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**PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLUENCE OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIP ON  
CHILDREN LIVING IN STREET IN RUIRU TOWN, KIAMBU COUNTY,  
KENYA**

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## ABSTRACT

Many countries across the world have had to deal with the difficult social phenomenon that is street children. It is estimated that over 100 million to 140 million street children worldwide. Research suggests that a multitude of push and pull factors combine to cause children to leave home and earn a living or live on the streets. Accordingly, this phenomenon needs to be addressed and solved, lest it continue to threaten societies around the world. Kenya urban areas have children who live and earn a living on the streets. The phenomenon is slowly changing from street children to street families where children grow up on the streets. This study aimed to investigate psychological influence of family relationship on increasing number of street children in Ruiru Town, Kiambu County. The study was guided by the following research objectives, to investigate how poor family relations, peer influence, alcoholic parents and single parenting influence increase of street children in Ruiru town, Kiambu County. This study employed descriptive research design. The target population of this study was 270 street children in Ruiru and children department officer. The study employed a simple random sampling technique in coming up with a sample size of 82 respondents where 81 were street living children and 1 children government officer in Ruiru Town. The study relied mostly on primary data sources. Data was collected using questionnaire. The study generated both qualitative and quantitative data where quantitative data was coded and entered into Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 17.0) and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Presentations of the findings were done in form of tables and figures where interpretation was done in prose. Most street children were forced to leave their home because of ill-treatment by their father after death of their mother. Some children opted for street life due to unfairly treatment by their family member due to their poor performance in school, thus they resorted to leave home to street life. Need for independent live forced some children to left their home to escape ruthless authority of their parents. Most children prefer street life to cope a variety of social problems, which render the family environment hostile and nonconductive to their needs. Family breakdown forced them to spending more time on the street or in leaving home entirely. The study recommended that parents should offer good parenting care to ensure their children grow in viable environment that is acceptable in the society. Organizations such as NGOs and government authorities for children affairs need to exert more efforts to ensure the involvement of everyone from individual level, family, group, and community in solving the problem that they encounter in social life such family negligence.