

**INFLUENCE OF DRUG ABUSE ON THE STREET CHILDREN'S
CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR: THE CASE OF KISUMU TOWN CBD,
KISUMU COUNTY – KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate the influence of drug abuse on the street children's criminal behaviour. The study used Kisumu Town CBD and its environs in Kisumu County as the case for study. The specific objectives of the study are as follows: (i) To establish the cause of drug abuse among street children in Kisumu Town; (ii) To examine the effects of drug abuse among street children in Kisumu Town; and (iii) To discuss the psychological interventions available for drug users among street children in Kisumu Town. Corruption and legal framework have also been selected as a moderating factor to help 'check' the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the study was divided into different chapters, with each chapter having a number of sections and sub-sections. In terms of the methodology, this study was employing the use of a descriptive design, where views and opinions of selected respondents was sought and analyzed. The study made use of probability and non-probability sampling techniques, where stratified random sampling and purposive sampling procedures was used. Data was collected using primary source through the use of structured questionnaires. The questionnaire included both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The data to be collected during field work was subjected to both quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques, where quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS, while qualitative data was analyzed using thematic grouping and content analysis. The analyzed data was then presented using charts, graphs and frequency tables.

The research established that more than 70 percent of the street children living in Kisumu abused drugs, most of the street children abused drugs due to hopelessness, lack of role models, unemployment, poor legal framework and peer pressure. The study also revealed that Street children have access to these illicit drugs through many people or dealers who exchange drugs with them in return for various forms of exploitation.. Substance or drug abuse among street children often entails congregations, which are the most enjoyable. Substance abuse is mostly viewed as a common type of activity among street children. many of the streets normally suffer from various psychological problems while living on the street, which are often associated with their inability to "cope with street life". These problems became clear when discussing the various unhealthy symptoms and psychological problems many of them share, Majority of the street children were total unaware of places that provide free psychological help for victims of drug abuse and the few who managed to get to the facilities faced high levels of discrimination thus lacking assistance. To limit substance abuse among street children, proper policies must be developed and implemented fully. NGOs lobbying for child rights must enhance awareness campaigns on child rights and protection, effective steps in dealing directly with issues related to child rights and protection must be taken. The county government of Kisumu should hire psychologists to be part of their team dealing with street children, to be able to tackle serious mental health problems and psychiatric disorders that street children suffer from. There is need to create awareness to street children on availability of places that provide free psychological help for victims of drug abuse as their knowledge on institutions providing free physiological help was found to be low.