

Influence of Family Stability and Peer Group Pressure Ecological Factors on Risk Taking Behaviour among Secondary School Students in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kajiado County, Kenya.

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Abstract: This study set to determine influence of family stability and peer group pressure ecological factors on risk taking behaviour among adolescents in secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kajiado County. The area has numerous ecological factors that could influence the behaviour of adolescents. Since the area is home to a lot of the working population of the adjacent Nairobi City County, people from various backgrounds have immigrated there. As such, the values held by the inhabitants of the area are not easy to define. In this context, adolescents are prone to indulge in risky behaviours such as drug abuse, unprotected sex, and gang behaviour among others that could impact their lives negatively. This study adopted the Ecological Systems Theory. The study is also cross-sectional in nature. Data was collected from 267 students and 15 principals sampled using stratified proportionate sampling and total population sampling techniques. These were sampled from the 15 public secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County. Data from students was collected using questionnaires while the principals were interviewed. Pretesting of the questionnaires was undertaken to establish their reliability and validity. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. Data from interviews was analysed thematically and the findings obtained used to verify those from students' questionnaires. The findings obtained show that family stability and peer pressure influence risk-taking behaviour in adolescents. The study's formulated hypotheses were tested at 95% confidence level using multiple regression analysis. The result showed that 2.6% ($R^2 = 0.026$) variation in the level of risk taking behaviour was attributed to independent variables. The study recommends that family stability plays a crucial role in the risk-taking behaviour of students, it is important to ensure that cohesiveness in the families is encouraged. Teachers should be at the forefront for checking negative behaviours in schools so as to protect the spread of such behaviours among peers.

Key words: Adolescent, Ecological Factors, Family Stability, Peer Group Influence, Risk taking behaviour.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The fact that the world is faced with fast modernization and vague boundaries among societies leads to immense social problem among adolescents. These social problems, some of which include risk behaviour, pose serious health issues that warrant special attention (Ochieng, 2013). In the United States of America, adolescent risk behaviour play crucial roles in eroding families, troubling societies and challenging social services (Sinha, Cnaan & Gelles, 2007). As such, the factors in the environment that contribute to such behaviour continue to draw attention to scholarship the world over. Risk taking behaviour (RTB) is the tendency to engage in behaviour that has the potential to be harmful or dangerous (Ochieng, 2013). As adolescents approach 14 years, they get into a special developmental stage. Herein, they are prone to the highest risk for a myriad of social problems. In this stage, most adolescents are prone to fall prey to dangerous activities including but not limited to casual sex, smoking, gang behaviour, drug abuse, and stealing, unwarranted physical fights among others as pointed out by Kauppi (2015).

Family stability is arguably one of the major factors influencing risk-taking behaviour among adolescents (Boyer, 2006). Families play a mediating role on the peer-influences on adolescents. Parental knowledge as argued by Wood, Read, Mitchell and Band (2004) check any negative peer relationships that might negatively affect their children. In essence, a stable family atmosphere will provide consistent guidance to

adolescents. Parents are able to control the type of peer relationships that their children form and keep. This plays a critical role in controlling the risky behaviour that adolescents are likely to take.

The family, more often than not, is the first environment in which adolescents grow. If the family unit is broken, the much needed guidance and support for such adolescents is lost (Wolfe, Jaffe & Crooks, 2006). This means that such adolescents are left with a poor reference point for decision-making and making behavioural choices. This, according to Brooks et al. (2012), predisposes adolescents to numerous risks. The absence of the requisite supportive relationships means that adolescents engage in risky behaviour and may not succeed in life due to the associated consequences.

Peer groups have also been seen as major predictors of the risk taking behaviour among adolescents. Allen, Chango, Szewo, Schad and Marston (2012) posit that adolescents are subject to influence by the social relationships they make. Families, and most importantly peers, play a critical role in shaping the behaviour of adolescents. Although peer relationships play important roles in safeguarding teenagers from negative outcomes such as depression, they may also lead to the adoption of risk-taking behaviour in peer groups that have members with high risk-taking appetites.

1.1 Problem of the Statement

Adolescents are growing in ecologies characterized with fast modernization and vague boundaries among societies. In this context, adolescents are exposed to immense social problems. These social problems such as risky behaviour pose serious health issues that warrant special attention (Kauppi, 2015). Theorists such as the Bronfenbrenner (1993) posit that the ecology in which an adolescent grows will affect his/her behaviour. The families in which adolescents find themselves as well as the friends (peers) they have are likely to affect their risk-taking behaviours.

Kajiado North Sub-County is faced with numerous ecological factors that could influence the behaviour of adolescents. People from various backgrounds have immigrated into the area, resulting in the societal values in the area not being easy to define (UNICEF, 2012). Literature shows that family stability and peer group pressure have the propensity to influence risk taking behaviour among adolescents.

Most of the existing studies rely on desk review of existing literature. Few of these studies, except those by Kyalo (2010) and Wango (2006) use the descriptive survey design as this current study. Furthermore, the fact that none of these studies focuses on Kajiado North Sub-County means that the findings obtained may not exactly relate to the current study. This current study investigates influence of family stability and peer pressure on risk taking behaviour among adolescents in secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County.

1.2 Study Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives;

- (a) To establish the influence of family stability on risk taking behaviour among adolescents in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kajiado County and;
- (b) To assess the influence of peer groups influence on risk taking behaviour among adolescents in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kajiado County.

1.2 Study Hypothesis

The study formulated the following null hypotheses at 95% confidence level

H₀₁: Family stability does not have statistically significant influence on risk taking behaviour among adolescents in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kajiado County

H₀₂: Peer group pressure does not have statistically significant influence on risk taking behaviour among adolescents in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kajiado County.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The study was founded on the Ecological Systems Theory (EST). The Ecological Systems Theory was advanced by Bronfenbrenner (1979). In the work titled, "the Ecology of Human Development (1979), he argues that "the properties of the person and of the environment, the structure of the developmental settings, and the processes that take place within and between them must be viewed as interdependent and analyzed in systems terms".

Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1993) shows five systems that influence the development of a person. These include the microsystem where by the person is exposed to a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations in one on one setting. These include home and school. The second system is the mesosystem. This incorporates linkages occurring between numerous settings where the developing person is located such as home and school.

The third system is the exosystem. This includes one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant. In these settings, events occur that affect, or are affected by, what

happens in the setting containing the developing person. These could be the parental workplace whereby an individual can be affected by the context in which the parent works through acquired values among others.

The last system is the macrosystem. This includes influences from culture, subculture and other extended social structure” (Bronfenbrenner, 1993). The last system is the chronosystem. In this one, the development of a person is affected by affected over time by numerous influences that occur at school, home or in the country at large.

The critiques of this theory posit that the person has to remain in the ecology continuously so as to be influenced by all the systems effectively. If the person relocates to a faraway place or another country, the systems change; leading to different development patterns (Feldman, 2003). In this current study, EST is relevant since the ecology in which an adolescent grows will affect his/her behaviour. This includes school, home, national policies and peers among others. These go on to determine the propensity of the student to take to risk taking behaviours and vice versa.

The wing of research on family stability and peer group influences on risk-taking behaviour among adolescents has attracted the attention of academia for decades now. Numerous studies were reviewed on the role of family stability and risk taking behaviour among adolescents. These include Willoughby and Hamza (2011); Apel and Kaukinen (2008); Wolfe et al. (2006) as well as Brooks et al. (2012) and Maina (2015). None of these studies, except Maina (2015) focuses on Kenya. Furthermore, most of the former studies are based on desk review of existing literature. The findings obtained may thus not relate to the findings anticipated in this current study. This underlines the need for this current study. Regarding peer group and risk taking behaviour, there is a plethora of literature albeit little from Kenya or Kajiado North for that matter. Studies such as Boyer (2006); Wood, et al. 2004); Allen et al. (2012) and; Boyer (2006); Pharo et al. (2011) and Maina (2015) show the central role that peer groups play in influencing the decisions that their colleagues take. Although the study by Maina was undertaken in Kenya, it did not focus on Kajiado County but Nairobi City County. Most of the studies do not use the descriptive survey design but use mixed research designs and mostly desk review of existing literature. They may thus not relate to this descriptive study. Some of the studies are not current. This calls for local and recent studies which this current study intends to achieve.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in Kajiado North Sub-County. The site for the study was selected owing to its special characteristics. In recent years, the area has attracted a myriad of worker populations seeking housing from the congested adjacent Nairobi City County (UNICEF, 2012). There are 15 public schools in the area. The huge influx of people from various ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds informs the choice of the area for the study since the variables under investigation were expected to affect adolescents considerably. Furthermore, there were fast growing towns in the area as well as growing number of youths from the surrounding higher education institutions. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. In this design, the researcher collected data through interviewing or administering questionnaires to sample of individuals. The design has an interesting attribute in that it studies the relationship between variables is described and generalizations principles or theory that has universal validity developed (Kahn, 1993). In assessing the influence of ecological factors on risk taking behaviour among adolescents; this was identified as a suitable design. The design was also cross-sectional because it is a point in time study.

The study targeted students and principals from the 15 schools the county. At the time of the study, there were 12478 students in these schools (MoEST, 2016). Only Form 3 students (which number 2706) were targeted (Ministry of Education, Kajiado County, 2016). This was for purposes of narrowing down the study in scope. Furthermore, these students were targeted due to the fact that by the time they reach this class, they are able to understand the factors influencing their behaviour considerably. The study used proportionate sampling to obtain the study sample (10% Form 3 students from each school) and simple random sampling. Proportionate sampling ensures that units from each main group are equitably included in the study (Jankowicz, 2005). As such, a proportionate number of students from each school selected was selected. The simple random sampling techniques used to select students from each school was specifically rotary to select students. In this case, the students were presented with a basket of shuffled up pieces of paper written “yes” or “no”. Those who chose “yes” were the ones who were selected to participate in the study. Total population sampling (census) was used to select the principals of each of the 15 public secondary schools. These were selected as the key informants due to their role as the main school administrators.

The population of the study was divided into 15 strata (corresponding to each of the 15 public schools). Only 10% of students in Form 3 per school were targeted. This agrees with Kothari (2004) who points out that 10-30% of accessible population is representative of the whole population. On their part, all principals of the 15 schools were sampled. This makes sample size of 290 students and 15 principals. The researcher employed two types of research instruments: self-administered structured students’ questionnaire and principals’ interview guide. Pre-testing was conducted to assist in determining accuracy, clarity and suitability of the research

instrument. This included a pilot study targeting 20 students and 2 principals drawn from 2 schools in Nairobi City County. The sample of 20 is informed by the work of Kothari (2004) which mentions that 10% to 30% of the study sample is adequate for pilot studies. Nairobi City County was chosen because it borders and faces similar challenges as Kajiado North Sub-County due to its urban nature. Furthermore, many inhabitants of Kajiado North Sub-County work or study in Nairobi. It is thus assumed that behavioural patterns in two areas are correlated.

Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) point out that reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results after repeated trials. The data obtained from the pilot study was used to ascertain the appropriateness and relevancy of the questionnaire to the study. Cronbach's alpha, a reliability coefficient which varies from 0 to 1 whereby a value of 0.7 or less indicates unsatisfactory internal consistency reliability (Malhotra, 2004), was used to test the reliability of items in the questionnaires. Upon pretesting the questionnaire, the Cronbach's alpha values obtained were as follows (family stability=0.846; peer group influence=0.916; and; risk taking behaviour=0.747. As such, the questionnaire was deemed reliable for use in data collection. In order to ensure the validity of the instrument, internal and external validity tests were carried out. Face validity was assessed by finding out the ease with which the respondents answer the research questions. In this case, any ambiguous questions were adjusted to make them easy to understand and answer. Cooper and Schindler (2003) point out that content validity offers adequate investigation of the study questions. The questionnaire was also presented to the supervisors for review and their input on the constructs of the research was used to improve the questionnaire.

Cooper and Schindler (2003) point out that construct validity is the extent to which a set of measured items actually reflect the theoretical latent construct that the items are designed to measure. Construct validity was ensured through the operationalization by setting the questions in the questionnaire based on the reviewed literature and the operationalized definition of the study variables. Content validity was used to find out if the instrument would answer all the research questions. Furthermore, factor analysis was used to test construct validity whereby the right coefficients from the data was obtained and the results used to make adjustments, corrections, and additions to the research instrument.

The data collected using questionnaires was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. Descriptive statistics such as: frequencies, percentages and means were conducted. Furthermore, inferential statistics (Multiple Regression Analysis) were used to test the relationships between the independent and the dependent variables.

Data from principals was analysed thematically. Herein, the responses were organized in themes and categories that emerge. These were reviewed and the emergent meanings drawn and applied to answer initial research questions and issues as posited by Miles and Huberman (1994). These findings were used to support the findings from students' questionnaires.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The study sought to examine the level to which students agreed to a number of statements regarding the influence of family stability as well as peer group pressure on risk taking behaviour. Regression analysis was carried out to establish the relationship between the two independent variables and the dependent variable (risk-taking behaviour).

Table 1 Multiple Regression Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.183 ^a	.033	.026	1.15771
a. Predictors: (Constant), Peer Group Pressure				

According to Table 1, the multiple correlation coefficients R had a value of 0.183. Multiple R is the correlation between the observed values of independent variables and the value of dependent variable predicted by the multiple regression models. Therefore, the small value of R (0.183) meant there was a small or weak correlation between the predicted and observed values of the level of risk taking behaviour. As such, multiple R is a gauge of how well the model predicts the observed data.

The coefficient of determination R^2 which is the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables was found to be 0.033 implying that 3.3% of variance in the level of risk taking behaviour was explained by family stability and, peer group influence. Further, the Adjusted

R²value of 0.026 means that 2.6 % of variance in the level of risk taking behaviour among secondary school students can be accounted for by the population the sample was taken from.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.056	2	6.028	4.497	.012 ^a
	Residual	349.819	261	1.340		
	Total	361.875	263			
a. Predictors: (Constant), Peer Group Pressure						
b. Dependent Variable: Risk-Taking Behaviour						

Table 2 shows the analysis of variance (ANOVA) output. The F-ratio in the ANOVA table tests whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data. That is, the ANOVA shows whether the model, overall, results in a significantly good degree of prediction of the outcome variable. The table shows that the independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable, F = 4.497, p<0.05, and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance. In other words, the regression model was a good fit for the data.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.462	.362		6.797	.000
	Family Stability	-.156	.064	-.151	-2.456	.015
	Peer Group Influence	.102	.076	.083	1.346	.001
a. Dependent Variable: Risk-Taking Behaviour						

Table 3 reveals the relative contribution of the two independent variables to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights. The negative value of the effect of family stability shows that increase in family stability influences leads to decrease in risk taking behaviour among secondary school students. The positive values of the effect of peer group pressure implies that the level of risk taking behaviour among secondary school students is actually determined by positive reinforcement of this variable. The significant t-test values (P<0.05) obtained for each of the independent variables shows that all the variables can be fitted in the regression model adopted by this study. The β values indicate the individual contribution of each predictor to the model if the effects of all other predictors are held constant. In other words, the β values show the relationship between the level of risk taking behaviour and each predictor. Thus, when family stability increase by one unit, the level of risk taking behaviour decreases by -0.151units ($\beta = -0.151$) while holding the societal influence constant. Similarly, when the effect of level of peer group influences increases by one unit the level of risk taking behaviour increases by 0.083units ($\beta = 0.083$).

In order to have direct comparison and better insight into the importance of predictors, the standardized β values that do not depend on the units of measurement of variables are used. The standardized beta values give the number of standard deviation that the level of implementation will change as a result of one standard deviation change in the predictor. Accordingly, Table 3 shows peer group pressure had the greatest influence on risk taking behaviour among adolescents ($\beta=0.083$). This was followed by family stability ($\beta=-0.151$). In order to test the study's two formulated hypotheses, the t statistic that tests whether a B value is significantly different from zero ($H_0: \beta = 0$) is considered. It is evident from table 3 that the level of family stability ($\beta = -0.151$, t = -2.456, p<0.05) and; peer group pressure ($\beta=0.083$, t = 1.346, p<0.05) made a significant contribution or influence to risk taking behaviour. Thus the two null hypotheses were rejected since all the two variables had significant relationship with two dependent variables.

V. DISCUSSION

5.1 Influence of Family Stability on Risk-Taking Behaviour among Students

The study sought to examine the level to which students agreed to a number of statements regarding the influence of family stability on risk taking behaviour. The first statement presented to the respondents was “I regard my family as stable and this influences the risky behavioural choices I may make”. From the 267 responses obtained, a mean of 4.12 was obtained. This can be rounded up to 4 (agreement to a great extent). The findings show that most of the students consider their families to be stable and that this could influence the behavioural choices they took. In this case, stable families could deter their children from engaging in risky behaviour as posed to broken families. This concurs with Wolfe et al. (2006) who is opines that family breakdown predisposes adolescents to numerous risks and vice versa.

With a mean of 4.33 (agreement to great extent), the students agreed to the statement “my parents/guardians guides me on how to avoid risky behaviour”. These findings show that parents and guardians played a key role in offering guidance to students to avoid risky taking behaviour. This agrees with Wolfe et al. (2006) who found out that since the family is the first environment in which adolescents grow, it is a strong predictor of risk taking behaviour among such adolescents. This is due to the fact that families give adolescents the needed guidance and support in making behavioural choices.

The respondents agreed to a great extent (mean of 4.06) to the statement that “my parents/guardians do not indulge in excessive alcoholic drinks”. These findings show that most of the parents and guardians were not indulging in excessive alcoholic drinks. High level of alcoholic use may affect the capacity of parents to handle their children in case of high risk taking behaviour. Furthermore, high alcohol use in the society could influence students’ propensity to indulge in risk taking behaviour. This agrees with Ogidefa (2008) who argues that the environment in which a child grows in determines their likelihood to engage in dangerous behaviour such as widespread abuse of drugs, deviant behaviour and alcohol abuse among others.

The respondents agreed to a great extent (mean of 4.22) with the statement “my parents/guardians give me advice and guidance about the accepted behaviour”. This finding shows that parents play vital roles in guiding students in such a way that they could avoid risk behaviours. This is the position of Wolfe et al. (2006) who found out that parents gave adolescents the needed guidance and support in making behavioural choices.

The respondents agreed to a great extent (weighted mean of 4.12) to the statement “my parents/guardians guide me on the risks associated with risky behaviour”. The findings obtained show the great role played by parents/guardians in reducing risk taking behaviour among students as pointed out by Wolfe et al. (2006). The findings obtained show that the respondents agreed to a great extent (mean of 4.09) to the statement “I am confident I can easily succeed in life because my family gives me clear example on how to lead my life”.

The last statement presented to the students was “if I have a question on a particular choice that I would like to take, my parents/guardians are always available to guide me”. The students agreed to a great extent to the statement (mean of 4.02). This shows that the persons that students lived with were always available to guide them in the various issues facing them. This is vital since it could easily avert risk taking behaviour among these students. These findings agree with Zulu et al. (2002) who point out that parental support could guide students from indulging in risky behaviour since they put in place measures aimed at controlling such behaviour. The regression model adopted by this study can explain 3.3% of the variability in the data. This is indicated by the R Square value of 0.033. It is thus a weak model. The significant F value obtained ($F=4.497$, $p<0.05$), shows that there was overall significant relationship between all the independent variables (including family stability) and the dependent variable of the study.

The significant Standardized Beta Coefficient ($\beta = -0.151$, $P<0.005$) shows that when family stability increase by one unit, the level of risk taking behaviour decreases by -0.151 units while holding the societal influence constant. The study went on to find out if stability of the family influence risk behavioural choices among students in schools in Kajiado North Sub-County by seeking the opinions of principals through interviews. The findings obtained show that stable families guide students better. Further, such families offer corrective measures (and discipline) to students in case of risk taking behaviour. Findings also show that there is poor attention to students in broken homes. On the other hand, there is better control for risky taking behaviours in stable homes than in poor and broken homes. Lastly, it is evident that there is better response to the specific needs of student in stable families and this checks their risk taking behaviour. These findings agree with Willoughby and Hamza (2011) who point out that the parents are the major guiding influences over the risks that their teenage children consider safe to engage in and the frequency with which they engage in such risks.

5.2 Peer Group Influence on Risk Taking Behaviour among students

The study also sought to examine the level to which students agreed to a number of statements regarding peer group influence on risk taking behaviour among students. The findings obtained were captured on a likert-type scale of 1 to 5. When present with the statement “I have friends that often influence me to engage in risky behaviours” the respondents agreed to a moderate extent (mean of 2.8). This shows that there was some

students were often influenced by their friends (peers) to engage in risky behaviour. These findings further buttress those of Haberland (2015) who found out that peer pressure pushes teenagers into risk-taking behaviours. There was moderate influence of parents on the kind of friends that students chose. This is shown by the mean of 3.0 (agreement to a moderate extent) to the statement “my parents checks the kind of friends I make and this influences my behaviour”. This shows that parents controlled the friends of students. As such, they did not control the influence that such friends had on their children. This is agreement with Zulu et al. (2002) who point out that parental support could guide students from falling victim of negative influences from peers.

When presented with the statement, “some of my peers take alcohol and other substances and encourage me to do the same”. The students agreed to a little extent (mean of 2.2). This shows that although some students do not agree that most of their peers took alcohol and other substances, it is evident that there were some peers who were doing so. This is shown by the fact that the highest score given was 5 (agreement to a very great extent). This could place some negative influence on others as pointed out by Naidoo et al. (2015) who are of the view that the many teenagers get into unexpected negative behaviours due to influence from peers. The students agreed to a moderate extent (mean of 2.8) that “I think that some of the things I do are as result of the friends I keep”. These findings show that there was some level of influence from peers on the behaviour of most students, in further agreement with Naidoo et al. (2015) who are of the view that the many teenagers get into unexpected negative behaviours due to influence from peers.

The students were presented with the statement, “It is important to be recognized by colleagues so it is often hard to stay away from peers irrespective of their behaviour”. The response obtained show that the respondents agreed to a moderate extent (mean of 2.7) to the statement. These findings show that some of the students were victims of the opinion of their colleagues. As such, some students tended to behave in such a way that they pleased their friends even if such friends had bad behaviour. These findings are in line with Boyer (2006) who found out teenagers are a reflection of the behaviour of the social relationships they make. The students agreed to a little extent (mean of 2.4) to the statement, “It is considered cool to do some risky things like smoking among friends so one ends up doing them anyway”. This shows that the way students want to be seen by their colleagues influences them to undertake some risky things. This corroborates the findings of Pharo et al. (2011) who argue that the way in which an adolescent wants to be perceived by colleagues affects the behaviour they condone.

The students agreed to a moderate extent (mean of 2.6) to the statement, “Most of my friends are in sexual relationships”. This shows that there was high level of sexual relationships (a risk taking behaviour) and that this could drag other students in the same behaviour. This buttresses the findings of Budeba and Neema (2014) that showed that adolescent students engage in sexual relationships due to peer pressure, self-desire, getting gifts and material gain among other influences. In the multiple regression analysis, the significant Standardized Beta Coefficient ($\beta = 0.083$, $P < 0.05$) shows that increase of Peer Group Influence by 1 unit would lead to affect risk taking behaviour by 0.083 units. The study went on to seek the opinions of principals through interviews whether peer groups influence risk taking behaviour among students in schools in Kajiado North Sub-County. The findings obtained show that most students easily adopt the behaviour of peers. In addition, the level to which a student is influenced to adopt risk taking behaviour depends on the kind of friends they choose. Evidently, some students are easily influenced by peers than others. In addition, it is evident that some students are easily influenced by peer in the adolescent stage.

Lastly, it is evident that students from financially unstable families are easily influenced by peers to adopt risk taking appetites. These findings agree with Haberland (2015) and UNESCO (2015) who posit that peer pressure pushes teenagers into risk-taking behaviours.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that family stability affects risk-taking behaviour in adolescents tremendously. Thus is due to the fact that stable families offer corrective measures (and discipline) to students in case of risk taking behaviour. Evidently, there was poor attention to students in broken homes. On the other hand, there is better control for risky taking behaviours in stable homes than in poor and broken homes. It was evident that there is better response to the specific needs of student in stable families and this checks their risk taking behaviour. Additionally, the level to which an adolescent is influenced to adopt risk taking behaviour depends on the kind of friends they choose. Evidently, some students are easily influenced by peers than others. In addition, it is evident that some students are easily influenced by peer in the adolescent stage. It was also evident that students from financially unstable families are easily influenced by peers to adopt risk taking appetites.

The study unearths important information on how the ecology of adolescents influence their risk taking behaviours. It is thus important to investigate how each variable under investigation in this study would influence such risk taking behaviour when the other variables are controlled in further studies.

In line with the study findings and conclusions, various recommendations can be made.

- a) Since family stability plays a crucial role in the risk-taking behaviour of students, it is important to ensure that cohesiveness in the families is encouraged. Families should put in place mechanisms for solving family disputes amicably.
- b) The law should also be enacted to ensure that parental responsibility in bringing up children is enforced.
- c) Furthermore, all challenges that face families such as socio-economic challenges should be dealt with through the requisite measures so as to reduce poverty which is a predictor of risk-taking behaviour in adolescents. The government should thus put in place mechanisms for helping needy families through job creation and grants.
- d) Peers play a crucial role in determining the likelihood of adolescents to engage in risk-taking behaviour and vice versa.
- e) Teachers should be at the forefront for checking negative behaviours in schools so as to protect the spread of such behaviours among peers.
- f) Parents should also ensure that their child receive the right advice on choosing friends and on dealing with negative influences from their colleagues at school.
- g) It is thus necessary to constantly review the behaviour of adolescents so as to guide them appropriately in case of negative behavioural changes.
- h) Lastly, the researcher recommends comparative study on the subject in other counties in Kenya. Detailed studies on each of the objectives of the study are also crucial since there are immense changes in the society due to modernism and this changes the environment in which adolescents grow in as time comes and goes.

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