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Influence of Parents' Drug Abuse on Attending School Meetings in Pre-Primary schools of Embulbul Sub-County

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ABSTRACT

Parental drug abuse is a global concern and a major issue affecting parental involvement in their pre-schoolchildren's learning. It negatively impacts their much needed involvement particularly provision of the needs of children who are at a vulnerable stage in life. The purpose of this study was to determine the implications of parental drug abuse on their involvement in children's education in Embu lbul Sub-county in Kajiado. The study was guided by Epstein's Model of parents' involvement. This study adopted a descriptive survey design method. A sample size of 8 (55%) out of 14 pre-schools, a similar number of head teachers and 24(50%) pre-school teachers (three from each school) were selected. Questionnaires for teachers and interview schedule for head teachers were used to collect data. The collected quantitative data were edited, coded, entered into a computer and analyzed descriptively using Statistical Package for Social Science. The analyzed data were presented using tables, pie-charts and bar-graphs. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation were used to interpret the data. Qualitative data were organized using relevant themes, presented using direct quotes and discussed as per the research question. The findings in the study established that majority of parents abusing drugs never participated in neither school meetings nor functions. The study concludes that parental drug abuse has a negative impact on parents' attending school functions. To improve

parents' attendance of school meetings, the study recommended that teachers should provide them with an opportunity to communicate their expectations and concerns.

Key Words: *drug abuse, parent, children's education, participation and school meeting attendance*

INTRODUCTION

Drug and substance abuse is an issue that countries in the globe have to put up with for many years. Globally, it is estimated that over 243 million people corresponding to 5.8 percent of the world population aged 15-64 had used an illicit drug, mainly a substance of opiates, cocaine and cannabis, at least once in the previous year (WorldDrugReport,2014). Indeed, millions of drug abusers, all over the world, are leading miserable lives or struggling between life and death especially in India (Ramavat, Gunjana, Kelkar, Patel, Saiyed & Thakor, 2016).

In the United States, approximately one in four children is exposed to alcohol and drug abuse in the family before reaching the age of age 18 years (Balsa & French, 2011). These parents neglect to take interest in school meetings, fail to attend seminars and communicate with teachers. The National Campaign against Drug Abuse Authority(2010)highlights that all children ought to be in a position to establish their own abilities and have the capacity to develop through youth in a way that sets the up for independence and coordinated living amid adulthood.

In Kenya, a number of academic research reports and law enforcement reports, however, indicate in the last few years, Kenya has had to deal with an increase in the drug abuse problem. According to the International Narcotics Control Board report (Cited in Fan & Chen, 2011), a total of 4,987 persons were reported to have committed offences related to child neglect and lack of participation in children's education. Mwiti (2006) opines that drugs misusing parents can't satisfactorily accommodate their children's fundamental needs which altogether influence their social lives. Parents who abuse alcohol and drugs are likely to assign more time and financial resources to alcohol consumption than other goals. The previous studies in Kenya; however appear not to have focused on the implications of drug abuse on parents' participation on children's education pre-school with respect to attendance to school meetings and functions.

Prevalence of drug abuse or misuse has to do with the extent or measure to which the behavior occurs.

The use

of illicit drugs and substance among the adult has steadily increased in the previous years in the world as the availability of many kinds of drugs is also increasing (Johnston, O'Malley, Miech, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2017). In Boston, the United States, the following family problems have frequently been associated with families who are affected by alcoholism and drugs: emotional or physical violence; increased family conflict; decreased family organization; decreased family cohesion; increased family stress including work problems, illness, marital strain and financial problems; increased family isolation; and frequent family moves which affect the children's education during early periods of their pre-schooling (Tsai, & Huang, 2019).

Alcoholic and drug-abusing parents are never at home early enough when the pre-school children are doing their homework, and they do not find it important to visit their children in school or even follow up on their performance or buy school materials required for learning (NACADA, 2012). Such environment is never conducive to good learning conditions for the benefit of the child (Bailey, Duncan, Odgers, & Yu, 2017). Castro, et al., (2015) points out that parent and teacher expectations regarding the academic, social, and emotional development of children have been shown to be among the best predictors of school success. The fear of being talked to on the impacts of their substance abuse of their children's learning makes them not attend school function so meeting. Research has indicated that there are positive academic outcomes stemming from parent involvement ranging from benefits in early childhood to adolescence and beyond (Benner, Boyle, & Sadler, 2016)

Most of the drugs abusing parents do not have clean or official clothing nor do shoes since they use their money to the last coin on buying drugs which they believe they cannot do without. Their children are characterized with torn uniform, malnutrition and lack all necessary required resources for them to learn effectively. The fear of being question about their irresponsibility keeps them away from attending school meetings. Difficulties may also include failure to remember birthdays or holidays are disrupted leading to total detachment from reality. At this stage, the parent loses consciousness and consequently fails to prioritize education of the children. As a result, the parents have no thought of participating in school activities such as attending school meetings and enquiring child's progress (Raychelle, 2015).

The main purpose of this study was to determine the implications of parental drug abuse on their participation in their children's education in relation to attending school events, functions or meetings in Embu Ibul Sub-county in Kajiado County.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this study, descriptive survey design was used. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 8 head teachers while random sampling was applied to select a total of 24 pre-school teachers. Questionnaires for Teachers and Interview Guides for Head Teachers were used to collect data. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used for analysis. The collected quantitative data were edited, coded, entered into a computer and analyzed descriptively using Statistical Package for Social Science. The data were presented using tables, pie-charts and bar-graphs. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation were used to interpret the data. Qualitative data were organized using relevant themes, presented using direct quotes and discussed as per the research questions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study sought to establish the effect of drug abuse on promoting their attendance of school meetings/functions. To accomplish this, firstly, teachers were asked to indicate the regularity of which parents visited schools. The results were as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Parent’s Alcoholism and Participation in School Meetings/Functions by Teachers

Extent of attending school events	Frequency	Percent\
Very often	3	12.5%
Often	5	20.5%
Rarely	7	29.2%
Never	9	37.5%
Total	24	100.0

Results in Table 1 revealed that 9(37.5 %) agreed that parents abusing drugs never participated in neither school meetings nor functions while 7(29.2%) reported that parents rarely participated in school functions. These findings

mean that more than half of parents abusing drugs possibly did not attend school functions and meetings. According to Partikak ouetal.(2005),thefearofbeingquestionabouttheirirresponsibilitykeepsdrugabusingparentsawayfromattending school meetings. In support to the findings of the current study, Kyalo (2010) argues that the fear of being talked to on the impacts of their substance abuse of their children’s learning makes the parents not attend school functions or meeting. Most of the drugs abusing parents do not have clean or official clothing or shoes since they use their money to the last coin on buying drugs which they belief they cannot do without. Their children’s are characterized with torn uniform, malnutrition and lack all necessary required resource for them to learn effectively. Interestingly, such parents also fear of being interrogated about their irresponsibility keeps them away from attending school meetings.

Headteacherswereaskedtoindicatethefrequencyatwhichalcoholicparentsattendedschoolfunctions.Thefindingsare presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Participation of Drug Abusing Parents in School Meetings/Functions as According to Head Teachers

Frequency	Percent
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Verygreatextent	0	0
Greatextent	0	0
Low extent	6	75
Verylowextent	2	25
Total	8	100.0

Findings in Table 2 revealed that majority 6(75%) of head teachers agreed that alcoholic parents attended school functions at low extent while 2(25%) rated the attendance as very low extent. This implies none of the parents who either addicted alcohol or abused drugs did not fully participate in their children’s education. These findings agree with Kanus (2013) that alcoholic and drug-user parents have been characterized by poor home management, lack of parenting and lack of good communication skills in the family and hence lack concern about their children’s education. For instance, alcoholic and drug-abusing parents are never at home early and do not find it important to visit their children in school or even follow up on their performance. Such condition is never friendly to a child who wants to excel in education.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the study concludes that most children were exposed to risks since there was high prevalence of drug use among their parents. Parental drug abuse has a negative impact on children’s education. For instance, a child hailing from a family where one or both parents abuse drugs is more likely to withdraw and develop behavioral disorders which eventually lead to poor achievement in school. The study also concludes that parents who abuse drugs in most cases underestimate the significance of children’s education and hence less likely to spare their time in order to attend school meetings or any other functions that either directly or indirectly enhance their children’s education. The study recommended that training initiatives should be implemented in order to inform parents on the importance of parental involvement in children’s education. It is recommended that parental involvement workshops be organized for school managers, school teachers and parents. Schools should encourage parents to play an important role as partners in their children’s education and effective communication should be encouraged between the school and home.

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