



Influence of Parental Alcohol Abuse on Students' Attitudes Towards Alcohol Abuse in Public Secondary Schools in Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi

By

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Abstract

This study investigated how parental alcohol abuse influences students' attitudes towards alcohol abuse in public secondary schools in Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi County. Guided by Systems Theory, the study adopted a convergent parallel design, supplemented by cross-sectional and phenomenological approaches. The target population comprised principals, teachers, students, and the Sub-County Director of Education, with a sample of 4 principals, 48 teachers, 285 Form Three and Four students, and 1 SCDE. Data were collected using questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, observation, and document analysis, with validity and reliability ensured prior to administration. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS to generate frequencies and percentages, while qualitative data were subjected to content analysis. Findings revealed that parental alcohol abuse significantly shapes students' attitudes by normalizing drinking, reducing parental guidance, and fostering emotional neglect. As a result, students exposed to parental alcohol use were more likely to view alcohol consumption as acceptable, experiment with drinking, and engage in indiscipline. The study concludes that the home environment is a critical risk factor influencing learners' perceptions and predisposition to alcohol misuse. It recommends that schools, parents, and the Ministry of Education collaborate to implement awareness programs, strengthen counseling services, and sensitize parents on the dangers of modeling alcohol abuse to their children.

Key Words: Parental alcohol abuse, Students' attitudes towards alcohol, Public secondary schools, Embakasi Sub-County, Alcohol prevention interventions, Kenya

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INTRODUCTION

Parental alcohol abuse, defined as continued drinking despite serious social, professional, or interpersonal repercussions, has long been recognized as a family-level risk factor (American Psychological Association, 2024). In educational settings, student discipline refers to rules, strategies, and sanctions designed to maintain a conducive learning environment (NCSSLE, 2022). Research consistently links problematic parental drinking with higher risks of indiscipline, absenteeism, aggression, and disengagement among students (WHO, 2021; UNICEF, 2020). Children exposed to alcohol misuse often experience inconsistent parenting, poor supervision, and emotional neglect, factors that undermine their self-regulation and increase susceptibility to disruptive school behaviours (Grant et al., 2019).

Evidence from developed countries underscores this connection. In the UK, parental alcohol abuse is treated as a child protection issue due to its association with neglect and student misbehaviour. Canadian studies show that students often access substances through family-members (Goodman et al., 2023). In the U.S., children of alcohol-misusing parents display higher dropout rates and disciplinary referrals (Martin et al., 2023). Australia highlights socioeconomic inequities as barriers to effective family-support programs despite policy interventions. Together, these findings illustrate the persistence of school-discipline challenges tied to parental alcohol misuse in resource-rich contexts.

Similar dynamics are reported across Africa. In South Africa, Nigeria, and Uganda, alcohol-related family dysfunctions are linked to disobedience, absenteeism, and poor academic focus among students (Mabasa & Ramaligela, 2023; Ayodele et al., 2022). In Zambia, adolescents with drinking parents showed higher indiscipline due to erratic supervision (Mvula & Phiri, 2021). Ethiopian studies linked parental alcohol misuse to student aggression (Alemu et al., 2022), while Tanzanian schools reported rising behavioral problems despite limited counselling programs (Lusekelo, 2021). These findings point to gaps in institutional support across African settings.

In Kenya, parental alcohol abuse has been identified as a driver of absenteeism, defiance, and susceptibility to peer pressure (Otieno et al., 2023; Kamau et al., 2023). Wambugu et al. (2023)

further noted that when alcohol misuse coincides with financial struggles, students are more prone to indiscipline. County-level studies reveal similar trends: Kiambu reported negative correlations between parental participation and student behavior (Karanja, 2023); Mombasa and Baringo highlighted classroom disruptions and school violence tied to parental drinking (Barasa et al., 2023; Chelimo & Ruto, 2022). National surveys confirm the scale: 40% of secondary students reported alcohol use within their homes, while 43% had a close family member abusing substances (NACADA, 2019).

Nairobi County reflects this national pattern, with 42.3% lifetime alcohol use among adults (NACADA, 2019). Despite counselling and awareness programs, implementation gaps persist due to inadequate resources, high counselor–student ratios, and parental non-involvement (Chelimo & Ruto, 2022). Embakasi, one of Nairobi’s most densely populated and socioeconomically diverse sub-counties, faces amplified risks. Yet, most studies in Kenya have emphasized peer influence (Musyoka et al., 2021) and school-level factors (Ngesa & Wanjohi, 2020), leaving parental alcohol abuse underexplored, particularly in urban settings like Embakasi. This gap justifies the present study.

Schools provide structure, guidance, and stability, but these foundations are undermined when parental alcohol misuse leads to neglect, poor supervision, and permissive attitudes toward substance use (UNICEF, 2020). National data indicate that 3.2 million Kenyans aged 15–65 currently consume alcohol, with urban prevalence reaching 19.1% (NACADA, 2022). In such contexts, children are more likely to adopt maladaptive behaviors, reflected in absenteeism, aggression, and poor discipline in schools.

In Embakasi Sub-County, educators report rising cases of indiscipline linked to parental drinking (Kamau et al., 2023). Yet, existing Kenyan studies have disproportionately emphasized peer pressure and school-level dynamics (Musyoka et al., 2021; Waweru, 2020), overlooking parental influence despite global evidence that children of alcohol-abusing parents are at heightened risk of truancy, aggression, and disengagement (NIDA, 2023; Kuppens et al., 2020). To date, no published research has directly examined this link in Embakasi’s public secondary schools. This study therefore seeks to bridge that gap by investigating the influence of parental alcohol abuse on student discipline in the sub-county. It sought to answer the following question:

How do parental alcohol abuse influence students' attitudes towards alcohol abuse in public secondary schools in Embakasi sub-county?

Students' attitudes about alcohol intake are greatly influenced by parental alcohol abuse, especially in secondary school settings. Teenagers who witness their parents drinking frequently believe that alcohol consumption is common or appropriate, which makes them more likely to adopt permissive views and start drinking themselves (Kamenderi et al., 2020). Studies conducted show that children are more likely to start using alcohol at a young age and have a good perception of it when their parents often drink or supply it at home (Kamenderi et al., 2020; & Kimani et al., 2019). Furthermore, heightened teenage sensitivity to alcohol consumption has been associated with neglectful parenting practices and insufficient parental supervision (Mutie, 2019). Therefore, in the Embakasi sub-county, positive student attitudes on alcohol intake in public secondary schools are probably influenced by parental alcohol abuse.

The study by Srivastava, Kumar, Rashmi, Paul, and Dhillon (2021) looked at how alcohol abuse in families and communities affected the actions of teenagers toward drug and alcohol abuse in India. The study used a three-level random intercept logit model to assess a sample of 5,969 teenage males in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, ages 10 to 19, using data from the 2016 Understanding the Lives of Adolescents and Young Adults (UDAYA) survey. Results showed that 16% of teenage boys took drugs, with rates higher among those who were employed (35%) and school dropouts (40%). Furthermore, 19%, 24%, and 28% of teenagers, respectively, were from households with a tobacco, alcohol, or drug user. The study emphasizes that teenagers are far more likely to take drugs if they are exposed to alcohol abuse in their families and the community. These findings highlight the necessity of focused interventions at the home and community levels to lower adolescent drug use risks.

In order to determine the prevalence of drug and alcohol use among secondary school students in Botswana's urban and peri-urban areas, as well as to investigate risk and protective variables related to these behaviors, Riva et al. (2018) performed a research. In this cross-sectional research, students from 17 public secondary schools in Gaborone, Lobatse, Molepolole, and Mochudi were given a survey consisting of 72 items. The Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test

(AUDIT), developed by the World Health Organization, was used to identify hazardous drinking habits, and Jessor's Problem Behavior Theory (PBT) served as the framework for analyzing the variables affecting drug and alcohol abuse. To evaluate risk and protective factors for alcohol and drug use, the study used culturally appropriate measures from established instruments. Several multivariate logit models were used in the analysis to investigate the connections between these variables and the drug use behaviors of the students. Out of 1,936 respondents, 42.1% reported using alcohol, with 22.4% of those who met the criterion for hazardous use, and 16.7% reported using illegal drugs, the most prevalent of which was marijuana. High alcohol availability, social and personal vulnerabilities, and harmful peer pressure were important risk variables; on the other hand, societal and individual controls seemed to have protective benefits. These results demonstrate the high rate of alcohol and drug use among secondary school students in Botswana, indicating that measures to restrict access to drugs and to fortify adolescent support systems may be useful in lowering usage.

Mpofu and Nkosi's (2019) study examined how students' views about drug use in South African public secondary schools were influenced by their parents' alcohol abuse. Due to their high degree of impressionability, adolescents' attitudes and perceptions are greatly influenced by the actions of their parents. Students who see parental alcohol abuse are more likely to have positive views about substances, which might normalize alcohol abuse behaviors in the household setting. The Social Learning Theory, which holds that children imitate behaviors seen in their immediate surroundings, including parental patterns, was used in this study. Indeed, 1,500 students from 15 public secondary schools in Johannesburg and Cape Town's metropolitan and peri-urban districts participated in a cross-sectional study. Students self-reported parental alcohol usage, and a modified version of the adolescent alcohol abuse knowledge, attitude, and behavior questionnaire was used to gather data on students' views regarding alcohol abuse. Students from families with substance-using parents were 1.8 times more likely to have permissive views about drugs, according to logistic regression analysis, which showed a strong correlation between parental alcohol abuse and students' chance of having such attitudes. These results highlight the significance of family-centered therapies by indicating that parental alcohol abuse has a significant impact on children's attitudes toward drug use.

A research by Misango, Mwaura, and Rop (2021) investigated how parental behavior affected drug and alcohol abuse among secondary school students in Kwale County's Kinango Sub-County. Under the direction of Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) and Erickson's Social Development Theory, the study employed a survey research methodology with 4,964 participants, including deputy principals, directors of guidance and counselling departments, and students. Four public secondary schools were chosen by stratified random selection, producing a sample of 384 students, four deputy principals, and four guidance and counseling heads. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect the data, and SPSS version 23 was used for both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Cronbach's alpha of 0.842 indicated that the instruments were reliable, and validity was guaranteed by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test. The results showed that parental effect on drug and alcohol abuse among students was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Given their position as role models, the report advises parents to refrain from using drugs and calls for improved guidance and counseling services in schools.

In their (2020) study, Kariuki and Mwangi investigated how much students' views regarding drug use in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya, are influenced by their parents' alcohol abuse. Family dynamics, particularly parental actions, have a substantial impact on adolescents' attitudes toward drug use. These behaviors can either discourage or encourage alcohol abuse. This study examined the effects of parental drug usage on pupils' views and acceptability of drug-related behaviors using the Social Learning Theory as a framework. Indeed, 800 students from five public secondary schools in Nairobi participated in a cross-sectional study. Structured questionnaires tailored to gauge attitudes about drug usage were used to gather data. Students with substance-using parents were 2.3 times more likely to acquire positive views regarding drug use, viewing it as normalized or acceptable, according to logistic regression analysis. The results highlight the necessity of family-centered treatments by indicating that parental influence is crucial in forming young people's opinions. These findings emphasize how crucial parental role modeling is in Kenya's attempts to reduce teen drug usage.

This study was grounded in Systems Theory developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1968, which provides a framework for understanding how interconnected subsystems influence educational outcomes. Schools are viewed as open systems that continuously interact with their environment through inputs and outputs (Liu et al., 2022). In this study, parental alcohol abuse

represents a disturbance within the family subsystem, which spills into the school environment through its influence on students' attitudes, participation, and discipline. Systems Theory underscores the interdependence of these subsystems, suggesting that disruptions at home inevitably manifest in students' perceptions of alcohol, often normalizing risky behaviors and undermining school discipline. This makes the theory particularly relevant in examining how parental alcohol misuse shapes learners' attitudes in Embakasi's public secondary schools.

The theory further highlights concepts critical to understanding student behavior, including interdependence, openness, feedback, and adaptation. When one subsystem is disrupted, such as through parental alcohol abuse, it impacts others, including peer relations and classroom conduct (Liu et al., 2022). Openness explains how external family challenges enter school settings, while feedback loops demonstrate how parental and school responses can either reinforce or mitigate alcohol-related attitudes among students. Adaptation emphasizes the need for schools to develop proactive measures, such as counselling, restorative practices, and parent-school collaboration, to maintain balance. Empirical studies affirm that schools employing systemic strategies, such as multi-tiered support and whole-school approaches, achieve better discipline outcomes than those relying solely on punitive measures (McIntosh et al., 2024; Reed et al., 2024).

Despite its strengths, Systems Theory has notable limitations. It is often criticized for being overly abstract and general, making it difficult to establish specific causal pathways between parental alcohol abuse and student attitudes toward drinking (Smith & Brown, 2025). Operationalizing concepts such as "system balance" or "feedback loops" remains a challenge for empirical testing. Furthermore, systemic solutions demand significant resources, coordination, and sustained commitment, which are often constrained in underfunded public schools in Embakasi. Critics also caution that focusing too heavily on external systemic factors risks minimizing students' individual agency and resilience (Reed et al., 2024). Nonetheless, Systems Theory remains a powerful lens for understanding the systemic roots of alcohol-related attitudes and for guiding integrated interventions that connect families, schools, and communities in addressing indiscipline.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed-methods convergent parallel research design, which allowed for simultaneous collection and integration of quantitative and qualitative data to enhance validity and depth of understanding (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The quantitative strand utilized a cross-sectional survey design, which was appropriate for examining trends and correlations between parental alcohol abuse and students' attitudes within a defined time frame (Kothari, 2019). In parallel, the qualitative strand employed a phenomenological approach to capture participants' lived experiences, providing nuanced insights into how parental alcohol abuse shapes students' perceptions of alcohol (Vagle, 2018). This methodological integration ensured triangulation, thereby strengthening the study's reliability and credibility.

The study targeted a population of 2,850 students, 270 teachers, seven principals, and one Sub-County Director of Education (SCDE) drawn from seven public secondary schools in Embakasi Sub-County (Nairobi County Annual Development Plan, 2023). Stratified random sampling was employed to select four schools, representing both county and sub-county categories, thus ensuring diversity in institutional contexts (Taherdoost, 2020). From these schools, 285 students were sampled systematically to ensure proportional representation by class and gender, while 80 teachers were selected using Yamane's (1967) formula with proportionate allocation to account for gender balance. Additionally, four principals and the SCDE were purposively included due to their policy and leadership roles, which provided contextual insights into institutional responses to parental alcohol abuse.

Data collection employed multiple tools tailored to both quantitative and qualitative strands. A structured questionnaire administered to teachers captured quantifiable patterns of student attitudes and behaviors linked to parental alcohol abuse (McLeod, 2024). Focus group discussions with students provided a platform for peer-based reflection on lived experiences (Tegan, 2021). Principals and the SCDE were engaged through semi-structured interviews to explore institutional strategies and challenges in addressing student alcohol-related issues (Patton, 2019). Supplementary tools included document analysis of disciplinary records and policies (Bowen, 2022) and observation checklists to capture behavioral indicators in school environments (O'Leary, 2023). This multi-instrument approach enriched data sources while supporting triangulation.

Data analysis followed both statistical and thematic pathways. Quantitative data were coded and analyzed using SPSS version 23 to generate descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, and inferential tests including ANOVA and regression to determine the extent to which parental alcohol abuse influenced students' attitudes (Creswell, 2021). Qualitative data from interviews, FGDs, documents, and observations were thematically analyzed through transcription, coding, and theme generation to identify recurring patterns aligned with research objectives (Nowell et al., 2017). The integration of both datasets at the interpretation stage enhanced the study's ability to present a comprehensive account of how parental alcohol abuse affects students' attitudes, behaviors, and school discipline.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Examining how much parental alcohol abuse influence students' preference towards alcohol abuse in public secondary schools in Embakasi sub-county was the goal of the first research question. Eight distinct statements on parental alcohol abuse and its influence on students' preference towards alcohol usage were given to teachers, who were asked to rate their agreement with each one. This was done using a five-point Likert scale, where the choices were Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Neutral (3), Disagree (4), and Strongly Disagree (5). Table 1 presents the assessment's summarized findings in an organized manner.

Table 1

Teacher Responses to Parental Alcohol abuse on Students' Preference to Alcohol Abuse Use (n=62)

No.	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
i	Students from parents who abuse alcohol tend to prefer alcohol themselves.	18 (29.0%)	22 (35.5%)	12 (19.4%)	8 (12.9%)	2 (3.2%)
ii	Parental alcohol abuse increases students' interest in experimenting with alcohol.	15 (24.2%)	20 (32.3%)	14 (22.6%)	9 (14.5%)	4 (6.5%)
iii	Learners exposed to parental drinking develop positive attitudes towards alcohol.	16 (25.8%)	18 (29.0%)	10 (16.1%)	11 (17.7%)	7 (11.3%)
iv	I have observed students admire their parents' alcohol abuse behavior.	14 (22.6%)	23 (37.1%)	11 (17.7%)	10 (16.1%)	4 (6.5%)
v	Parental alcohol abuse encourages students to normalize alcohol use.	12 (19.4%)	24 (38.7%)	8 (12.9%)	12 (19.4%)	6 (9.7%)

vi	Students from drug-using families show a higher preference for alcohol abuse.	17 (27.4%)	23 (37.1%)	12 (19.4%)	6 (9.7%)	4 (6.5%)
vii	Parental alcohol abuse habits influence how students perceive alcohol abuse risks.	16 (25.8%)	24 (38.7%)	10 (16.1%)	6 (9.7%)	6 (9.7%)
viii	Students whose parents abuse alcohol are more open to trying it themselves.	12 (19.4%)	19 (30.6%)	14 (22.6%)	10 (16.1%)	7 (11.3%)

Source: *Field Data (2025)*

Of the teachers who responded to the first item in Table 1, 18 (29.0%) strongly agreed and 22 (35.5%) agreed that students whose parents abuse alcohol also tend to like alcohol. As a result, 40 respondents, or (64.5%), agreed with this statement. Eight (12.9%) disagreed, only two (3.2%) strongly disagreed, and twelve (19.4%) were unsure. These results imply that students' preferences for alcohol are directly influenced by parental alcohol addiction. Concerns over the intergenerational transmission of alcohol abuse habits are strengthened by the comparatively low disagreement, which suggests that teachers frequently notice such trends. The noteworthy proportion of unsure answers can represent situations in which the influence is subtle or difficult for teachers to see.

A total of (56.5%) of teachers agreed with the second statement, with 15 (24.2%) strongly agreeing and 20 (32.3%) agreeing that parental alcohol abuse encourages students to try alcohol. Conversely, 4 (6.5%) strongly disagreed, 9 (14.5%) disagreed, and 14 (22.6%) were unsure. According to these findings, more than (50%) of educators think that parental drug usage significantly influences students' curiosity about alcohol abuse. The (22.6%) neutrality indicates that although the connection is recognized, some teachers might not have enough concrete proof or may find it difficult to identify these latent tendencies in their students.

Of the 34 teachers (54.8%) who agreed with the third item, 16 (25.8%) strongly agreed and 18 (29.0%) agreed that students who witness their parents drinking have positive attitudes toward alcohol. Eleven (17.7%) disagreed, seven (11.3%) strongly disagreed, and ten (16.1%) were unsure. According to these results, over (50%) of respondents believe that students' positive attitudes about alcohol are influenced by their parents' drinking. Students' resistance to alcohol is probably weakened by positive reinforcement from their family surroundings. Nonetheless, the existence of neutrality and disagreement, which account for about (45.2%), suggests that not all

students are impacted equally, maybe as a result of personal fortitude or outside protective variables.

A total of 37 (59.7%) teachers agreed with the fourth item, with 14 (22.6%) strongly agreeing and 23 (37.1%) agreeing that they have seen students admire their parents' alcohol abuse behavior. Ten (16.1%) disagreed, four (6.5%) strongly disagreed, and eleven (17.7%) were unsure. These findings show that almost (60%) of teachers believe that students' admiration for their parents' drug use is a worrying trend. This kind of appreciation makes it more likely that students will follow suit, which feeds the drug-use loop. Depending on the specific situation, students may reject or disassociate themselves from parental alcohol abuse, according to the combined (22.6%) disagreement and (17.7%) unsure responses.

Additionally, 36 (58.1%) instructors agreed with the fifth item, with 12 (19.4%) strongly agreeing and 24 (38.7%) agreeing that parental alcohol abuse helps students to normalize alcohol use. On the other hand, 6 (9.7%) strongly disagreed, 12 (19.4%) disagreed, and 8 (12.9%) were unsure. This indicates that teachers strongly believe that students' perceptions of alcohol intake as appropriate are influenced by their parents' alcohol abuse. While normalization is a widespread concern, some students may be resistant to such effects or protected by other factors, such as strong school support systems or alternative role models, according to the (29.1%) disagreement and uncertain respondents.

According to the sixth statement, 40 respondents (64.5%) agreed, with 17 teachers (27.4%) strongly agreeing and 23 (37.1%) agreeing that students from drug-using households have a stronger preference for alcohol abuse. Six (9.7%) disagreed, four (6.5%) strongly disagreed, and twelve (19.4%) were unsure. This demonstrates that a sizable percentage of educators think that children from drug-using homes are more likely to develop a preference for drugs themselves. Variations in individual student behavior, resilience, or the existence of outside interventions that lessen these dangers within some families could be the cause of the moderate levels of disagreement and neutrality.

Of the 40 teachers (64.5%) who responded to the seventh statement, 16 (25.8%) strongly agreed and 24 (38.7%) agreed that students' perceptions of the risks of alcohol abuse are influenced by their parents' drug use. Six (9.7%) disagreed, six (9.7%) strongly disagreed, and ten (16.1%) were still unsure. According to the majority opinion, students' perceptions of substance-related

risks are skewed and probably minimize the risks when they observe drug use in their families. The 19.4% disagreement shows that, in certain situations, witnessing parents' drug use may discourage rather than promote risky conduct. This could be because to unfavorable personal experiences or outside factors like information received in school.

The last response shows that 19 teachers agreed and 12 teachers strongly agreed (19.4% and 30.6%, respectively), indicating that 31 teachers (50.0%) think kids whose parents drink alcohol are more likely to attempt it themselves. Ten (16.1%) disagreed, seven (11.3%) strongly disagreed, and fourteen (22.6%) were unsure. The importance of family influence is highlighted by the fact that half of the respondents agree that parental alcohol abuse makes students more receptive to alcohol experimentation. Nonetheless, the (27.4%) disagreement and (22.6%) neutrality show that student answers vary, with some opposing parental influence because of their own personal convictions, peer pressure, or school-based intervention initiatives.

Using the observation checklist, the researcher observed clear student behavioral patterns that matched Table 1's teacher perceptions. For example, several students showed indicators of inattention, disengagement during class, and sporadic disciplinary problems, which teachers frequently attributed to challenges in their homes where alcohol consumption by parents was common. Additionally, observations showed that students from influenced households were more likely to hang out with classmates who accepted dangerous behaviors, such as casual conversations about alcohol. Additionally, these adolescents were more likely to exhibit classroom behaviors including tardiness, absenteeism, and poor hygiene, which may indicate that their home environment contributed to a lack of motivation and a propensity to emulate their parents' behaviors.

On the other hand, trends found in the documents aligned with the responses of the teachers. The relationship between home influence and school engagement was confirmed by school attendance records, which showed a greater absenteeism rate among students from households dealing with alcohol-related disorders. The assertion that parental alcohol abuse promoted the normality of such behavior was supported by disciplinary records that also showed repeated offenses like rudeness, absenteeism, and in certain situations, drug possession. Furthermore, scholastic records showed that these adolescents frequently received worse scores than their contemporaries, indicating that home situations including alcohol had a detrimental

effect on concentration and dedication to learning. When combined, the observational and documentary data supported the finding that, although the ANOVA results did not reveal a statistically significant influence, the practical indicators indicated that parental alcohol misuse had a slight but persistently detrimental influence on adolescents' academic lives.

The administrators interviewed agreed with the teachers that students' preferences and involvement in alcohol and drug use are greatly influenced by their parents' drug and alcohol use. Students from homes where drugs or alcohol are abused frequently exhibit emotional instability, indiscipline, and neglectful behaviors, according to principals (ESCPSSP 1 and 3). According to principal (ESCPSSP 2), these students are also more likely to exhibit low academic performance, absenteeism, and disobedience. Additionally, principals noticed that students from these backgrounds are more likely to be vulnerable to alcohol abuse since they prefer to associate with friends who engage in similar risky behaviors. They underlined that students are more likely to engage in drug usage if they witness it at home and don't have any positive role models.

During the interviews one of the principals observed that:

We see a clear pattern, of students whose parents abuse drugs are often withdrawn, aggressive, or undisciplined. Because they had to care for an intoxicated parent, some of them even arrive late to school or smell like alcohol. According to one child, he began smoking bhang because it made him forget the battles he saw at home. These are sad facts. Our efforts as educators are not very effective if parents are not setting a good example. There is a critical need for comprehensive strategies that address the underlying causes of student drug addiction by combining community education, parental involvement, and school support networks (ESCPSSP 2 Personal Communication March 12, 2025).

Parental alcohol usage has a significant influence on adolescents' involvement in alcohol misuse, according to the sub-county director of education interviewed for the study. SCDE has noticed that children from households where alcohol abuse is accepted frequently show early indicators of substance interest, low academic performance, and absenteeism. According to the SCDE, these kinds of settings lessen parental control and oversight, allowing adolescents greater latitude to hang out with classmates who engage in comparable activities. Additionally, it was

noted that children from these homes frequently experience a lack of emotional support, which drives them to look for approval from outside, and occasionally risky, sources, such as substance-using peer groups. These revelations indicate a recurring issue that calls for community and school-level attention.

Students candidly discussed how their home environments influenced their choices during one of the focus group discussions:

It doesn't seem like a bad thing when your dad is always drinking or using drugs. You are occasionally even ordered to buy them alcohol. We discuss how it's incorrect at school, yet it seems normal at home. Our acquaintance claimed that smoking helped them forget about their home difficulties, which is why they started smoking. It's difficult to say no when your friends are doing it and your parents aren't even aware of it (ESCPSSFGD 12, 2025).

These compelling testimonies demonstrate how parental alcohol abuse directly affects adolescents' drug-related attitudes and behaviors, which motivates schools to take more aggressive action.

Both principal interviews, SCDE, students' FGD, and teacher responses have extensively demonstrated the influence of parental alcohol abuse on students' alcohol preferences. According to the results of the survey, (64.5%) of teachers (18 strongly agreeing and 22 agreeing) think that students from homes where alcohol is abused often favor alcohol themselves. Similarly, (54.8%) of teachers said that exposure to family drinking promotes good views about alcohol, while (56.5%) felt that parental alcohol abuse enhances students' interest in trying with alcohol. These quantitative results are consistent with principals, SCDE, and students' observations that students from substance-using households are more likely to engage in dangerous behaviors, such as alcohol abuse, since they frequently experience emotional instability, behavioral problems, and neglect.

The principals' worries about the absence of healthy role models at home were further supported by the fact that (59.7%) of instructors admitted to seeing students applaud their parents' alcohol abuse behavior. Additionally, (58.1%) of teachers said that parental alcohol abuse normalizes alcohol consumption. Principal (ESCPSSP 2)'s comments that these children

frequently defy authority, skip class, and perform poorly academically provide credence to this impression. Principals and educators concur that these adolescents frequently associate with peers who use alcohol, which increases their susceptibility.

The understanding that students are a part of interrelated subsystems, such as the family, school, and community, rather than existing in a vacuum makes the aforementioned findings applicable to systems theory. According to systems theory, disruptions in one subsystem will always have an influence on how other subsystems operate. According to research, parental alcohol abuse has a major influence on students' behavior in public secondary schools. This shows how family system dysfunction, such as neglect, modeling risky behavior, or a lack of discipline, directly affects students' social and academic development. Students' lack of discipline, low academic engagement, and susceptibility to peer pressure are all consequences of parental alcohol misuse. Accordingly, parental alcohol consumption undermines the home system, which leads to maladaptive behavior in the educational system, which is in line with systems theory.

The above findings agree with those of Srivastava et al. (2021), who discovered that teenagers who witnessed substance usage in their homes were far more likely to use drugs or alcohol themselves. The above findings that parental alcohol misuse predisposes adolescents to experimentation and indiscipline were reinforced by their extensive study conducted in India, which showed that alcohol consumption at the family and community levels greatly affected teenagers' attitudes and risk behaviors. In line with the findings of Embakasi, Misango, Mwaura, and Rop (2021) also reported statistically substantial parental influence on secondary school students in Kinango sub-county. Their study, which was guided by Bandura's Social Learning Theory, emphasized how extremely impressionable children are and how frequently they imitate parental behavior, especially when it comes to drinking alcohol and taking risks.

Furthermore, studies conducted in Nairobi by Kariuki and Mwangi (2020) and South Africa by Mpofu and Nkosi (2019) corroborate the Embakasi findings. According to both research, children who witness their parents' alcohol consumption are far more likely to normalize or view alcohol favorably, which in turn encourages permissive attitudes toward substance use. Similarly, Riva et al. (2018) found that social and parental factors were powerful predictors of high rates of drug and alcohol use among Botswana students. When considered

collectively, these researches consistently support the Embakasi findings by confirming that parental alcohol misuse has a considerable influence on students' alcohol preferences and attitudes. The convergence in various circumstances highlights how parental modeling is ubiquitous in shaping teenage behavior.

CONCLUSION

According to the study's findings, students' preferences about alcohol in public secondary schools in Embakasi sub-county are greatly influenced by their parents' alcohol abuse. Many adolescents become more curious and willing to try alcohol when they witness their parents using alcohol, normalizing the habit. Students follow the example set by their homes, adopting unsafe behaviors depending on what they see. As a result, children from these families are more likely to take alcohol than their classmates from alcohol-free homes, indicating that parental behaviors are important in influencing how students view and choose to use alcohol.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given that parental alcohol abuse significantly influenced students' involvement in alcohol abuse, the study recommends that parents be educated about the impact of their behavior on their children's wellness through seminars and community forums. School administrations and community-based organizations should work together to plan parenting programs that promote responsible behavior and positive role modeling at home. Additionally, as a safeguard for students, local authorities and religious leaders should promote cultural norms that prohibit alcohol abuse by adults.

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