

**PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLUENCE OF DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE
ON BEHAVIOUR CHANGE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS
IN MWALA CONSTITUENCY, MACHAKOS COUNTY**

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ABSTRACT

The use of harmful substances or amounts of substances which are harmful to users and others is termed as substance abuse. This study was investigating psychological influence of substance abuse on behaviour change among secondary school students in Machakos County. The study found out that alcohol, khat, and tobacco are among the drugs and substances abused by secondary school students. Regarding factors contributing to substance abuse by secondary school students, the findings are peer pressure, accessibility, availability, family background are among the leading contributing factors. It examined students' behaviour related to substance abuse in which according to findings, sneaking from school, bullying students, burning schools, organizing strikes were among reported behaviour. On the aspect of literature review, international, national and regional findings from studies that are relevant were taken into account. The researcher used descriptive survey research design. This design attempted to describe and explain situation of the present by using questionnaires to comprehensively describe a phenomenon. The targeted population was twenty five (25) secondary schools from Mwala Constituency, in Machakos County; including senior teachers and counsellors. And the sampled population was three public secondary schools. The total number of participants was two hundred and forty six (246); in which three secondary schools were purposively sampled, two hundred and forty students were selected using stratified and simple random sampling; besides three teachers and three school-counsellors were sampled from same schools. The research instruments used were questionnaires and structured interview guides. To draw pertinent conclusion from the data obtained, the researcher used qualitative and quantitative data analysis technique. It included coding of the data obtained and subjecting it to statistical package for social sciences. This study provided information to school administrations and ministry of education at county level about the magnitude of substance abuse in secondary schools, commonly abused substances and their effects. The researcher also recommended areas for further research.