

Factors Influencing Secondary School Students to Steal and Their Need for Guidance and Counselling in Bungoma West District, Bungoma County in Kenya

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Abstract: *The safety of both members of the society and their property is central for harmonious coexistence; therefore this study investigated the factors influencing secondary school students to steal and their need for guidance and counseling. Theft among secondary school students is on high increase and persisting among indiscipline cases in secondary schools. The Kenya Government through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology basing on previous researches has recommended guidance and counseling as the alternative means to punishment in dealing with students' maladaptive behaviors and matters of indiscipline in secondary schools. Both the Transactional Analysis Theory of Eric Berne and Psychoanalysis Theory of Sigmund Freud were used to give theoretical framework of this study. The study used the descriptive survey design. Principals, teacher counselors and form two students of public secondary schools were the targeted population. Purposive sampling procedure was used to select the six principals and six teacher counselors from sample schools. While the 25 respondent students from each school were chosen using the stratified random sampling procedure. Six secondary schools (35%) were selected out of seventeen secondary schools in Bungoma West District. The secondary schools selected were Chwele Girls High School, Karibuni Girls Secondary School, Kaptanai Mixed and Day Secondary School, St. Antony Sirisia Boys High School, Butonge ACK Boys High School and Lwandanyi Secondary School. Questionnaires were used as the research instrument to collect data. Data collected was coded and entered in the computer for analysis. Descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequency distributions and means were used to summarize the data with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data was presented in tables, histograms and pie charts.*

Keywords: Guidance, Counseling, Stealing, Factors, School

1. Introduction

Stealing can take various forms and kinds; it can be robbery, forgery, plagiarism, evading taxation, infidelity, depriving (someone) of something belonging or due and embezzlement. Stealing is an old and common problem in the history of mankind. Implied in the Holy Bible as early as in the times of Abraham and his son Isaac. People globally steal from each other, in families and in institutions. In USA, a study done on attitudes and conduct of some 29, 760 high school students by Josephson Institute found out that an average of 30% of students admitted to have stolen from a store within the past year (Josephson institute of Ethic, 2009). Subair (1999) in his research reported that stealing was among the three most frequently committed crimes among secondary school students in Botswana. In Kenya, stealing among secondary school students rated very high among the common indiscipline problems as reported by teachers in sampled schools; it accounted for 85% as reported by respondent students and second (81%) in the order of severity (Mbugu, 2005). See Table 1.

Table 1: Common indiscipline problems in order of severity in Meru South District, Kenya

Dozing in class	82%
Stealing other students' property	81%
Noise making in class	78%
Laziness	68%
Using vernacular language	66%
Coming to class late	65%

Source: (Mbugu, 2005)

2. Methodology

This study used the descriptive survey design. The design was suited for this study because it secures evidence of the existing situation and identifies norms or standards to compare with the present conditions in order to plan for the next step (Good, 1992). Wiersma (1985) further says that survey studies are conducted to determine the status quo and are concerned with the gathering of facts rather than the manipulations of variables. This study surveyed a sample of s The Bungoma West District had 17 established secondary schools. Out of the seventeen, 4 are girls boarding schools while 3 are boys' boarding schools. The remaining 10 were mixed and either day or with form IV students boarding. These schools had an approximate population of 6,500 students, 215 teachers and 17 principals. This gave the target population of 6,769 (D.E.O Bungoma West District).

Purposive sampling procedure was used to get the schools, Teacher Counselors and Principals, while stratified random procedure was used to get a representative sample of respondent form two students (Orodho, 2004). This ensured that all categories of schools in the divisions and main religious sponsors were included. The schools were six namely: Chwele Girls High School, Karibuni Girls Secondary School, St. Antony Sirisia Boys High School, Butonge ACK Boys High School, Kaptanai Secondary School and Lwandanyi Secondary School. In each school, form two students were targeted on the ground that they are well versed with the concept of stealing in school for they had been there for a longer period than form ones. Form

three and four students were avoided on grounds that they were busy with academic work. See table 2.

Table 2: The number of subjects selected from schools

Type of Schools	Selected number of :							
	Schools	Principals		Teacher counselors		Form II students		Total number of subjects
		M	F	M	F	M	F	
Boys	2	2	0	1	1	50	0	54
Girls	2	0	2	0	2	0	50	54
Mixed	2	2	0	1	1	25	25	54
Total	6	4	2	2	4	75	75	162

The researcher used questionnaires. Questionnaires were used as they are quite appropriate and they facilitate collection of information from large sample and diverse regions (Kombo, 2006). They collect information that is directly observable and inquire about accomplishments. The questionnaires were of closed-ended questions to avoid responses that are not clear and irrelevant to the study. The completed questionnaires were arranged and coded. Collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means and percentages to determine the factors influencing secondary school students to steal and their interventions through guidance and counseling. This was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Factors influencing students to steal

Table 3: Factors influencing students to steal

	Chwele girls	Karibuni	Sirisia	Kaptanai	Lwandanyi	Butonge	Total
Peer Pressure	23	15	13	15	15	16	97
Family background	24	21	14	15	23	13	110
Lack of G&C	10	13	15	14	12	10	74
Buy drugs and alcohol	4	3	14	6	9	7	43
Academic deficiencies	11	11	7	7	15	8	59
Poor interpersonal relations	19	20	16	19	11	9	94

From the above data, the factors that influence students to steal are discussed as;

3.2 Peer pressure

Peer pressure was mentioned by one out six principals and two out of six teacher counselors as the casual factor to stealing in schools. Ninety seven (97) of the sampled students which are 64% of the sampled students mentioned peer pressure as a factor that causes students to steal. Students feel the need to be like the peers and therefore resort to stealing or join the group of students who steal. The findings from this study were in agreement with a similar study by Davies (2009) and Apondi (2010) whose studies indicated that students steal for desire to fit in a peer group. Peer group was mentioned most in Chwele Girls which is a pure boarding Girls school followed by Butonge Boys Secondary school. Majority of Students in boarding schools mentioned peer pressure as the cause of stealing.

3.3 Family background

Family background affects the development of children. Students who come from families who have the vice of

Stealing in secondary schools is influenced by factors such as peer pressure, family background, buying drugs and alcohol, academic deficiencies and frustrations, lack of Guidance and Counseling and poor interpersonal relations. These factors were highlighted by principals, Teacher counselors and students in the sampled schools. The frequency mentioned for each factor by principals and Teacher counselors varied.

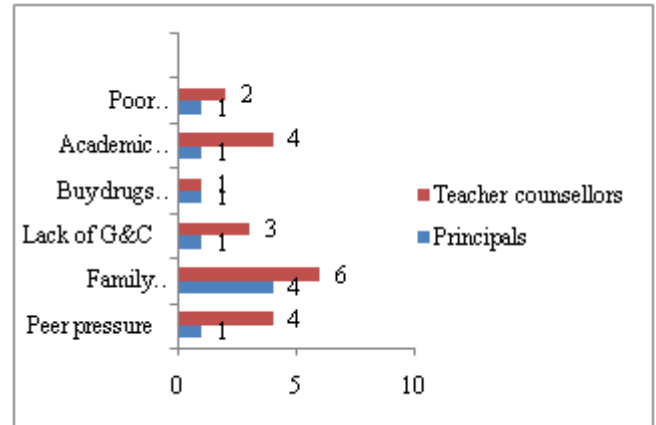


Figure 1: Factors influencing students to steal

From the students, the following data was collected on factors influencing students to steal.

stealing are likely to carry over the same behavior even in their adolescent. From this study, all principals and four out of six Teacher counselors revealed that family background was one of the causes of stealing in schools. From the students 110 students who were 73% of the sampled students were of the view that family background was the cause of stealing in the sampled schools. Students that viewed family background as the cause of stealing were from Girls schools which are Chwele Girls and Karibuni Girls.

3.4 Lack of Guidance and Counseling to students

This factor was mentioned by three principals, one Teacher counselor and 74 students as one of the causes of stealing in secondary schools. Lack of guidance and counseling in schools was as result of several factors such as lack of trained teacher counselors and heavy workload of the teachers in the guidance and counseling department. This makes them have little time to guide and counsel students. These findings agreed with a similar study by Apondi (2008) on why guidance and counseling is not effective in schools.

3.5 Buying drugs and alcohol

Students engaged in stealing activities so that they can buy drugs and alcohol, 43 students which are 28% of sampled students viewed this as a cause of students to steal. The same was supported by one principal and one teacher counselor. Students steal money to buy drugs and alcohol. These findings are similar to a study by Mackay (2009) and Davies (2010), who in their studies found that students steal money or sell stolen items so that they can buy drugs.

3.6 Academic deficiencies

Some of the students who do not perform well academically engage in stealing as a way of nursing their frustrations. They feel they will be recognized by their peers for stealing. From the sampled schools, one principal and four teacher counselors supported this fact, while 59 students held the same fact. This was in tandem with a study by Mackay (2009).

3.7 Poor Interpersonal relations

Poor interpersonal relations such as envy and jealousy can make students steal so that they can acquire some highly coveted items. From this study, 94 students and four teacher counselors viewed poor interpersonal relations as a cause of stealing. Poor interpersonal relationships influenced students to engage in indiscipline behaviors like stealing.

3.8 Guidance and counseling services to students who steal in secondary schools.

Data collected from the sampled schools indicated that all Principals, Teacher counselors and students acknowledged the presence of guidance and counseling services in schools. Four out of Six Teacher Counselors and 120 out of 150 students acknowledged that guidance and counseling is offered to students who steal.

3.9 Mode of Guidance and Counseling in schools

Guidance and counseling to students who steal was done either individually or as a group.

Table 4: Mode of Guidance and Counseling

Mode of counseling	Teacher Counselors	Students
Group	6	70
Individual	5	100

Six Teacher counselors in the six schools carried out group counseling while five were carrying out individual counseling to students who steal. 70 students which was 46% of the students revealed that guidance and counseling was done as a group while 100 students which was 67% of the students indicated that it was done on individual basis. Guidance was done by 50% of the Teacher counselors while 44% of the students admitted to be guided. All the Teacher counselors and 60% of the students admitted there was counseling for students who were involved in theft cases. The same percentage (50%) admitted that there was a follow up to guidance and counseling while 50% indicated there was no follow up to guidance and counseling.

3.10 Preventive Guidance and Counseling Services

There were several preventive guidance and services measures employed in secondary schools to deal with students involved in stealing. These are discussed under:

3.11 Teaching students about honesty and respect to others property

From this study, all the six Teacher counselors indicated that they were teaching their students about honesty and respect of their fellow students' property as a way of preventing them from stealing. The responses from the students about this preventive measure varied.

Table 5: Teaching honesty and respect of property

School	Chwele girls	Sirisia	Kaptanai	Karibuni	Lwandanyi	Butonge	Total	%
Frequency	26	22	18	21	25	20	132	88

From the above data, 88% of the students admitted that they were taught about honesty and respecting other students' property as a way of curbing theft in secondary schools. This was an important preventive measure since if students learnt the virtue of honest and respect, they would not engage in stealing.

3.12 Guide students to relate positively with others

All the Teacher counselors and 102 students out of the 150 sampled students indicated that they were guided to relate positively.

Table 6: Guide students to relate positively with others

School	Chwele Girls	Sirisia	Kaptanai	Karibuni	Lwandany	Butonge	Total	%
Frequency	23	13	15	17	15	19	102	68

This showed that 68% of the students revealed that they were guided to relate positively. Chwele girls had 23 students, Sirisia had 13, Kaptanai had 15, Lwandanyi had 15 while Butonge had 19 students. If students relate positively with each other, they are likely not to involve themselves in stealing. They respected other students' property.

3.13 Establish peer groups and welfare clubs

The Teacher counselors and 84 students indicated that they had established peer groups and welfare groups as preventive measure to stealing. Peer guidance and youth welfare groups can help students within the same age bracket to behave in a positive way.

3.14 Setting proper school rules and ethos

All the Teacher counselors and 54% of the students revealed that proper school rules and ethos on taking, borrowing and damaging others property was an important preventive measure to curb stealing. Diane (2001) in his study agrees to this fact. If positive school ethos is established, students will not engage in evil practice since they will take pride in their ethos.

3.15 Therapies for students who steal

Despite the sampled schools using different guidance measures, there were several counseling or therapeutic measures which were used to help students who were stealing in secondary schools. These are discussed in this sub section.

3.16 Encouraging rational thinking

Students involved in stealing were counseled to think rationally about their behavior and to evaluate their attitudes and beliefs about stealing.

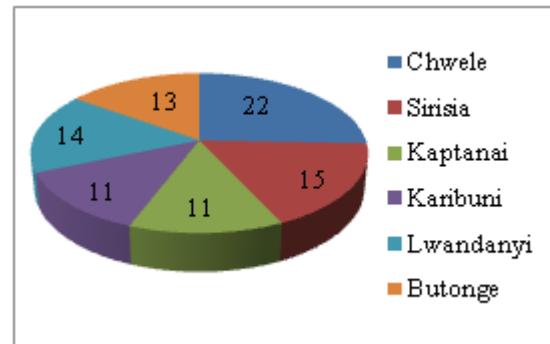


Figure 2: Responses to rational thinking as a therapeutic measure

The pie chart above shows the distribution of students who indicated that encouraging students to be rational thinkers was a therapeutic measure for students involved in stealing. The large fraction was from Chwele girls while the few students to admit the above therapeutic measure were from Butonge secondary school. Four out of six Teacher counselors admitted to be using this as a therapeutic measure to students who had stolen.

3.17 Culprits to pay back more than what was stolen

One of the therapeutic measures to students who have stolen was to make culprits pay back more than what they had stolen. This was mentioned by 82 students and three tutors. The following was the distribution of students who mentioned this therapeutic measure.

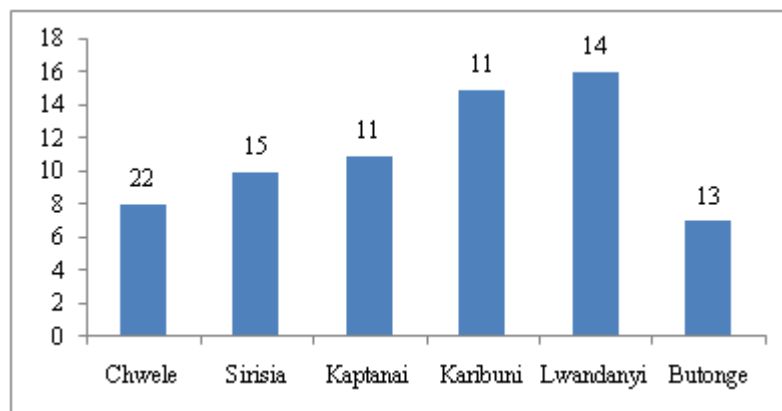


Figure 3: Responses to culprits paying back more than what they stole

3.18 Culprits to apologize and be forgiven

From data collected, four out six Teacher counselors indicated that culprits were made to apologize and promise not to steal again. From the sampled students, 67 students mentioned this as a counseling measure taken.

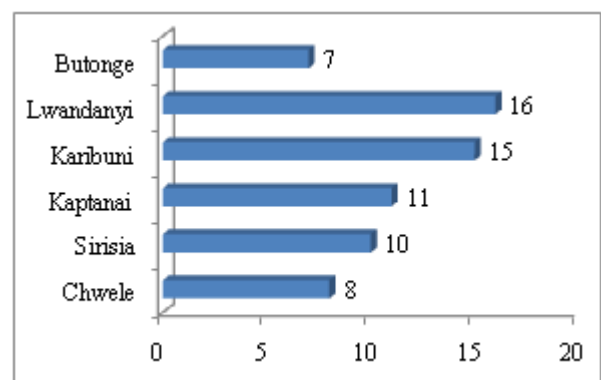


Figure 4: Responses to culprits apologizing and being forgiven

3.19 Teacher counselors and disciplinary committees to develop an understanding in culprits on why stealing is wrong

The other therapeutic measure mentioned was Teacher counselors and disciplinary committee to emphatically

develop an understanding in the culprits as to why stealing is wrong and the need to seriously confront it. This was mentioned by four out of six Teacher counselors and 67 sampled students. The same was mentioned by several students in the sampled schools as indicated in table 4.12

Table 7: Developing an understanding in culprits as to why stealing is wrong

School	Chwele girls	Sirisia	Kaptanai	Karibuni	Lwandanyi	Butonge	Total	%
Frequency	15	15	16	15	17	19	97	65

If the culprits are meant to understand why stealing is wrong, they will not engage in theft activities but will have a self drive to behave in the positive way.

4. Conclusions

From the findings of this study, it is evident that stealing is rampant in schools. The respondents from the six schools where this study was carried out admitted that stealing was there. Stealing was caused by factors such as family background, peer pressure, lack of guidance and counseling and influence to buy drugs and alcohol. All these factors were heavily present in all the sampled schools and across all the subjects of study. Given some of the causal factors to stealing identified, there is need for proper guidance and counseling to be put in place so as to root out this vice in schools.

5. Recommendations

Based on these findings, the researcher makes the following recommendations; teachers involved in discipline of students in secondary to be provided with this information of factors causing students to steal and their guiding and counseling intervention measures. This will help them deal with stealing problems in schools. The parents should be involved in guidance and counseling of their students who steal. Parents can provide insights to the root cause of stealing behavior in their children and assist in their treatment. More so the Ministry of Education should train Teacher counselors on how to help students with deviant behaviors like stealing in secondary schools.

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