

Influence of Parental Separation Anxiety-Induced Traumatic Stress on Substance Use among the Youth in Private and Public Universities in Lang'ata Constituency, Nairobi County

Caroline Mary Mwendwa Onyango¹
Dr. Susan Gitau (PhD)²

¹ Africa Nazarene University - Kenya (caronney@gmail.com)

¹ Africa Nazarene University - Kenya (sgitau@anu.ac.ke)

ABSTRACT

Substance use among the youth has been on the rise in Kenya; leading to a lot of psychosocial problems. In spite of varied initiatives by the Kenya Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as well as the local and international community to control substance use, very little, less progress has been achieved hence, the need to study in detail the psychosocial factors associated with substance use among the youths in private and public Universities. The study investigated the influence of separation anxiety on substance use among the youths in private and public universities in Lang'ata Constituency, Nairobi County specifically, the Co-operative University of Kenya and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT, Karen Campus), The Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) and Tangaza University College (TUC). The research employed descriptive survey design and the target population of 140 comprising: students, counsellors, and deans of students. A sample size of 104 participants was selected using stratified random sampling followed by Simple random sampling and Purposive sampling. The research instruments for data collection were pre-tested using Spearman's rank-order formula for test-retest to compute the correlation coefficient to establish reliability. A correlation coefficient of + 0.65 and above was considered high enough for reliability. The study had a correlation coefficient of + 0.7 and hence, determined the reliability of the instruments, and the validity was perfected by experts. Data were collected using questionnaires, interview schedules, and the PTSD checklist to assess trauma among the students. A pilot study was conducted in a neighboring public university of 14% target population participants to correct the instruments and for triangulation purposes. Descriptive statistics including mean, frequency tables, percentages, and ratios as well as inferential statistics including Pearson's correlation was used to analyze the data with the help of the Advanced Microsoft Excel Package for Data Analysis. The study established that the interaction between parental separation anxiety significantly influenced university students on substance use (dependent variable) ($r=0.570$). Based on the study findings, it is recommended that there should be strong therapeutic interventions for students suffering from separation anxiety. This can be done by the universities as well as civil society organizations through guidance and counselling as well as social support interventions. The government, through security agencies, should provide strong bulwarks against physical violence targeted at students.

Keywords: Separation Anxiety; Substance Use; Youths in Private and Public Universities; Lang'ata Constituency; Nairobi County

I. INTRODUCTION

The study predictor variable in the study was parental separation anxiety. The dependent variable comprises substance use while intervening variables include student characteristics such as feelings, thoughts, anxiety, anger, attitudes, perceptions, and depression. The rationale for choosing these variables was the researcher's interest in these areas as a counsellor. Traumatic events include shocking and overwhelming events that threaten the life or cause severe bodily harm or damage the physical integrity of an individual usually resulting in post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSDs). This study is based on the premise that parental separation could result to a Traumatic Stress (TS) which is symptomized by nightmares, avoidance of events that memorize the trauma, overreaction to stimuli, anxiety, and depressed moods. Victims of traumatic stress may thus result in substance use in an attempt to avoid traumatic memories or regulate depressed moods (Cafaso, 2017). Therefore, the study on traumatic stress is inevitable to find an appropriate solution for the vice. Globally studies have revealed many traumatic experiences with learners in institutions of higher learning. The occurrence of PTSDs among learners is approximately 9% and has been linked to comorbid psychiatric disorders, a college dropout, and adverse health problems. Above higher exposure to Post Traumatic Experiences (PTEs), traumatized university students develop PTSDs and a higher frequency of impulse management, purpose-oriented behaviour, and psychosocial effects like anxiety challenges, and depression among others (Cusack, Grubaugh, Knapp, & Frueh, 2006).

In Iraq, 22.9% of university students were found to have PTSDs (Alshawi, Al-Hemiary, & Al-Diwan, 2011) while over 25% of students screened positive for PTSDs and 14.1% of college students in Tibet were diagnosed with PTSDs. Worldwide, the university learners were adversely by substance use. A lot of surveys of college students show that many have used alcohol (70-80%), marijuana (20%), and/or cocaine use (1-2%) in America which has developed

into substance use disorder for a considerable number of them exhibiting 7 key symptoms: tolerance to the substance; withdrawal; consumption of huge amounts or extended periods than required; the persistent urge to reduce or control use; longer time spent in acquiring, use or recovery from use; abandonment or reduced involvement in significant interactions, recreational operations and actions due to excessive use of substance regardless of the physical or psychosocial challenges (Johnson, 2013). This study would help in discouraging students from indulging in deviant activities or engagements.

Current studies show that the utilization and substance abuse is a global epidemic that has dramatically increased among the youths in higher learning institutions, particularly in developing countries. According to Tot, Yazici, Metin, Bal, and Erdem (2004), in the past two decades, the fight against substance use among youths has gained momentum in advanced nations. The United States of America is using a developmental perspective toward the treatment and care of youths with substance use disorders. This approach embraces among others psychosocial assessment to find out social and emotional problems such as peer pressure, environmental influence, and family influence that may have played a role in the patient's initial substance use as well as their continued drug use. The identification of psychosocial factors has been instrumental in recovery from substance use disorders, relapse prevention, and personal growth as youths are linked with appropriate networks. Drug use among learners has expansively been witnessed in numerous nations of Africa (Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, 2016).

Several nations from Sub-Saharan Africa are faced with high economic, social, and traditional changes, which control the spread of substance use and abuse among the youth, especially in various higher learning institutions hence, higher institutions of learning are appropriate for this study to provide a lasting solution. According to Lopez-Tamayo, et al., (2016), University education gives learners freedom and self-directed engagements different from parental and teacher guidance. Essentially, this may influence substance use among learners in the university. This poses a risk of indulging in substance use and abuse. Hence, there is a need for this study to discourage students from engaging in substance use activities.

In Nigeria, a study by Nalah and Audu (2014) underlines the gravity of substance use among university students. Moreover, the abuse of substances led to increases in the violent behavior of students. Such abuse of substances was graver among students suffering from stress and included alcohol and marijuana. Some of the behaviours associated with such abuse were sexual harassment among others. The former study was undertaken in West African countries which underline the need for related studies in other parts of Africa.

In South Africa, Laurisavan, Carla, Martiedu, and Gina (2017) investigated the impact of trauma on patients' psychology. 75.5 percent had mood disorders, 17.2 percent had anxiety disorders, 22.4 percent had substance-related disorders, and 20.9 percent had cluster B personality disorders or characteristics, according to the findings. Traumatic death or injury of a loved one (37.0 percent), physical assault (24.5 percent), witnessed/threatened violence (19.3 percent), and sexual assault were the most commonly reported types of trauma exposure (17.7 percent) (Laurisavan, Carla, Martiedu, & Gina, 2017). Women were more likely than men to have experienced trauma, such as the death of a loved one, physical violence, or sexual assault. The findings of this study add to existing knowledge about the prevalence of trauma exposure such as parental separation trauma and its likely link to mental disease.

In Kenya, different studies have shown that traumatic experiences are prevalent among university students. Kenya experience Post-Election Violence (PEV) in 2007/2008 at the early age of current university students. A study involving a random community-based sample of youths aged 6-18years, within an informal settlement in Nairobi, showed that children and youths were exposed to war-like violence resulting in 18% of the survivors suffering PTSD (Harder, et al., 2020). People were displaced (650,000 people), bereaved (1, 133 died), injured, or lost property (Waki, The Commission of Enquiry into Post-Election Violence, 2009). Therefore it implies that learners have witnessed the suffering and demise of their loved ones and were being haunted by disturbing media images. Thus, they suffered parental neglect arising from abandonment and lack of support occasioned by displacements and loss of property; separation anxiety due to deaths and disappearance of loved ones; physical and sexual abuse arising from the injuries or sexual immoralities suffered or being exposed to during the PEV and hence, leading to substance use.

Substance use refers to the consumption of medical or non-medical substances without being addicted or demonstrating substance use maladies to alter moods. It turns out to be substance abuse when the substance is used in a non-recommended way or more than what is recommended. Gopiram and Kishore (2014) state that substance abuse is a pattern of harmful and persistent use of psychoactive substances; unethical practices. Exposure to traumatic experiences is prevalent among the youth and witnessed among the ages of 16 to 20 years which coincides which is the average of university entries. This, therefore, necessitates this study to enable students to make rational decisions in real-life situations.

According to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), "an estimated 271 million people, 5.5% of the world population, aged 15-64 have engaged in SA." Kenya, like many countries in the developing world, is also experiencing an upsurge in substance use and its effects are taking a toll on the youthful population of the country especially those in secondary schools and higher learning institutions (UNODC, 2019). Accordingly, Nairobi, Coast,

and Western regions have been reported with increased usage of alcohol and abuse of substances. This is attributed to the highest-burden of substance use disorders (SUDs) among the youth most of who were in secondary school and higher learning institutions (NACADA, 2017). This study is important in helping learners in high schools and universities.

Alcohol use has been linked to depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among Kenyan university students, with moderate risk (45.7 percent), high risk (39.3%), and low risk (15.0 percent) being the most common (Ndegwa, Munenne, & Oladipo, 2017). A 20% prevalence of substance use was reported among first-year students at Nairobi University with alcohol (22%), cannabis (8%), and tobacco (7%) being the most frequently used substances while 13% were polysubstance users (Musyoka, Mbwanyo, Donovan, & Mathai, 2020). The overall lifetime prevalence rate of substance use among university students in Eldoret stood at 69.8% while that of alcohol is 51.9%, cigarettes at 42.8%, cannabis (2%), and cocaine (0.6%) with 60.8 % engaging in substance use to relieve stress (Atwoli, Mungla, Ndung'u, & Kinoti, 2011). Currently, medical agencies around the world have overemphasized the dangers of substance addiction and the need for steps to combat the vices, and university officials have raised alarm about rising alcohol and other drug abuse rates. Cannabis and amphetamines are some of the substances grossly abused among university students. Recent research also indicates that about 84% of students aged 16-24 years were included in substance use and abuse (NACADA, 2017). According to Kiriru (2018), the experience of the harmful and devastating impact of drugs in the university institutions is in the public domain despite the efforts by the universities and other stakeholders to provide knowledge on the problems of how to curb the vice, the use of the substance is still on the rise among the youths in universities. The studies provide overwhelming statistical evidence on traumatic stress and rampant substance use among university students but do not provide a clear connection between them. Based on this background this research aims at investigating the influence of parental separation anxiety on substance use among university learners in Lang'ata Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

It is important to examine the nexus between parental separation anxiety and substance use among university students since traumatized students suffer a lot of psychosocial problems. They exhibit difficulties in developing healthy attachments with other members of the society and if accompanied by excess stress, it results in abnormal stress response systems such as the brain and nervous systems. Similarly, students with a history of traumatic stress due to parental separation among other factors show chronic physiological problems; suffer from body deregulation resulting in insensitivity or hypersensitivity to stimuli such as pain, stimuli, etc. and ultimately engage in deviant behavior such as substance use.

Drug and substance use in the wake of traumatic stress due to parental separation among the youth and young adults results in devastating effects on users across the world. In many parts of the world, excessive use of substances such as; psychoactive, alcohol, and illicit drugs has led to addiction and subsequent negative effects on the users including university students. The consequences of substance use include; physical health problems, mental illness, liver cirrhosis, depression, heart disease, and anxiety. The persistent use of the substance may also lead to withdrawal from studies, anti-social behavior, and a general withdrawn state of life hence, making the users weak and helpless, barring them from performing any productive duty. Smoking, alcohol and substance use leads to premature deaths, a huge disease burden due to addiction, substance use disorders, escalating incidents of rape, student unrest, poor academic performance, delays in completion of studies, and school dropout among university students. Therefore, this study is envisaged to help students against such vices which are dangerous to their health and livelihood.

Universities have made efforts to address traumatic stress emanating from parental separation and substance use among students. This includes hiring professional counselors, formulating policies against substance use, peer counseling programs, establishing dispensaries to provide medical treatment to traumatized students, and recreational facilities for students to relieve stress instead of engaging in substance use. However, despite these efforts, traumatic stress induced by parental separation anxiety and substance use continues to be prevalent among students in universities. This can be attributed to the limited number of professional counselors engaged by the universities relative to the large number of students admitted to the universities, the lack of a standardized policy framework to address traumatic and substance use in universities coupled with lack of inadequate funding for therapeutic programs for traumatized students. The inability of students to afford treatment for traumatic stress and the lack of a two-way communication process between the students and university administration to address traumatic stress has made the traumatized students resort to substance use as a coping strategy. This study sought, therefore, to investigate the relationship between parental separation anxiety - induced traumatic stress and substance use among University students in Lang'ata Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya. The literature reviewed and empirical evidence in the universities indicate that substance use by university students is caused by traumatic stresses which should be investigated further by various scholars. The findings of this study would, therefore, provide appropriate solutions to some of the gaps in the study.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

To determine the influence of parental separation anxiety on substance use among university students

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Rosner (2012) as cited in Beck's (1960) Cognitive Behavioural Theory (CBT) in which "an individual's emotional and behavioral reactions are determined by the perceptions and spontaneous thought about a given situation in an environment." The basic principle of this theory is the individual's belief in the development process in the interaction with others and the environment. Interactions between individuals, others, and the environment are likely to influence the behavior negatively or positively. Consequently, as the people interact in an institution or society, spontaneous thoughts made when faced with certain life situations such as; parental separation, physical violence from close relatives and sexual abuse due to economic strains and frustrations may lead to irrational judgments or discussions such as substance use. The use of substances may be caused by individual trauma.

The CBT has been used to inform the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy that underlines the need for the Psychotherapeutic treatment aimed at helping traumatized individuals to recognize and change automatic dangerous behaviors or irritating thought patterns that negatively influence feelings and behaviors (substance use) and transform the distorted thinking patterns, emotional and behavioral responses into a better life pattern. The use of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy in Psychotherapy has proved to be "effective in the treatment of various mental disorders namely; PTSD, Anxiety disorders, bodily dysfunctions, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders, and Substance use" (Misciagna, 2020). In addition, the Centre for Substance Abuse Treatment (2009) asserts that Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is effective in the management of substance use (independent variable) and by encouraging consumers to abstain from substance use and related activities.

Beck's (1960) CBT was found appropriate for the study because it envisaged that traumatic stresses such as parental separation anxiety can be managed effectively by Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). Further, in this study, the theory is useful in explaining the Process through which traumatized students fell into the trap of substance use (independent variable) through the concept of thoughts, feelings, anxiety, attitudes, perceptions, depression, and anger (intervening variables).

Finally, the CBT is also suitable for this study it informs therapy treatment measures for substance use disorders (Misciagna, 2020). So, based on the theory, whenever, a traumatic student reflects memories of traumatic events, it generates negative feelings like anger, depression, anxiety, and sadness and thus, triggers the need to engage in substance use to remove the negative feelings. Hence, upon failure to get alternative help to manage the traumatic stress, the student repeatedly engages in substance use which culminates in either poor academic performance, dropping out of the university, or addiction.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

The literature reviewed in this section deals with how separation anxiety causes traumatic stress among university students across the world. The reviewed literature is important because it would help in identifying the gaps to bridge by this study. Ideally, children require the presence of both parents as they grow. However, the relationship between the male and female parent may be broken in case of divorce or bereavement. Separation may be occasioned by a wide range of factors including lack of intimacy, strained parenthood, stressful conditions, lack of enough communication, conflict of interests, personal differences, lack of commitment, substance use immigration among others (Erman & Harkonen, 2017).

Globally, separation and divorce rates have been on an increasing trend. The divorce rate has grown from 2.6 for every 1000 married persons to 5.5 by the year 2008. The rates ranged from lows of 0.45 in Sri Lanka to highs of 19 in Kazakhstan. The rates were high in Europe with the U.K recording a high of 6.55. The rates were low in Latin America, Eastern Asia, and Pacific nations ranging between 1.13 and 3.97 (De Paulo, 2019). According to UNICEF (2018), nearly 133 million children aged 0-17 are orphaned: 74 million in Asia and more than 12 million in Africa due to AIDS, violence, and other causes.

In Africa, divorce rates continue to remain relatively low, stable, and declining in some countries. A study conducted across "11 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, found remarkable stability in divorce rates in certain countries like Cameroon, Zimbabwe, and East Africa; a 10% decline in others such as Liberia, Namibia, and Zambia; and significant variation in the risk of separation within the first 20 years of marriage ranging from 16% to 47.1% in Mali and Congo respectively" (Clark & Brauner-Otto, 2015).

In Kenya, though the divorce and separation rate remain low, there has been a notable increase. The divorce

rate has risen from 10.5% in 2015 to 17.7% in 2020 attributed to urbanization, literacy levels, religious beliefs, and territorial family distributions (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Past studies have identified Parental separation as a major risk factor for substance abuse among children and young adults. A study focusing on alcohol and cannabis-dependent twins found parental separation to be more influential than genetic and environmental factors (Waldron et al., 2014). In a study conducted in Nairobi, 91.8% of the respondents concurred that the parents have a greater responsibility in preventing substance use among the youths which can be highly compromised by parental separation and divorce (NACADA, 2020). More often than not, the gaps outlined in previous studies could be filled by the findings of the study.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study employed descriptive survey design because “it’s appropriate for investigation of contemporary phenomena within life context in society” (Pereira-Morales, Adan, Camargo, & Forero, 2017). The design is also considered deemed fit because it deals with current issues and situations of a phenomenon and specifically, in this study, it deals with traumatic stress on substance use among the youth in private and public universities. Descriptive research determines and reports the situation as it is at the time of the study (Mugenda, 2003). The design has been successfully used in similar studies (Mbwayo, Mathai, Harder, & Nicodimos, 2020) and is hence considered suitable for this study.

3.2 Research Site

This study was conducted in two private and two public universities in Langa’ta constituency, Nairobi County. The universities under study include Cooperative University (Main campus) and JKUAT University (Karen Campus), Catholic University of East Africa (CUEA), and Tangaza University College (TUC). Specifically, Cooperative University (Main Campus) is located along Shirika road, hardy Karen approximately 20 kilometers from Nairobi city. The JKUAT University (Karen Campus) is located along Bogani road in Karen; CUEA is located along Bogani East Road while TUC is located along Lang’ata South Road. The sites are preferred due to their sufficiently large and diverse student population representative of significant student characteristics relevant to the topic of study. Further, they are considered convenient in terms of accessibility by the researcher and their proximity to each other which would help save time and cost during data collection.

3.3 Target Population

The study target population was 140 (29%) out of 420 comprising 30 (30%) out of 100 third-year Bachelor of Science from each university totaling 120, three counsellors from each university totaling 12, and two deans of students from each institution totaling eight. The students were drawn from among first years in different schools in the universities. The counsellors comprised those offering professional and spiritual guidance while deans of students have had encounters with students engaged in substance use. Table 1 below illustrates the size and composition of the target population.

Table 1 Target Population

Category	Total Population	Percentage
Students	120	86
Counsellors	12	8
Dean of Student	8	6
Total	140	100

3.4 Study Sample

3.4.1 Study Sample Size

The size of the representative sample was determined using Slovin’s formula: $n = N / (1 + N e^2)$

Where:

n- Sample size

N- Target population

e – Margin of error. The confidence level for this study is 95% giving a margin error of 0.05 Thus

$n = 140 / (1 + 140 * 0.05^2)$

$= 103.7$ (Approx. 104).

The sample size will be 104. The sample size for each category will be determined by its proportion (%) in the target

population as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Sample Size

Category	Total Population	Sample Size	Percent
Students	120	92	88
Counsellors	12	8	8
Dean of Students	8	4	4
Total	140	104	100

3.4.2 Sampling Procedure

Since the target population is not uniform, the stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample where representatives of each stratum were selected separately using simple random sampling based on their proportion in the target population. This helped ensure all the categories are proportionately included in the sample. Random sampling aimed at removing biases in the selection process where members of the target population were given a fair chance to be included in the sample. Purposive sampling was used to select the counsellors and deans of students who have significant interaction with the students and have important data relating to the study variables among the university students.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected primarily using questionnaires and interview schedules. However, interview schedules were administered where it was not possible to administer questionnaires. The PTSD Checklist has used a standard tool for trauma testing; a self-reporting rating scale comprising 18 items corresponding to the key symptoms of PTSD. The respondents indicated the symptoms on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Extremely). The questionnaire consisted of both close and open-ended questions most of which were designed using a five-point Likert scale strategy which measures response by asking the extent to which the participant agrees or disagrees with the issue being investigated. The questionnaire was divided into five sections. Section A was focused on the background information of the participant; Section B on parental neglect; Section C separation; Section D on physical violence and Section E on sexual violence. This design helped collect detailed information on study variables and enhance objectivity, precision, and simplicity in data collection and analysis.

3.6 Pilot Testing of Research Instruments

The developed research instruments were pre-tested using an almost identical sample in the stratified strata. This enabled the content, construct, and criterion validity of the instruments as well as their reliability (Bless & Achola, 1987). The research instruments were pre-tested in one of the public universities purposively selected in Lang'ata Constituency but not among the ones sampled for the study. The instruments were piloted on 14% of the target population (20 participants) from Multimedia University to help in correcting spellings, sentences, and grammatical mistakes to attain reliability and validity of the instruments. Piloting was conducted for triangulation purposes and to ensure the effectiveness of the instruments.

3.6.1 Instrument Reliability

To enhance the reliability the PTSD Checklist was used and help guide the structuring of the questionnaire. The test-retest reliability technique was used to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaires where 20 questionnaires containing a set of questions from the actual questionnaire will be issued. A week later, the same participants answered the same questions again and the two sets of answers were correlated using a Spearman's rank-order formula for test-retest "to compute the correlation coefficient to establish the extent to which the content of the instruments is consistent in eliciting the same responses every time the instrument is administered." A correlation coefficient of "0.65 or higher was regarded sufficient to assess the study's instrument dependability" (Kerlinger, 1973). This study had a correlation coefficient of 0.7 and thus, declared instruments reliable for an effective and thorough study of the problem. High levels of correlation ($r > 0.7$) were used to determine the retest reliability.

3.6.2 Instrument Validity

The questionnaire was tested for content, construct, and criterion validity by engaging specialists or experts in the same discipline such as colleagues, counsellors, and research supervisors to help in shaping the instruments to measure what it is intended to measure and drop the irrelevant questions.

3.7 Data Analysis

Collected data were edited and coded to ensure completion and consistency before being subjected to

computer processing using the Advanced Microsoft Excel package for analysis. Descriptive statistics including mean, percentages, variance, and standard deviations were used for quantitative analysis. Inferential statistics including Pearson's correlation coefficient, regression analysis, and ANOVA were used in qualitative analysis to test the relationship between traumatic stress and substance use. Data collected were presented using frequency tables, charts, percentages, and graphs as appropriate.

IV. FINDINGS

4.1 Response Rate

Based on the sample population of the study, a total of 104 questionnaires were administered to the study respondents. A total of 57 participants filled out the questionnaires and returned them for analysis. This provided a response rate of 63.2%. As indicated by Mugenda and Mugenda (2010), a response rate of around 50% is adequate; around 60% is good, whereas a response rate around 70% and above is very good or excellent. Thus, the response rate of 54.8% established for this study is, therefore, good for establishing the conclusions for the study or making recommendations. The study, following the views given by Mugenda and Mugenda, demonstrated that the established response rate of 54.8% is acceptable for answering the research questions. However, it is evident to note that individuals who did not fill out their questionnaires could not have done so due to time constraints or any other factor out of the control of the researcher.

Table 3 Response Rate

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	36	63.2%
Female	21	36.8%
Total	57	100

4.2 Separation Anxiety and Substance Use among University Students

The study sought "to determine separation anxiety on substance use among university students in Lang'ata Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya." The study determined that 91% of the respondents (mean = 4.26) disagreed that suicide was the main cause of parents' death, in addition, 89.5% of the respondents (mean=4.47) disagreed that substance use was the main cause of parental death. This left most young people vulnerable to numerous negative influences which could predispose them to drug abuse (Pereira-Morales et al., 2017). Also, 75.4% of the respondents (mean=1.26) agreed that inability to have more children was the reason for the divorce of the parents. When the separation happened, children were predisposed to separation anxiety which could push them into substance use as posited by Erman and Harkonen (2017).

Moreover, 89% of the respondents agreed that illness was the main cause of the parents' death while 86% of the respondents (1.47) agreed that accident was the main cause of parental death. These findings are indicative of the fact that parental separation was occasioned by numerous factors as pointed out by Erman and Harkonen (2017). When it happened, students were pushed into substance use as a coping mechanism as pointed out by Otieno et al. (2015). The findings show that separation anxiety due to conditions facing parents contributed to the possibility of substance use among students due to the stresses that result.

The study findings additionally concur with the findings of De Paulo (2019) who found that separation and divorce cause traumatic stress and consequently lead to substance use by adolescents in society. The study findings are also supported by Waldron et al. (2014) who noted that separated parents are not in a position of preventing their children from substance use. The findings of Clark and Brunner-Otto (2015) however, contradict the findings stating that there are some divorce families which are stable in guiding their children against substance use.

Table 4 Descriptive Analysis for Separation Anxiety and Substance Use

Indicators	N	SA/A	N	SD/D	Mean
Suicide was the main cause of my parents death	57	5.5%	3.5%	91.0%	4.26
Substance use was the main cause of my parents' death	57	3.5%	7.0%	89.5%	4.47
Inability to have more children was the reason my parents divorced/separated	57	75.4%	21.4%	3.2%	1.26
Illness was the main cause of my parents' death	57	89.0%	8.8%	2.0%	1.26
Accidents was the main causes of my parents' death	57	7.0%	86.0%	7.0%	3.47

4.3 Substance Use

The study also sought to examine the level of substance use (the dependent variable). The findings were presented in the following sections. The findings from several statements were presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Statements on Substance Use

Question	Frequency		Percent	
	Yes	NO	Yes	No
Used drugs other than for medical reasons	37	20	64.9	35.1
Used more than one substance at a time	31	6	83.8	16.2
Relatives or friends aware or suspected	33	4	89.2	10.8
Relatives and friends complained	29	9	78.4	21.6
Medical problem	25	12	67.6	32.4
Mental problem	4	33	10.8	89.2
Emotional problem	23	14	62.2	37.8
Academic Problem	26	11	70.3	29.7
Felt bad or remorseful	32	5	86.5	13.5
Ever tried to stop substance use	37	0	100.0	0.0
sought help from relatives, counsellors or your university	37	0	100.0	0.0

The respondents were asked if they had used drugs other than for medical reasons. Most of them (64.9%) said that they had done so. This is in line with the study by Ndegwa et al. (2017) that recorded similar findings. Most of the students (83.8%) said that they were doing so. When asked if their relatives or friends were aware of or suspected their involvement in substance use, most of them said yes (89.2%). This aligns with the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (2016) which shows the importance of significant persons in the lives of students in substance abuse. As such, students had options for getting help from friends and relatives.

The respondents were asked if their relatives and friends complained about their involvement in substance use. In response, most of them said yes (78.4%). Further, the respondents were asked if they ever experienced an adverse medical problem as a result of substance use. Most of them affirmed that this was the case with them (67.6%). Additionally, most of the students said that they did not experience mental problems due to substance use (89.2%). Though few had mental challenges as posited by Misciagna (2020), it is evident that drugs could influence students negatively.

On whether they experience emotional problems resulting from substance use, most of the students answered in the affirmative (62.2%) which agrees with the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (2016) which reported similar effects among substance users. Most of the students also experienced academic problems as a result of substance use (70.3%). The majority of them felt bad or remorseful about substance use (86.5%). The majority also opined that they had tried to stop substance use (100%). The majority also you ever sought help from relatives, counselors, or your university (100%).

The students were asked to point out the frequency they abused drugs. The findings as presented in Table 6 show that the majority (62.2%) did it every week followed by 18.9% who did so monthly and 13.5% who did it occasionally.

Table 6 Frequency Abusing Drugs

How often	Frequency	Percent
Weekly	23	62.2
Monthly	7	18.9
Occasionally	5	13.5
Rarely	2	5.4
Total	37	100.0

The respondents were asked to point out the type of substances they often used. Most of them said that they abused either alcohol (67.6%) or cigarettes (56.8%). The rest abused miraa (8.1%) with only 1(2.7%) abusing cocaine. These findings show high use of different substances as posited by Nalah and Audu (2014) who said that alcohol and marijuana were the most abused. However, this study is in disparity with the former study since marijuana was scantily used in the students' population targeted by this study. The findings were presented in Table 7.

Table 7 Substance Abused

Substance	Frequency	Percent
Alcohol	25	67.6
Cigarette	21	56.8
Miraa (Khat)	3	8.1
Cocaine	1	2.7
Others	4	10.8

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Correlation Coefficient analysis examined the strength of the relationship between the study variables and ranges between -1 and +1. Using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, a negative coefficient value signified a negative correlation whereas a positive coefficient signified a positive correlation. A high correlation coefficient value of equivalents +0.5 or above signified a strong positive correlation between the study variables. A correlation coefficient of +0.3 indicated a moderate positive correlation between the variables whereas a correlation coefficient value below 0 signified a negative correlation between the variables under study consideration. The findings show that a strong positive correction between parental separation anxiety and substance use ($r=0.570$, $p<0.05$).

Table 8 Correlation Analysis Findings

Variables		Substance Abuse
Parental Separation Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	0.570**
	Sig. (2- tailed)**	0.000
	N	57
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)		

V.CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The study sought “to determine separation anxiety on substance use among university students in Lang’ata Constituency, Nairobi County.” The Study established that separation anxiety has a relationship on substance use ($r=0.570$, $p<0.05$). Thus, the study thus concludes that there is a significant positive relationship between parental separation anxiety and drug abuse in the study area. University students with parental separation anxiety-induced traumatic stress were thus likely to start abusing drugs.

5.2 Recommendations

There should be strong therapeutic interventions for students suffering from separation anxiety. This can be done by the universities as well as civil society organizations through guidance and counselling as well as social support interventions.

REFERENCES

- Alshawi, A., Al-Hemiary, N., & Al-Diwan, J. (2011). *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder among University Students in Baghdad: A Preliminary Report*. Baghdad: Researchgate. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294089915_Post_Traumatic_Stress_Disorder_among_University_Students
- Atwoli, L., Mungla, P., Ndung'u, M., Kinoti, K., & Ogot, E. (2011). Prevalence of substance use among college students in Eldoret, western Kenya. *BMC Psychiatry*, 34(1), 11. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-244X-11-34>
- Bless, H., & Achola, L. (1987). Research factors affecting performance. In E. Seppo, & B. Hatfield, *Psychology of Sports: A Social Psychological Approach* (pp. 103-117). Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers.
- Cafaso, J. (2017). Traumatic Events: Causes Effects and Management. *Journal of Psychology*, 1-5. Retrieved from <https://www.healthline.com/health/traumatic-events>
- Clark, S., & Brauner-Otto, S. (2015). Divorce in sub-Saharan Africa: Are Unions Becoming Less Stable? *Population and Development Review*, 1-5. DOI:10.1111/j.1728- 4457.2015.00086.x
- Cusack, K., Grubaugh, A., Knapp, R., & Frueh, B. (2006). Unrecognized Trauma and PTSD among Public Mental Health Consumers with Chronic and Severe Mental Illness. *Community mental health journal*, 42(1), 487-500.

doi:10.1007/s10597-006-9049-4

- De Paulo, B. (2019). *Divorce rates around the world: a love story*. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/living-single/201902/divorce-rates-around-the-world-love-story>
- Gopiram, P., & Kishore, M. (2014). Psychosocial attributes of substance abuse among adolescents and young adults: A comparative study of users and non-users. *Indian journal of psychological medicine*, 36(1), 58.
- Government of Kenya, (GoK). (2019). *Violence against Children and Youth Survey*. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- Harder, Valerie , S., Abednego , M., Musyimi, C., Ndetei, D., & Mutiso, V. (2020). A randomized clinical trial of mobile phone motivational interviewing for alcohol use problems in Kenya. *Addiction*, 1-7. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/add.14903>
- Johnson, D. J. (2013). Does cleanliness influence moral judgments? In B. a. A direct replication of Schnall, *Social Psychology* (pp. 209-215). DOI: 10.1027/1864-9335/a000186
- Kerlinger, F. (1973). *Review of research in education*. F. E. Peacock.
- Kiriru, A. (2018). Effect of awareness on substance abuse among university students in selected private universities in Kenya. *African research journal of education and social sciences*, 5(2), 1-6.
- Laurisavan, Z., Carla, N., Martiedu, T., & Gina, J. (2017). Reported exposure to trauma among adult patients referred for psychological services at the Free State Psychiatric Complex, Bloemfontein. *Health SA Gesondheid*, 22(1), 235-240. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1>
- Lopez-Tamayo, R., DiGangi, J., Segovia, G., Leon, G., Alvarez, J., & Jason, L. (2016). Psychosocial factors associated with substance abuse and anxiety on immigrant and US-born Latinos. *Journal of addiction & prevention*, 4(1), 1-6.
- Mbwayo, A., Mathai, M., Harder, V., & Nicodimos, S. (2020). Trauma among Kenyan School Children in Urban and Rural Settings: PTSD Prevalence and Correlates. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*, 13(1), 63-73. doi:13. 10.1007/s40653-019-00256-2
- Misciagna, S. (2020). *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: Theories and Applications*. Retrieved from <https://books.google.co.ke/books?id=SJn8DwAAQBAJ>
- Mugenda, O., & Mugenda, A. (2003). *Research Methods, Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Nairobi: ACT.
- Musyoka, C., Mbwayo, A., Donovan, D., & Mathai, M. (2020). *Alcohol and substance use among first-year students at the University of Nairobi, Kenya: Prevalence and patterns*. Kenya: University of Nairobi. Retrieved from <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0238170>
- NACADA. (2017). *The Role Of Parents In Prevention And Control Of Alcohol In Kenya*. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- Nalah, A., & Audu, G. (2014). Substance Use and Violent Behaviour of Students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi – Nigeria. *Academic Research International*, 10(1), 3418-3437. DOI: 10.1037/rnSV0000004.
- Ndegwa, S., Munenne, A., & Oladipo, R. (2017). *Factors influencing Alcohol Use among University Students in a Kenyan University*. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332686677>
- Otieno, C., Okoth , R., Peltzer, K., Pengpid , S., & Malla, L. (2015). Traumatic experiences, posttraumatic stress symptoms, depression, and health-risk behavior in relation to injury among University of Nairobi students in Kenya. *International Journal of Psychiatry Medicine*, 50(3), 299-316.
- Pereira-Morales, A., Adan, A., Camargo, A., & Forero, D. (2017). Substance use and suicide risk in a sample of young Colombian adults: An exploration of psychological factors. . *The American journal on addictions*, 26(4), 388-394.
- Rosner, R. (2012). Aaron T. Beck's drawings and the psychoanalytic origin story of cognitive therapy. *History of Psychology*, 15(1), 1–18. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0023892>
- SIDA. (2005). Children in Africa with experiences of massive trauma Available at. *Massive Trauma*. https://www.sida.se/contentassets/2d85d61feb084ed09cfb91679c8f0078/children-in-africa-with-experiences-of-massive-trauma_1648.pdf.
- Tot, S., Yazici, A., Metin, O., Bal, N., & Erdem, P. (2004). Psychosocial correlates of substance use among adolescents in Mersin, Turkey. *Public Health*, 118(8), 588- 593.
- UNICEF. (2014). *Children from all walks of life endure violence, and millions more are at risk*. Nairobi. Retrieved from <https://data.unicef.org/topic/adolescents/violence>
- UNODC. (2019). *World Drug Report 2019*. New York: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Retrieved June 11, 2021, from <https://wdr.unodc.org/wdr2019/>
- Waldron, M., Grant, J., Bucholz, K., Lynskey, M., Slutske, W., Glowinski, A., ... & Heath, A. (2014). Parental separation and early substance involvement: results from children of alcoholic and cannabis dependent twins. *Drug Alcohol Depend*, 134(1), 78–84. DOI: 10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2013.09.010. Epub 2013 Sep 19. PMID: 24120074; PMCID: PMC3908916.