in violence torn communities that do not provide support services. In an attempt to cope with these devastating circumstances, the youth in informal settlements often exhibit risky behaviors including substance abuse, gang membership, aggressive and violent actions against others, stealing and other criminal activities or early pregnancies. This is in line with Mbutia (2013) who is of the opinion that most of the youths who engage in crimes were born in the slum areas. She further asserts that there is a relationship between deviant behavior and peer influence in school and outside the school and family influence as she studied perceived factors influencing deviant behavior among the youth.

Literature Review

Several studies have been done all over the world with findings showing the prevalence of occurrence of various kinds of problem behaviors. A study by Clarke (2002) in America reports that

students' indiscipline is a serious problem facing the education system. Mrug, Loosier and Windle (2008) found high level of violence exposure occurring in schools. Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton and Scheidt (2001) found the prevalence of bullying among United States of America youth to be substantial. Reimer and Smink (2008) of America have found out that school absenteeism within the public schools has reached a crisis point, and it has been linked to school dropout. In Malaysia, Yahaya and Sidek (2005) observed that there were different perceptions about the prevalence of bullying among secondary school students where teachers reported bullying overall rate to be low while students reported it to be moderate.

In South Africa, Nita (2005) found bullying behavior to be at a lesser or greater extent a problem at most schools while Weeks (2012) is of the view that irregular school attendance, substance and alcohol abuse, vandalism violence and criminality are the common deviant behavior among secondary school students. In Tanzania, Morris (2008) found bullying behavior to be a significant problem in secondary schools in Dare Es Salaam region while Ndibalema (2013) found physical bullying to be perceived to be the dominant element of bullying.

In Kenya the extent of problem behaviors has been shown by number of studies; Oriya (2005), Mkula (2005) and Ndetei, Ongecha, Khasakala, Syanda, Mutiso, Othieno(2007) all found bullying to be indeed prevalent in public secondary schools. Mutisya (2003) and Oriya (2005) both found fighting among students to be frequently reported in secondary schools. Wachira (2002) found that there was an increase in physical violence among secondary school students. While a report by NACADA (2007) observed that drugs and substance abuse both licit and illicit are forming a sub-culture in Kenya among the students.

There are so many deviant behaviors that researchers have identified in their studies of secondary schools. In Kenya, Ziro (2002) found that refusal to put on uniform while going out of school, teasing fellow students, striking disobedience to prefects, refusal to take legitimate punishments from teachers and refusal to do cleaning duties. Mutisya (2003) and Ngunzi (2004) found that different schools within the same district reported the same nature of students' indiscipline which were; theft, lateness, absenteeism, truancy, unattended duties and wrong dressing. Njoroge (2005) found out that the reported incidences of deviance were; lateness, irresponsible sexual behaviors, general indiscipline, stealing, noisemaking, truancy, negative attitude and arrogance, bullying, use of drugs and alcohol as well as sneaking out of school. A more recent study by Kyalo (2010) found that boy/girl relationship, poor response to bells, theft, faking of sickness, fighting, noisemaking and destruction of school property, refusal to complete assignments as well as riots and demonstrations to

be the most cited indiscipline problems. In the most recent study by Mbutia (2013) common deviant behaviors amongst the youths are; alcohol and drug abuse, premarital sex and prostitution, gang fighting and rape.

The role of the community and neighborhood as agents of social control has been assessed in the social control literature. In a New England study on adolescent partner abuse, Banyard and Quartey (2006) surveyed 980 young people in grades seven through twelve on various aspects of risk-taking behavior. Specifically, self-report data were collected on adolescent partner abuse, victimization, family background, and neighborhood monitoring and support. The authors found that young people who admitted to physical and/or sexual partner offending had lower perceptions of neighborhood monitoring than young people who did not report such partner abuse. Diminished feelings of social responsibility were also found to be related to delinquency amongst study participants. The role of communities in fostering values and normative beliefs on violence has been examined by other researchers, including Bernburg&Thorlindsson (2005). Utilizing national survey data on 2,941 Icelandic adolescents, Bernburg and Thorlindsson (2005) sought to assess the effects of internal and external values and perceived norms on aggressive behavior. The authors found a significant relationship between the neutralization of aggression within community norms and aggressive behavior amongst both male and female respondents. Additionally, amongst male respondents, community conduct norms were found to be a stronger predictor of aggression than the effect of conduct norms and peers. Findings such as this support the notion that community groups that adhere to violent norms will likely affect the aggressive nature of individual members.

Gorman-Smith & Reardon (2008) found that living in a disadvantaged neighborhood may be associated with many poor outcomes for youth, including delinquency, violence, substance use, lower academic achievement, problems with social competence, and mental health problems. The association with violence may be the most studied of these links, she suggested, but the research has not clearly illuminated the reasons why some young people are affected so much more seriously than others. Although some data suggest that different aspects of neighborhoods have independent effects, it seems likely that the effects interact, a situation that presents a difficult research challenge. Research by Colder et al (2000) showed that children living in neighborhoods characterized by socio-economic disadvantage and high rates of violence are at risk of experiencing and utilizing aggressive behaviors in school setting.

In Nairobi Kenya, survey on effects of violence of the youth by UNICEF (2005) found that young people are left to take care of themselves in violence torn communities that do not provide support

services. In an attempt to cope with these devastating circumstances, the youth in informal settlements often exhibit risky behaviors including substance abuse, gang membership, aggressive and violent actions against others, stealing and other criminal activities or early pregnancies.

In a study by Mbutia (2013) it was revealed that the community where one lives can contribute to deviant behaviors in that she found out that most of the youths that had been involved in the crimes had been born in the slums. One third had been in the slum for more than 14 years while others had been there between 6 and 14 years. Duration of stay in the slum had effect on the perception on deviant behavior.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Trans-Nzoia West Sub-County. Trans-Nzoia West sub-county, Trans-Nzoia East Sub-County and Kwana County, are located in Trans-County in Kenya. The study site is large with heterogeneity in the target populations' characteristics. These include variation in the nature of secondary schools and therefore the collected data was more reliable and hence representative. Trans-Nzoia West Sub-County is also one of the sub-counties in Kenya and thus stands an equal chance of being chosen. Also, this sub-county has a large population density, and high poverty level that favor deviant behaviors amongst the adolescents.

The population study was drawn from all 74 schools that had form threes in Trans Nzoia West Sub-County in the year 2014. The target population of the study was 6529 (74 deputy head teachers or 74 guidance and counseling teachers and 6381 form three students). Deputy Head teachers, teachers and students served as the main respondents of the study. Trans-Nzoia West Sub-County is subdivided into 4 educational zones namely; Central, Kiminini, Saboti and Waitaluk.

Simple random sampling (SRS) was used to select individual schools from each zone using lottery method. This ensured that each zone had an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. This technique of sampling enabled the researcher to select a sample without bias from the target population. This probability sampling design enabled the researcher to generalize and make prediction to the entire population, which were all secondary schools. Purposive sampling was used to select deputy principals since they are directly involved in disciplining the students as guiding and counselors are involved in correcting deviancy through counseling.

The sample size was 661 respondents from 74 secondary schools. Simple random technique was used to select 23 secondary schools in the sub-county. The researcher used 638 form three students who

were randomly sampled from the 23 schools, 23 teachers (deputy principals, guidance and counseling teachers). This is 10.12% of the target population and as Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) say that for descriptive studies 10% of the accessible population is enough. Stratified sampling ensured that each education zone with heterogeneous characteristics such as geographical setting was proportionately represented. This is in line with Wade (2011) who says that stratified sampling increases the likelihood that key groups end up being included in the sample while still maintaining much of the random element.

After collection of both qualitative and quantitative data using PBS and questionnaires, data analysis was done. The raw data was categorized through coding and tabulation. Editing was done to improve the quality of the data coding. Data was summarized and presented using percentages, means and standard deviation (SD). Subsequent analysis involved assessing the relationship between social institutions and deviant behaviors among students using spearman's rank. To test significance of the relationship, t-tests were used.

Findings

The finding of the PBS showed that problem behaviors do exist among students in secondary schools. The students' rating is supported by a study by Karega (2012) who equally found the frequency of occurrence of problem behaviors amongst students to be low. This could be attributed to the fact that in the self-evaluation report questionnaire each student wanted to cover up and portray good. In addition, this reveals that during counseling process, it is not easy to get the truth out of those students as they would always try to coil around especially when the counselor is not patient and tactful enough to address the issue which calls for administrators of schools to allow majorly teachers who have passion for counseling to occupy those dockets in schools and also to reduce their workloads to enable them have enough time to ponder over and know the best ways to handle students' issues.

COMMUNITY AND DEVIANT BEHAVIORS AMONG STUDENTS

Table 1: Community and Deviant Behaviors among Students (Students' Views)

	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean (SD)
Community						
The community into which one lives affects his/her behavior	199(38.1)	154(29.9)	56(10.8)	41(7.9)	71(13.7)	2.3(1.4)
High rates of violence in the community increases aggressive behaviors in schools	214(41)	117(22.3)	53(10.1)	45(8.6)	94(18)	2.4(1.5)
Community rules/norms reduce students behavior problems	154(29.5)	154(29.5)	79(15.1)	68(12.9)	68(12.9)	2.5(1.4)
Poor neighborhoods/slums contribute to deviant behaviors among students.	151(29)	141(28.3)	60(11.6)	83(15.9)	79(15.2)	2.6(1.4)
Culture of impunity in the community contributes to deviant behaviors among students	188(36)	132(25.2)	75(14.4)	75(14.4)	53(10.1)	2.4(1.4)

Key: SA -Strongly Agree, U- undecided, D-Disagree and SD -Strongly Disagree.

***Source: Field Data (2016)**

As indicated in Table 1, majority of students reported to agree that the community into which one lives affects his/her behavior 354(68%) and that high rates of violence in the community increases aggressive behaviors in schools 331(63.3%) as reported in table 4.6. Still 308(59%) reported that community rules/norms reduce students behavior problems, 297(57.3%) that poor neighborhoods/slums contribute to deviant behaviors among students while 320(61.2%) that culture of impunity in the community contributes to deviant behaviors among students. In addition, survey on effects of violence of the youth by UNICEF (2005) found that young people are left to take care

of themselves in violence torn communities that do not provide support services. In an attempt to cope with these devastating circumstances, the youth in informal settlements often exhibit risky behaviors including substance abuse, gang membership, aggressive and violent actions against others, stealing and other criminal activities or early pregnancies.

CONTRIBUTION OF COMMUNITY TO STUDENTS DEVIANT BEHAVIOR (TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES)

Table 2: Contribution of Community to Students Deviant Behavior (Teachers' perspectives)

Community	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD	Mean (SD)
The community into which one lives affects his/her behavior	9(39.1)	10(43.5)	1(4.3)	3(13)	0	1.9(1.0)
High rates of violence in the community increases aggressive behaviors in schools	9(39.1)	12(52.2)	1(4.3)	1(4.3)	0	1.7(0.8)
Community rules/norms reduce students behavior problems	13(56.5)	7(30.4)	1(4.3)	2(8.7)	0	1.7(0.9)
Poor neighborhoods/slums contribute to deviant behaviors among students.	10(43.5)	12(52.2)	0	1(4.3)	0	1.7(0.7)
Culture of impunity in the community contributes to deviant behaviors among students	10(43.5)	11(47.8)	1(4.3)	1(4.3)	0	1.7(0.7)

Key; SA -Strongly Agree, U- undecided, D-Disagree and SD -Strongly Disagree.

***Source: Field data (2016)**

Table 2 indicates majority of the teachers agreed that poor neighborhoods/slums contribute to deviant behaviors among students 22(95.7%), community into which one lives affects his/her behavior 19(82.6%), culture of impunity in the community contributes to deviant behaviors among students 21(91.3%), high rates of violence in the community increases aggressive behaviors in schools 21(91.3%) and that Community rules/norms reduce students behavior problems 20(86.9%)

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY AND DEVIANT BEHAVIOR

***Table 3: Relationship between Community and Deviant Behavior**

Characteristic	Deviant behavior		t-value	p-value
	Low (SD)	Moderate(SD)		
Community	12.1(4.1)	12.5(3.5)	0.351	0.746

***Source: Field Data (2016)**

As indicated in table 3, there was no significant relationship community and deviant behavior based on responses from students ($p>0.05$). This is because all T-value was greater than their bonds. Therefore the null hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between social institution-community- and deviant behavior was rejected and an alternative hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between social institution-community- and deviant behaviors among secondary school students was accepted.

***Table 4: Correlation between Community and Student's Behavior**

	Community
Deviant behavior	$r=-0.65$ $p=0.002$

***Source: Field Data (2016)**

Based on the teachers responses, there was a significant negative correlation between community and students behavior ($r=-0.65$, $p=0.002$) respectively as in Table 4.9. This means that the community negatively impacts on students' behavior.

Teachers rated students in their schools to be having moderate frequency on deviant behavior. Teachers rating could have been influenced by the rampant reports of deviancy in schools and also by the fact that some misbehaviors are made known to majorly deputy principals and guidance teachers who are directly involved in handling them in schools.

CONCLUSION

The study established that poor neighborhood, culture of impunity in the society, high rates of violence in the society and society norms contribute to deviant behaviors among students in secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia West Sub-County and thus the communities of students contribute to their deviant behavior in school. Therefore it can be concluded that aggressive behaviors can be lowered by the community doing away with high rates of violence, the community involving all members when setting norms that will govern them and coming up with programs that will boost economic status of residents in the slums and ensuring that the culture of impunity is dealt with properly.

The findings from students revealed that there was no significant relationship between community and deviant behavior based on responses from students ($p>0.05$).Based on the teachers responses there was a high negative correlation between community and students' deviant behaviors ($r=-0.65$).

Recommendations

1.

- Chief meetings to emphasize good behavior and specify penalty for specific misbehavior
- Norms to be set by majority of members so that they are collectively owned
- Peace to be emphasized
- Economic status of slum neighborhoods to be stepped up e. g by encouraging various groups formation who can later on assess finances from banks to start up income generating projects

2. The Ministry of Education should provide training in guidance and counseling or employ a school counselor for each school and should make it mandatory that all schools have a counseling room

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