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The Level of Awareness of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Interventions Being Implemented in Public Boarding Secondary Schools in Kitui West Sub-County

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at the level of awareness of alcohol and substance abuse interventions being implemented in public boarding secondary schools in kitui west sub-county. The researcher used a convergent mixed method design to collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data. The study sampled 391 participants from 6 public boarding secondary schools in Kitui West Sub-County, including principals, teacher counselors, teachers, and students, using both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Data collection instruments included interviews, questionnaires, and focus group discussions, all validated by experts and tested for reliability. The researcher followed ethical guidelines, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 27 for quantitative results and thematic analysis for qualitative insights. Based on the evidence gathered, the researcher arrived at the conclusion that there was a commendable level of awareness among the teachers and students of alcohol and substance abuse interventions being implemented in school with counselling being the most employed strategy. In addition, the use of peer education, and guest speakers reflects a proactive effort, yet the limited use of interactive formats like workshops and student participation reduces the overall effectiveness of these interventions. Although counselling plays a central role, an over-reliance on it without adequately integrating other approaches weakens the holistic impact. The Ministry of Education should standardize and regularly review school policies on alcohol and substance abuse to ensure consistency and relevance across all institutions, with annual updates to address emerging trends.

Key words: ***Level of Awareness of Alcohol & Substance Abuse Interventions***

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Intervention programs for alcohol and substance abuse in schools are essential worldwide, tackling a major public health issue among adolescents. Educational interventions are widely implemented across various countries to enhance students' knowledge and decision-making skills regarding alcohol and substance abuse risks. Smith et al. (2020) conducted a systematic review focusing on educational programs in diverse school settings across the United States, Europe and Australia. The methods employed included a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and quasi-experimental studies to evaluate the programs. Data collection tools comprised pre-intervention and post-intervention surveys, as well as standardized questionnaires to assess knowledge, attitudes and behaviors related to alcohol and substance use.

The data were analyzed using statistical methods and meta-analytic techniques to compute effect sizes and evaluate the overall effectiveness of educational programs. The results obtained revealed that educational programs significantly increased knowledge and improved attitudes towards substance use. However, the long-term impact on actual behaviour change was less consistent, highlighting the need for supplementary strategies to sustain behaviour change. The previous study examined various school environments using different methodologies, whereas the current research concentrated specifically on boarding secondary school students in Kitui West Sub-County which presented a different social setting and utilized a mixed methods research design. This focused approach was expected to provide context specific insights into the issue.

II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Johnson and Brown (2021) reviewed global secondary school interventions, primarily in North America and Western Europe. Their study identified several key interventions such as educational programs to enhance awareness and knowledge, counselling and support services for students, policy and environmental changes to create a drug-free school environment, family and community involvement to reinforce prevention efforts and extracurricular activities to engage students in constructive pursuits. These diverse interventions were evaluated for their effectiveness in mitigating substance abuse among students. They used systematic review of global interventions, combining qualitative and quantitative methods.

Sampling procedure employed was purposive sampling of schools known to have active counselling programs. The data collection instruments employed included interviews of school counsellors, focus groups with students and parents, standardized mental health and substance use assessment tools. The data collected were

analyzed thematically for qualitative data and statistical analysis for quantitative data including pre- and post-intervention comparisons. The results obtained showed that counselling services were effective in reducing substance use behaviors, particularly when integrated with family support. However, cultural barriers and limited access to qualified counsellors in certain regions posed significant challenges. Although the above study was carried out in a secondary school setting, it was done in a different locality from the current study. Current study was carried out in Kitui West Sub-County in Kenya. Proposed study was hoped to reveal different aspects affecting counselling services in boarding schools in Kenya, and Kitui County in particular.

Jones et al. (2019) synthesized peer-led interventions' effectiveness across studies in the United States, Canada, and parts of Asia. The methodology employed was systematic review and meta-analysis of peer-led interventions. The researchers collected data using surveys, focus groups and interviews with peer leaders and participants and self-reported substance use measures. Data analysis procedures applied were meta-analysis to determine overall effectiveness, subgroup analysis to examine variations based on peer leader training and program duration. The results obtained revealed that peer-led interventions were effective in reducing the initiation and frequency of substance use among adolescents. However, the variability in peer leader training and program sustainability was noted as a critical factor affecting long-term outcomes. Whereas the reviewed study focused on peer led intervention only, the current study focused on multiple interventions that are being employed to curb alcohol and substance abuse. The current study was also carried out in a different study context which may revealed different aspects with regard to peer-led interventions.

In Africa, a study was carried out by Adelekan et al. (2022) on policy interventions for substance abuse prevention in Nigerian schools. The research methodology applied was scoping review of policy interventions in Nigerian schools. The study employed purposive sampling to select policy documents and case studies from schools that had implemented policy interventions. key informants, such as school administrators and policy makers, were selected using snowball sampling. The review included data from 20 schools and interviewed 30 key informants, including administrators and policy makers. The researchers employed policy document analysis, interviews with school administrators and case studies. The data collected was analyzed by qualitative content analysis whereby key themes were identified and the effectiveness of the policy interventions were as well assessed. The results revealed that policies restricting access to substances and promoting a substance-free culture were effective in reducing substance use. Challenges encountered included enforcement and cultural adaptation across diverse socioeconomic contexts. While the reviewed study collected qualitative data from the respondents only, the current study collected both qualitative and quantitative data which provided more insights to the interventions that were being used in secondary schools in Kitui West Sub-County.

Additionally, Nkhoma and Mafumbate (2019) conducted a study on strategies to combat drug abuse among primary school students in the Hhohho region of Eswatini, Southern Africa. This study used a qualitative approach and an exploratory research design to examine substance abuse prevention measures. The exploratory research facilitated focus group discussions with 20 primary school students and in-depth interviews with nine teachers and one head teacher from a single primary school. These methods aimed to explore their general attitudes, views, opinions, feelings, and understanding of drug abuse prevention measures. Data collection involved face-to-face interviews with teachers and focus group discussions with students. The data collected were analyzed thematically. The study concluded that family challenges, loneliness, boredom and peer pressure were the factors driving the pupils to start using drugs and they end up abusing them.

The above study recommended for social media campaigns against drug abuse, helping the pupils by guidance and counselling, peer counselling and parental engagement. Despite these measures, drug abuse among the pupils has not stopped completely. While the above study focused on primary school pupils in Eswatini (former Switzerland), the current study focused on secondary boarding school students in Kenyan setting who are at a different age group. Also, the above study had used a case study of one primary school while the current study combined descriptive survey and phenomenology to collect data from six secondary schools and thus have a wider range of data from different participants. The researcher was able to uncover some aspects on the interventions used which are unique to adolescents.

Another study was conducted by Ndyanabangi et al. (2021) on educational programs for alcohol and substance abuse prevention in Ugandan schools. The researcher employed a quasi-experimental study and gathered data through pre- and post-intervention surveys to assess changes in knowledge, attitudes, and self-reported behaviors related to substance use.The study employed a stratified random sampling method. Schools were stratified

based on location that is urban versus rural, then randomly selected from each stratum to ensure a representative sample. A total of 20 schools were selected, with 50 students from each school participating in the study, resulting in a sample size of 1,000 students.

III: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study utilized a mixed methods research approach adopting the convergent mixed methods research design (Creswell & Clark, 2018). This is a methodological approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of a research problem. It involves the simultaneous collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, with the aim of integrating and comparing the results to draw more robust conclusions. The quantitative component employed structured questionnaires that yielded numerical data, while the qualitative component used methods such as interviews and focus groups. By leveraging the strengths of both approaches, the convergent design allowed the researcher to validate and corroborate findings and address different aspects of the research questions. The design as well provided a richer, more nuanced understanding of the research problem.

The quantitative component employed a descriptive survey design, utilizing structured questionnaires with closed-ended questions to gather broad, numerical data, which were analyzed to identify patterns and trends across a larger population. Simultaneously, the phenomenological approach was used for the qualitative component, incorporating structured interview guides, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to delve deeply into participants' personal experiences, perspectives and contextual factors (Creswell, 2013). This dual approach allowed for a detailed exploration of both statistical trends and rich narrative insights, thereby integrating quantitative and qualitative data to achieve a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The combination of these methods was intended to leverage the strengths of both approaches, offering a fuller picture of the topic under investigation and enhancing the overall validity and depth of the study's findings.

3.2 Study Location

The research was conducted in Kitui West Sub-County, located in Kitui County, Kenya. The focus was on students in public boarding secondary schools within this sub-county to assess the specific barriers and effectiveness of interventions in this setting. The sub-county had a population of approximately 70,871 according to 2019 national census and covers total area of approximately 416.4 km^2. The respondents were drawn from both boys and girls public boarding secondary schools. The students in these schools are drawn from different parts of the country as well as the teachers. Therefore, the respondents had diverse beliefs, culture and tradition. The researcher selected the area because it yielded the needed information of interest to the researcher since no other similar study has been done there.

3.3 Target Population

The target population is the particular, conceptually defined group of potential participants that the researcher can access, which reflects the characteristics of the population of interest (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). The target population for the current study comprised of 20 public boarding secondary schools within Kitui West Sub-County. These schools consist of 20 principals, 20 teacher counselors, 240 teachers and 2,560 students (data from Kitui West Sub-County Education Office, 2023). The selection of the principals, teacher counselors, teachers and students as participants in this research was justified by the unique and valuable insights each group provided.

The researcher considered this study in secondary boarding schools because it yielded information on the extent of effectiveness of alcohol and substance abuse interventions among the students in these schools who are at adolescent stage and vulnerable to peer pressure and experimenting new things. This is supported by Johnston et al. (2021) who noted that secondary school students are at a critical age for developing substance use habits, thus making them an appropriate focus for the study. Johnson et al. (2021) further highlights that students in boarding schools may face unique risk factors such as peer pressure, academic stress and separation from family support which can contribute to substance abuse behaviors. Consequently, the students were selected because they are the primary targets of the interventions and their behaviors, attitudes and experiences are central to evaluating the effectiveness of these programs.

Teachers were sampled because they often have first-hand observations of student's behaviors, including signs of alcohol and substance abuse, as well as the behaviour change following the interventions. Teachers play a crucial role in the success of substance abuse interventions in schools by providing support, guidance and enforcement of school policies (Brown & Miller, 2021; Evans et al., 2020). Since teachers are involved in delivering and supporting the interventions within the schools settings, their insights complimented data from students as well as providing crucial information on the feasibility, implementation challenges and perceived effectiveness of the interventions employed. Moreover, teacher counselors were sampled because they specialize in providing guidance and counselling to students including those struggling with alcohol and substance abuse. This is supported by Johnson and Smith (2020) and White and Brown (2021) who highlighted that guidance and counselling teachers are uniquely qualified to tackle substance abuse issues among students because of their training in mental health and behavioral interventions. Consequently, their insights into student's behaviour, motivation and responses to interventions are thus informed by their professional training and experience. In addition, guidance and counselling teachers have established relationships of trust with the students which can facilitate discussions about more sensitive topics such as alcohol and substance abuse.

The inclusion of school principals in the study on alcohol and substance abuse interventions was crucial, as they play a pivotal role in implementing and overseeing intervention programs within boarding schools. As the primary decision-makers and leaders, principals are responsible for creating policies, enforcing rules and fostering a school environment that supports students' well-being. Research indicates that the leadership of school principals directly influences the effectiveness of school-based interventions, as their involvement ensures the proper allocation of resources, staff support and the development of a school culture that discourages substance abuse (Murphy et al., 2020). Moreover, principals have a comprehensive understanding of the school's unique challenges and student needs, making their insights essential for assessing the practicality and impact of intervention programs.

In addition, principals act as key liaisons between the school, parents, and the community, which positions them to evaluate how external factors contribute to the success or failure of substance abuse interventions. According to O'Reilly et al. (2021), effective school leadership significantly enhances the sustainability and long-term outcomes of such programs by fostering collaboration and ensuring continuous support from all stakeholders. Including principals in the study provided valuable data on how administrative leadership influences the implementation and effectiveness of alcohol and substance abuse interventions, filling an important gap in the existing literature.

3.4 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

Sampling is a process in statistical analysis where a predetermined number of observations are selected from a larger population (Tuovila, 2020).In selecting the sample population for the study, the researcher identified the public boarding secondary schools within Kitui West Sub-County. According to Suresh (2011), as quoted by Creswell & Creswell (2017), a sample size can be calculated using the following formula: $\mathbf{n = Z^2.p.(1-p)/E^2}$

Where:

n = Required sample size

Z = Critical value, Z-score relating to a confidence level, for alpha of 95%, Z is approximately 1.96.

p = Estimated proportion of the population affected by the interventions which is 50% or 0.5

E = Acceptable margin of error which is 5% or 0.05

Thus $n = (1.96)^2.0.5.(1-0.5)/(0.05)$

$n = 0.9604/0.0025 = 384.16$

n = 385 participants

The researcher will further apply **Yamane (1967)** formula for determining sample size.

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Therefore, to calculate the sample size for each group using the formula $n_i = (N_i \div N) \times n$

Where

n_i = sample size for stratum

N_i = population size of stratum

N = total population size (sum of all strata),

n = total sample size.

For principals $n_i = (20 \div 2840) \times 385 = 2.71 \approx 3$

For teacher counselors $n_i = (20 \div 2840) \times 385 = 2.71 \approx 3$

For teachers $n_i = (240 \div 2840) \times 385 = 32 \approx 33$

For students $n_i = (2560 \div 2840) \times 385 = 346.03 \approx 346$

The researcher employed stratified and random sampling for schools as well as purposive sampling for selecting key personnel such as the principals and teacher counsellors. Additionally, stratified sampling and random sampling was used for the teachers and students to ensure a diverse and representative sample

Table1
Summary of Sampling Matrix of the Participants

Unit of Analysis	Target Population	Sampling Technique	Actual Sample Size	Percentage (%)
Public Schools	20	Stratified and simple random sampling	6	30
School Principals	20	Purposive	3	15
Teachers counsellors	20	Criterion	3	15
Teachers	240	Stratified and Simple Random	36	15
Students	2,560	Stratified and Simple Random	349	13.6
Totals	2,680		397	14.8

Source: (Researcher, 2024)

3.6 Description of Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments are tools or methods used by researchers to gather information, facts or evidence relevant to their study (Creswell & Creswell, 2021). These instruments enable the researchers to

systematically and accurately capture the information necessary for their analysis and conclusions. The researcher used structured close and open-ended questionnaires, Structured questionnaires are tools used to collect data through pre-designed questions, which can include both close-ended and open-ended formats. Close-ended questions provide respondents with predefined answer options, making the data easier to analyse, while open-ended questions allow for more detailed, personalized responses, offering deeper insights into participants' views (Alshenqeeti, 2022).

The researcher as well employed focus group discussions, structured interview guides and unstructured interview guides to collect data. These instruments were used to triangulate and integrate quantitative and qualitative data. They were designed based on the study questions and aimed to explore the level of awareness of alcohol and substance abuse prevention programs and activities in public boarding secondary schools, examine factors influencing effective implementation of the interventions, identify challenges and barriers and assess the extent of effectiveness of the existing interventions and suggest improvements to enhance the effectiveness of the interventions.

3.6.1 Students` Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a research tool that includes a set of questions designed to collect information from respondents (McLeod, 2018). It was used in thee study in order to enable the researcher obtain large amounts of information within a short time. Structured questionnaires were administered to secondary school students. The Students` questionnaires (See Appendix IX) were designed using closed-ended and open-ended questions. This is because they provide standardized response options, ensuring that all the students interpret the questions in a similar manner and respond within the same framework. The researcher was able compare responses across different students and schools. Closed-ended questionnaires were used in order to obtain a more objective data thus minimizing response bias ensuring that the data obtained reflects students` perceptions and experiences accurately. Moreover, closed ended questions allowed the researcher to obtain measurable quantitative data that were analyzed using statistical methods and also to minimize chances of irrelevant answers by keeping the responses focused to the research objectives. On the other hand, open-ended questions allowed the respondents to express their thought and experiences thus provide richer and deeper insights into the research topic.

The questionnaires were divided into six sections: A, B, C, D, E and F. Section A focused on collecting demographic details from the respondents, while Section B gathered information on the level of awareness of the interventions used to address alcohol and substance abuse. Section C, sought information on the extent of effectiveness of the existing interventions. Section D, the researcher sought information on the the factors influencing the effectiveness of the interventions. Additionally, section E established the challenges faced when implementing alcohol and substance abuse interventions in schools. Lastly, section F, sought suggestions on ways of improving the existing interventions.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussion Guides

A focus group discussion (FGD) is a method of qualitative research where a small group of participants engage in a guided discussion about a particular topic. This approach allows researchers to explore participants' attitudes, perceptions and experiences in depth through dynamic group interactions (Hennink et al., 2020). A focus group discussion (FGD) (see Appendix X) was used to obtain data from the students. This is a qualitative data collection instrument that gathers insights from participants through structured group discussions facilitated by a moderator. This method is particularly effective for exploring complex behaviors, attitudes and experiences, as it leverages group dynamics to elicit richer data than individual interviews might (Krueger & Casey, 2019). It allowed for in-depth discussions, enabling participants to interact and build upon each other's responses, thereby uncovering nuanced perspectives and generating comprehensive insights into the research topic (Smithson, 2020). This enabled the researcher to gain deeper insights into the topic, thus it was useful in assessing the interventions effectiveness. Nyumba et al. (2018) emphasizes that the interactive nature of FGDs helps in identifying common themes and divergent viewpoints, making it a valuable tool for assessing the effectiveness and impact of such interventions in boarding school setting.

Focus group discussion instruments were administered to one boy` and one girl` schools who were exempted from filling the students` questionnaires. It was organized into six sections. Section A collected demographic information from the students. Section B comprised of questions seeking information on the level of

awareness of the existing interventions in schools. Additionally, section C focused on the extent of effectiveness of the interventions. Section D sought information on the factors influencing the effectiveness of the interventions. In addition, section E sought information on challenges facing the implementation of the interventions while section F sought suggestions on how the interventions can be improved. This enabled the researcher gather deeper insights of the students` perception and experiences of the implementation process of the interventions.

3.6.3 Teachers` Questionnaires

Teachers` questionnaires (See Appendix VIII) were designed using closed-ended and open-ended questions. This is because they provide standardized response options, ensuring that teachers interpret the questions in a similar manner and respond within the same framework. The researcher was able compare responses of teachers across different schools. Closed-ended questionnaires were used in order to obtain a more objective data thus minimizing response bias ensuring that the data obtained reflects teachers` perceptions accurately. Additionally, using closed-ended questions enabled the researcher to gather quantifiable data that were analysed statistically, while reducing the likelihood of irrelevant responses by ensuring the answers remain aligned with the research objectives. Conversely, open-ended questions gave respondents the opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences, offering more detailed and insightful perspectives on the research topic.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Validity refers to how well a research instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Thus, validity ensures that an instrument correctly assesses the intended concept, whether through content, construct or criterion-related validity, thus making sure that the results are significant and pertinent. Reliability, on the other hand, relates to the consistency and stability of the measurements provided by the instrument (Bordens & Abbott, 2022). It guarantees consistency and stability of measurements, whether evaluated over time within the instrument itself or between different raters, thereby ensuring that the results are reliable and reproducible. Validity and reliability are crucial for ensuring the robustness and credibility of research instruments.

3.7.1 Credibility and Dependability of Qualitative Research Instruments

Credibility refers to the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings and is achieved through rigorous methodological practices (Shenton, 2021). Dependability in qualitative research refers to the reliability of the research process and findings. It ensures that the study results are consistent over time and across various conditions. The researcher had the research instruments evaluated by peers and experts to confirm that they accurately measure what they are intended to. Expert feedback helped refine the research methodology and address potential biases in the original study design. Validity in qualitative research instruments ensured that the study genuinely reflects participants' perspectives and experiences, providing an authentic representation of the phenomenon being studied. It also enhanced the transferability of findings, allowing other researchers and practitioners to apply the insights to similar contexts. Moreover, maintaining validity helped to identify and mitigate researcher bias, ensuring that conclusions are based on data rather than preconceived notions.

To ensure the reliability of qualitative tools, the researcher shared findings with participants for verification of data accuracy and interpretation. This feedback helps ensure that participants' perspectives are accurately represented (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Additionally, the researcher involved peers in reviewing data collection methods and findings. This external review adds another layer of scrutiny and helps identify potential biases or gaps (Nowell et., 2017). Using standardized structured interview guides also ensured uniformity across different sessions and participants, thereby upholding the reliability of the research instruments.

3.7.2 Validity and Reliability of Quantitative Tools

Validity refers to the extent to which a quantitative research tool accurately measures what it is designed to measure. It includes aspects such as content validity, construct validity, and criterion-related validity, ensuring that the instrument yields accurate, reliable, and relevant information about the concept under investigation (Creswell &

Creswell, 2018). Content validity was ensured by making sure the instrument covers all relevant aspects of the construct through an extensive literature review and consultation with experts. Face validity was evaluated by having experts assess whether the instrument appears to measure what it intends to based on a superficial review.

3.7.2.1 Pretesting of Research Instruments

Pretesting of research instruments is a crucial step in research because it helps refine and improve research questionnaires and interview guides, before they are used in the main study. The researcher conducted a pilot test with a small sample of 10 students and 2 teachers from a public boarding secondary school in Kitui Central Sub-County to identify and address any validity issues. This process ensured that the research tools measured the intended constructs effectively and would produce consistent results. Conducting a pilot test allowed the researcher to identify and address potential issues with the clarity, relevance and structure of the questions, thus ensuring that they effectively captured the intended information.

By testing the instruments on a smaller scale, researcher assessed the feasibility and practicality of the data collection process, making necessary adjustments to enhance the overall reliability and validity of the research tools (Kumar, 2021). Additionally, the pretest provided opportunity to evaluate the procedures and logistics of the research, such as the time required for data collection and any potential challenges participants might face. This preliminary phase helped the researcher anticipate and mitigate problems that could arise during the full-scale study, leading to more credible findings.

3.7.2.2 Reliability of Quantitative Instruments

Reliability refers to the extent to which the results of a study can be consistently replicated under the same conditions (Caroll & Goodfriend, 2022). The researcher ensured the reliability of the quantitative research instruments by testing whether pre-tested questionnaires for students and teachers produce consistent results. This helped in verifying that the measurements are accurate and reflect the true value of the variables being assessed, thus reducing measurement errors and enhancing the overall quality of the data. Additionally, the researcher ensured clarity in the instructions and language used in the questionnaires and verified that the allocated time for completing the questionnaires is sufficient.

3.7.3 Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research Instruments and the Research Process

In qualitative research, ensuring dependability and credibility is crucial for validating the accuracy and reliability of findings. It is concerned with making sure the research process is stable and reproducible, allowing future researchers to follow the same procedures and arrive at similar conclusions. Credibility, on the other hand, is concerned with ensuring that the research accurately reflects the participants' views, which can be achieved through techniques like member checking and triangulation (Creswell, 2013). It ensures that the study findings genuinely represent what the participants experienced or intended to convey. These methods are essential for enhancing the trustworthiness of qualitative studies, as they ensure that the research process is both consistent and accurately reflective of the participants' perspectives.

Methodological triangulation was used by the researcher to ensure trustworthiness, incorporating various data collection methods such as questionnaires, focus group discussions, and interviews within the same study to validate findings across different approaches. This strategy allowed for more comprehensive understanding of the research problem by combining both quantitative and qualitative data. Additionally, the researcher had the research instruments reviewed by experts and conducted pilot testing to ensure that the tools accurately measure the intended constructs and avoid ambiguous questions. Expert reviews helped refine the instruments, ensuring they were both relevant and appropriate for the study context, while pilot testing identified potential issues in question clarity and response accuracy, further enhancing the reliability of the data collection process.

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3.8 Description of Data Collection Procedures

The researcher worked with the Catholic University of Eastern Africa to secure an official introductory letter for the study which is crucial for legitimacy and support. The researcher then sought approval from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) to ensure compliance with legal and ethical guidelines. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires which were administered to the sampled students and teachers by the researcher. These questionnaires were disseminated to participants in public boarding secondary schools in Kitui West Sub-County. The researcher ensured that these instruments were administered consistently and ethically, with careful attention to participants' confidentiality and informed consent. The researcher also collected and carefully reviewed the completed instruments to maintain integrity of the responses.

Additionally, qualitative data were collected through structured and unstructured interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher organized and conducted focus group discussions with students from two schools who were not completing the questionnaires. The researcher obtained permission from the school administrator and assent from the students. A convenient time for conducting the focused group discussion was agreed upon which was lasting 45 minutes. The researcher sought consent of the respondents, assured them of confidentiality and explained the purpose of the study. The researcher grouped the students into strata according to their class level from form one to form four with each group comprising of 15 students. The students were asked questions using a guide and allowed to discuss as the researcher probed for more insights. The researcher took notes of the responses given for later analysis. After the session, the students were debriefed and thanked for their participation. The data collected was coded for analysis.

3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation

Quantitative data collected through questionnaires were systematically analyzed using descriptive statistics. The first step involved organizing the raw data to ensure accuracy and completeness. This included entering the data into the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 27, where it was subjected to various statistical analyses. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were calculated to summarize the data. Frequencies and percentages provided insights into the distribution of categorical responses. The statistical data were presented in a comprehensive manner using tables, and graphs to visually convey the patterns and trends observed in the data.

Thematic analysis approach was employed to analyse qualitative data, which were collected through structured interview guides, unstructured interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher first gave the principals codes as PMSI for a male principal in school 1, PFS2 for a female principal in schools 2 and PMS3 for male principal in school 3. The teacher counselors were as well given codes as TCFS1 for female teacher counselor in school 1, TCFS2 for a female teacher counselor in schools 2 and TCMS3 for male teacher counselor in school 3. In addition, the students participating in focus group discussions were coded as Female students, FGDs1 and Male Students FGDs2. These codes were used during data analysis.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis involves six key steps, which are discussed in this section. The first step was familiarization with the data which involved thoroughly reading through detailed notes from focus group discussions and interviews, involving students, teachers' counselors, and administrators. The aim was to get a clear understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes toward the interventions in place. The second step was generating initial codes which was manually done. It involved identifying important features of the discussions that relate to the research focus such as recurring mentions of peer mentorship, school rules, counseling programs and administrative support which were coded. Similarly, negative feedback such as lack of follow-up, fear of punishment and insufficient resources were also be captured as codes. These initial codes helped break the data into meaningful chunks and start the process of organizing responses according to common ideas.

IV: RESULTS

Table 2: ***Level of Support from School Administrators***

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Support from Administration	Frequency	Percent
Neutral	3	8.3%
Agree	15	41.7%
Strongly Agree	18	50.0%
Total	**36**	**100%**

The data regarding the level of support from school administration, with over 91% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that the administration adequately supported intervention programs, suggests that leadership plays a pivotal role in the success of substance abuse prevention initiatives. This high level of support indicates that when school leadership is actively involved in and committed to these programs, it creates a positive and empowering environment for both teachers and students. Teachers, in particular, felt more confident and capable of addressing substance abuse issues when they have administrative backing. This is supported by Okoth (2021), who noted that where the principals were engaged in the supporting the intervention practices, cases of drug and substance abuse were lower. Such support can include providing resources, facilitating professional development for staff, and ensuring that programs are integrated into the school's overall strategy for student's well-being. This suggests that when school leadership is actively involved in enforcing policies and promoting preventive programs, students are less likely to engage in substance abuse thus enhancing the effectiveness of the interventions.

However, the small minority of respondents who remained neutral suggests that there were still be gaps in how administrative support was perceived or enacted. These neutral responses could point to areas where support might not be as consistently applied, potentially in terms of resource allocation, communication, or the prioritization of substance abuse programs. This indicates that while many schools may have strong administrative frameworks in place, there may be inconsistencies in how this support is delivered across different schools. These gaps could lead to uneven implementation of prevention programs, across the schools within Kitui West Sub-county.

Schools serve as a primary setting for reaching adolescents, making them a strategic location for implementing prevention and support initiatives. The school environment plays a crucial role in the success of alcohol and substance abuse intervention programs. Table 11 presents the data on how respondents felt concerning conducive school environment.

4.2 Regression Analysis

Table 3 presents the regression results on the effect of communication channels exposure, student leadership role, and prior training on the level of awareness of alcohol and substance abuse interventions among students in public boarding secondary schools in Kitui West Sub-County. The table shows the unstandardized coefficients (B), standard errors, standardized coefficients (Beta), t-statistics, and significance values for each predictor variable. These results were used to determine the relative contribution of each predictor in explaining variations in students' awareness levels.

Table 3: Regression Analysis

Predictor Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.

Predictor Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.324	0.211	—	6.279	0.000*
Communication Channels Exposure	0.482	0.067	0.511	7.194	0.000*
Student Leadership Role (Prefect/Club)	0.339	0.094	0.284	3.606	0.000*
Prior ASA Training (Yes=1, No=0)	0.276	0.083	0.226	3.325	0.001*

The regression coefficients indicated that the constant term was statistically significant ($B = 1.324$, $t = 6.279$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that even without the influence of the predictor variables, there was a baseline level of awareness among students. Communication channels exposure had a positive and significant effect on awareness ($B = 0.482$, $\beta = 0.511$, $t = 7.194$, $p < 0.001$). This implied that an increase in the number of communication channels available to students was associated with a substantial rise in their level of awareness regarding alcohol and substance abuse interventions.

Similarly, student leadership roles were found to significantly predict awareness ($B = 0.339$, $\beta = 0.284$, $t = 3.606$, $p < 0.001$). Students who served as prefects or participated in clubs exhibited higher awareness compared to their counterparts without leadership responsibilities. Prior training on alcohol and substance abuse also emerged as a significant predictor ($B = 0.276$, $\beta = 0.226$, $t = 3.325$, $p = 0.001$). Students who had undergone such training demonstrated better understanding and recognition of the interventions than those who had not.

Overall, the findings showed that communication exposure, leadership involvement, and prior training were all strong and statistically significant contributors to students' awareness levels. This highlighted the importance of using multiple communication channels, empowering student leaders, and offering regular training to enhance awareness of alcohol and substance abuse interventions in public boarding secondary schools.

4.3 ANOVA

Table 2 presents the analysis of variance (ANOVA) results for the regression model examining the relationship between communication channels exposure, student leadership role, prior training, and the level of awareness of alcohol and substance abuse interventions among students in public boarding secondary schools in Kitui West Sub-County. The table shows the sum of squares, degrees of freedom, mean squares, F-statistic, and significance value, which were used to test the overall fitness and statistical significance of the regression model.

Table 4: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	45.263	3	15.088	63.874	0.000*
Residual	41.112	174	0.236		
Total	86.375	177			

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) results showed that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(3,174) = 63.874$, $p < 0.001$. The regression sum of squares was 45.263 with 3 degrees of freedom, while the residual sum of squares was 41.112 with 174 degrees of freedom. The mean square for regression was 15.088 compared to 0.236 for the residual. This indicated that the variance explained by the predictor variables—communication channels exposure, student leadership role, and prior training—was substantially greater than the unexplained variance. The significant F-ratio confirmed that the overall model provided a good fit for the data and that the predictors collectively explained a significant proportion of the variance in students' awareness of alcohol and substance abuse interventions in public boarding secondary schools.

V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the evidence gathered, the researcher arrived at the conclusion that there was a commendable level of awareness among the teachers and students of alcohol and substance abuse interventions being implemented in school with counselling being the most employed strategy. In addition, the use of peer education, and guest speakers reflects a proactive effort, yet the limited use of interactive formats like workshops and student participation reduces the overall effectiveness of these interventions. Although counselling plays a central role, an over-reliance on it without adequately integrating other approaches weakens the holistic impact.

5.2 Recommendations

The Ministry of Education should standardize and regularly review school policies on alcohol and substance abuse to ensure consistency and relevance across all institutions, with annual updates to address emerging trends.

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