



## PREVALENCE OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIORS AND ASSOCIATED FACTORS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CENTRAL KENYA

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### Abstract

Secondary students have been known to exhibit aggressive tendencies and antisocial behavior and both at home and education-related problems which have been held accountable. The aim of this research was to determine how common antisocial behavior was among secondary school students in Central Kenya. The study incorporated elements of the social learning and control theories. The study focused on students from secondary schools and employed a descriptive survey research design as its method of study. The study's target population consisted of 70 secondary schools located in Central Kenya. An interview with key informants guide was employed to collect qualitative data, while questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from a representative group of 200 participants from 15 secondary schools. The SPSS version 20 program was used to evaluate the study's quantitative data, and the qualitative information gathered from open-ended surveys was grouped into various thematic groups and presented narratively with the quantitative information. The study revealed that school year, school the environment, peer pressure and inappropriate teacher guidance are some of the school-based factors that influence anti-social conduct. The roles of the family and the school in behavior regulation are distinct. From the study recommended that overall development and parents should manage the home environment by setting rules, offering guidance and counseling and monitoring behavioral changes in their children. School administrators should also encourage parents and guardians to monitor their children's behavior and offer guidance and counseling. The management of the school should encourage parents and guardians to monitor their children's behavior and offer support and direction.

**Keywords:** Aggressive inclinations, antisocial behavior, school-based issues, parental discipline.

### INTRODUCTION

Over the past century, as criminology has advanced and research quality has increased, the quantity of studies on aberrant conduct has increased significantly (Omwenga & W, 2024). If a behavior is unusual, deviates from the norm, or does not fit societal norms, it is deemed abnormal or anti-social (Omwenga & Kayusi, 2024). Anti-social behavior is defined as a code of behavior that deviates from the normative code of conduct in society. Wachikwu and Ibegbunam (2012) describe anti-social conduct as crimes committed by children under the age of 18 that usually involve a violation of socially acceptable norms and values. Moreover, anti-social behavior was characterized by Wachikwu and Ibegbunam (2012) as a persistent breach of socially prescribed patterns of behavior, usually comprising anger, vandalism, rule breaking, and social norm violations. Similarly, anti-social behavior was defined by Hanrahan (2017) as a destructive act that includes overt or covert intentional aggression and enmity toward others. It characterizes a broad disdain for social accepted practices and standards that allow people to live in harmony with one another (Alice, Omwenga & Lambert, 2024).



According to research by Slattery and Meyers (2014), parental supervision moderates the association between teenage antisocial behavior and community violence, while exposure to violence is a strong, direct predictor. Nonetheless, the present study assumes that secondary school students, but not teenagers, engage in antisocial behavior (Omwenga & Mwangi, 2024). Although there is ample evidence that poor parenting is associated with future anti-social behavior in youth, Bacchini, Concetta Miranda, and Affuso (2016) contend that as children enter adolescence and are given greater autonomy, Sammon (2014) states that encountering community violence is an important risk factor for disruptive conduct, and that parental supervision in particular becomes an essential indicator of anti-social behavior. Hostility and tolerance to violent acts are indicators of this. The association between this risk factor and antisocial conduct in adolescents is well-supported by research (Spano, Vazsonyi, & Bolland 2009). However, in order to improve data collecting and analysis, the current study aims to integrate mixed research methodologies, whereas earlier investigations focused on a descriptive approach.

Chan et al. (2016) argued in an Australian research of secondary school students that drug use is highly associated with unprotected sex for girls but not for boys, even after adjusting for a number of risk factors. While those under the age of 16 were the exclusive subject of the previous study, secondary school pupils of all ages are the focus of this one. While the current study looks at how school and family-based factors affect anti-social behavior in students in secondary school, Rovis, Jonkman, and Basic (2016) focused on anti-social behavior and looked at a multilevel analysis of student relationships with their families and school bonds.

Aituisi, Yakubu, Bada, Umar and Shaib (2010) argue that romantic relationships have the greatest impact and may psychologically obstruct the process of learning. A descriptive technique was used by Umar et al. (2010), but the current study intends to use a descriptive survey research strategy to ascertain whether the outcomes will be consistent. Similarly, Malete (2007) claims that pupils in Botswana's secondary schools are much more likely to self-report aggressive tendencies and antisocial actions. Boys are more prone than girls to use drugs and alcohol, possess and use dangerous weapons, and be aggressive. Additionally, low parental supervision and poor parent-child relationships were substantially associated with high scores on anti-social and aggressive behaviors (Keari et al., 2024).

This study was carried out in Kenya, while the last one was carried out in Botswana. This implies that the goal of the investigation is to ascertain whether the outcomes will be constant or not.

### **Purpose of the Study**

To determine the prevalence of anti-social behavior in secondary school children in Central Kenya.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study was carried out in central region of Kenya. The global nature of the field of study which suggests that secondary school children come from a variety of backgrounds which led to its selection. Furthermore, the study was able to gather information from a variety of respondents because the central region of Kenya has both day and boarding schools. This gave study a wide understanding of antisocial conduct among secondary school students. The study used a descriptive survey research approach in order to achieve its main goal. According to Orodho (2015), a descriptive survey research design enables the collection of data related to the study's goals. The study was able to gather information from a large number of respondents by using a survey approach, which improved generalizations. All secondary school students in the central region of Kenya whose antisocial behavior was to be examined made up the study's target population. 70 secondary schools in the area were the study's target population (MoE, 2024; Central Counties Integrated Development Plan 2018/2023). 15 schools, or around 30% of the target demographic, made up the study's sample population (*Table 2*).



The study stratified the sample and chose a representative sample of male and female students from the 15 schools, as shown in *table 2* above. Because the respondents had the data required for the study, the sample size of 200 respondents, as shown in *table 3* below, was judged sufficient.

Stratified random sampling was used in the investigation. Stratified sampling involves grouping individuals of a population into different strata, with the idea that members of the same stratum should share similar characteristics. Interviews were performed to gather qualitative data from them. Information was gathered from key informants and school officials at the sampled schools using an interview guide. In-person interviews were used for this.

### ***Collection of Quantitative Data***

A questionnaire was used to obtain quantitative data for the study since it is simpler to administer to a large sample size. Because questionnaires may reach a large number of respondents quickly and because the study gives research participants more time to complete and react to the specified themes, it used them to collect primary data. Furthermore, because respondents are not asked to reveal their identities until specifically requested, questionnaires ensure the respondents' confidentiality. According to Owens (2014) [26], questionnaires should be the main instrument used in research since, in contrast to interview guides, they do not result in the acquisition of biased data or information.

### ***Ethical considerations***

Heads of the institutions where the study was carried out, as well as the counties' research department. Additionally, the respondents were informed that participation was entirely voluntary and that they could choose to engage, decline, or withdraw at any time while the data was being collected. Furthermore, respondents were guaranteed anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent at no point during the data gathering process, and the study did not pressure them into providing information.

### ***Data Analysis***

The study employed SPSS version 20 for data analysis. The study was able to run descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, tables, and percentages, thanks to the application. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentages, standard deviation, and mean, were used in the study. Tables, charts, and graphs were used throughout the study to display the data. In accordance with the study's goals, the qualitative information obtained from open-ended questions was categorized into a number of thematic categories and presented narratively with the quantitative data. In order to support quantitative data, the study included qualitative data.

## **RESULTS**

### ***Response Rate***

There were 200 responders in the study's sample. As shown in *table 4* below, 174 respondents completed and returned questionnaires, representing an 87% response rate. In contrast, 26 respondents made up the 13% non-response group. According to Nachmias & Nachmis (2004), a response rate of 50% or more is considered satisfactory and serves as a solid foundation for data analysis. Morris (2016) backs up the claim that responses with a response rate of more than 60% are required for a social study in order to draw valid research conclusions. Therefore, the study concluded that the 87% response rate attained was suitable because it was higher than 50% and would yield enough data for analysis and the formulation of satisfactory study results.

**Table 4.** Response Rate

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Response	174	87
Non-Response	26	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Social and Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

In order to determine how each respondent's demographic characteristics affected anti-social conduct among Central Kenyan secondary school students, the study gathered a variety of demographic data. The demographic data gathered for the study comprised the respondents' gender, educational class and type of school. This section's data was gathered using quantitative techniques, particularly a questionnaire. The heads of the schools where the data was gathered gave their agreement before the questionnaire could be given to respondents.

#### Gender of the Respondents

As shown in *table 5* below, the study aimed to determine the respondents' gender distribution. According to the data analysis, 103 (59.2%) of the respondents were male, and 71 (40.8%) of the respondents were female. Because males and females exhibit considerably different levels of anti-social conduct, the study gathered data on gender (Bergen et al., 2004).

**Table 5.** Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	103	59.2
Female	71	40.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100</b>

#### Class Level of the Respondents

The study made the decision to gather information on the students' class level since it influences their ability to make decisions and their academic objectives. According to *Table 6*, 76 (43.7%) of the students in the data collection were at form level, although the bulk of the respondents, 98 (56.3%), were form three students.

**Table 6.** Respondents' Class Level

Class	Frequency	Percentage
Form three	98	56.3
Form four	76	43.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100.0</b>



## Type of School and Distribution of Respondents

Since day and boarding schools are direct indicators of academic success and, consequently, determinants of student behavior, the study gathered data on the type of school. In actuality, boarding school kids are under the direct supervision of their teachers, whereas day school pupils are seen by both parents and teachers. The purpose of the study was to determine the respondents' educational background, as shown in *table 7*. The majority of respondents (39.7%) attended mixed secondary schools, just over a third (36.2%) attended day schools, and 24.1% attended boarding schools, according to the analysis of the data.

**Table 7.** Type of School

Type of School	Frequency	Percentage
Day	63	36.2
Boarding	42	24.1
Mixed	69	39.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Predictors of Anti-social Behaviour

The purpose of the study was to look into factors that affected antisocial conduct among Central Kenyan secondary school pupils. The respondents were asked about issues such as broken households, peer pressure, media influence, lack of parental attention, and the absence of counselors in schools. *Table 8* below provides a tabulation of the data analysis.

**Table 8.** Predictors of Anti-social Behaviour among Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Absence of parental supervision	43	24.7
Absence of school counselors	35	20.1
Broken house	33	19
Influence of the media	27	15.5
Influence from peers	36	20.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The majority of respondents (24.7%) agreed that the primary cause of antisocial conduct is an absence of parental supervision, as shown in *table 8*. However, nearly a quarter (20.1%) of the respondents believed that one of the main predictors of anti-social conduct was the absence of counselors in schools. Some of the students in the survey, 19% broken homes, whereas 15.5% backed media influence and 20.7 were on peer pressure. This result is in line with Ojo's (2015) findings that students' antisocial behavior was frequently caused by a broken household, media influence, and a lack of parental care.



## Prevalent Types of Anti-social Behaviour

The goal of the study was to find out what kinds of antisocial conduct were most common in Central Kenyan schools. In addition to having the option to respond, respondents were given a list of antisocial behaviors from which they could choose the most suitable; this information was not included in the questionnaire. *Table 9* below presents the results under this subsection.

**Table 9.** Types of Anti-social Behaviour and Distribution of Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Stealing	69	39.7
Rudeness	78	44.8
Malpractice in examination	27	15.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Table 9* shows that the majority of respondents (44.8%) said that the most common and noticeable anti-social behavior among secondary students in the study area was rudeness, while 39.7% thought that theft was a fundamental anti-social activity. Additionally, 15.5% of respondents believed that the most serious anti-social behavior that led to other vices, like school burning, was exam malpractice.

## Reported Aggressive Tendencies

Respondents to the study were asked about some of their self-reported antisocial behavior. Alcohol and drug misuse, carrying and utilizing dangerous weapons, and participating in fights and scuffles were among the options offered to the respondents. *Table 10* below presents the results from this subsection.

**Table 10.** The distribution of respondents and the types of aggressive behaviors

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Drug abuse	69	39.7
Alcohol consumption	47	27
Participation in scuffles and fights	58	33.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The majority of respondents (39.7%) stated that drug abuse was the most common aggressive behavior in their individual schools, as can be seen in *table 10* above. However, (27%) of the respondents said that alcohol consumption was an aggressive behavior in their school, and 33.3% said that scuffling and fights was the most violent and anti-social behavior in their individual schools within the study area. Therefore, it is possible to draw the conclusion that violent behaviors in secondary schools include fighting, drug usage, and alcohol consumption.





A study by Malete (2007) found that self-reported aggressive tendencies and anti-social behaviors, like drug and alcohol misuse, were significantly more common among secondary school students. This finding is consistent with that study. The results of this study, however, contradict those of Malete (2007) about the use of dangerous weapons because none of the participants reported carrying or using a weapon.

### Reasons for Aggressive Tendencies

The goal of the study was to determine the causes of antisocial conduct in secondary schools within the chosen research area. Low parental supervision, strained parent-child relationships, insufficient teacher assistance, and unsuitable role models were among the options presented to the respondents. *Table 11* below provides an analysis of the data gathered under this subsection.

**Table 11.** Distribution of Respondents according to Reasons for Aggressive Tendencies

Reasons for Aggressive Behaviour	Frequency	Percentage
Strained parent-child relationships	43	24.7
Poor parent-child relations	59	33.9
Insufficient teacher assistance	23	13.2
Inappropriate role models	49	28.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The majority of respondents (33.9%) said that Poor parent-child relations was the primary cause of aggressive and antisocial conduct in secondary school children, as seen in *table 11 above*. Nearly (28.2%) of the respondents claimed that inappropriate role models were the primary cause of aggressive tendencies in secondary schools, while nearly (24.7%) of the respondents saw Strained parent-child relationships as the driving force behind aggressive behavior and (13.2%) said that teachers did not provide enough support.

### Prevalent Causes of Anti-social behavior

In the sampled schools, the study aimed to identify common reasons of antisocial conduct. The structured question asked respondents to select the most relevant answer from a list of common reasons why people act in an antisocial manner. The factors that contributed to antisocial conduct included peer pressure, parental socioeconomic, home environment, gender, and place of residence. The data gathered under this subsection is analyzed and shown in *table 12 below*.

**Table 12.** Prevalent Causes of Anti-social behavior in Schools

Causes of anti-social behaviour	Frequency	Percentage
Peer pressure	71	40.7
Parental socioeconomic	21	12
Home environment	57	32.7
Gender	25	14.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100.0</b>



According to the data analysis presented in *table 12* above, the majority of respondents (40.7%) believed that peer pressure promoted antisocial behavior in secondary school students, while 12% thought that parental socioeconomic status could predict antisocial behavior. However, 14.6% of respondents identified gender, with boys believed to exhibit more anti-social behaviors than girls, and 32.7% of respondents said that the home environment contributed to anti-social behavior because of the perceived absence of or inadequate parental monitoring.

## **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, and RECOMMENDATIONS**

An analysis of data on the incidence of antisocial behavior among Central Kenyan secondary school students revealed that some of the key predictors of antisocial behavior were broken homes, peer pressure, media influence, a lack of school counselors, and insufficient parental care. Additionally, the study found that some of the most common anti-social acts were examination malpractice, rudeness, and theft. According to the majority of respondents, the most common aggressive behavior in their respective schools was getting involved in fights and scuffles. The main causes of aggressive behavior were cited as inadequate parental supervision, strained parent-child relationships, and unsuitable role models.

According to an analysis of the data gathered, peer pressure, parental socioeconomic level, home environment, gender, and residential location were the main factors of antisocial conduct. The results of antisocial behavior included poverty, unemployment, and instability in life. Furthermore, the study found that boys were more likely than girls to engage in aggressive and antisocial behaviors, and that anti-social behaviors were influenced by sociodemographic factors as age, family size, and child labor.

According to the study, the family and school environments were the main causes of the high incidence of violent tendencies and antisocial behaviors among secondary school pupils. The study comes to the conclusion that anti-social behavior is influenced by a number of home and school-based factors, including the sociodemographic characteristics of the students. The study found that anti-social behavior is influenced by family-based factors. Accordingly, the study comes to the conclusion that family-related factors, like family conflict and a history of problem behavior, have an impact on secondary school students' antisocial behavior. iii. The study finds that anti-social behavior is triggered by school-based variables such as peer pressure, school atmosphere, and insufficient supervision and counseling.

The study found that the attitudes and values that are taught in schools differ greatly from those that are taught at home. Thus, the study comes to the conclusion that students' behavior is greatly influenced by their families, which serve as the fundamental socialization unit.

### **Recommendations**

- i. Analysis of the study's results showed that antisocial behavior was common among secondary school pupils due to a shortage of school counselors, peer and media pressure, and insufficient parental supervision. As a result, this study suggests that school administrators provide guidance and counseling to students and encourage parents/guardians to keep an eye on their behavior.
- ii. According to the study, anti-social behavior is influenced and/or contributed to by family factors, such as parental conflict and attitudes that support problem behavior. In light of this, the study advises parents to establish rules and provide advice and counseling in order to govern the home environment in a way that promotes children's overall development.
- iii. The study's conclusions show that a variety of school-related factors, including social pressure, a lack of teacher direction, and the academic year, affect problem behavior among secondary school pupils. Since this method would allow teachers to identify when there is a shift in behavior, the





study advises school administrators to create a monitoring system that tracks behavioral changes in their children. Monitoring pupils' intellectual progress is one method of achieving this goal.

- iv. It was clear that values taught at the classroom level and those instilled in the family could differ. For example, adolescents may conceal aggressive behavior at school but disclose it at home. In light of this, the study suggests that parents be aware of their responsibilities for behavior monitoring, including the use of rewards and punishments, and that schools employ morally grounded teachers and staff members who can serve as role models for students, as behavior is imitated through observational learning.
- v. The study concentrated on two factors; family and school-based factors that affect the prevalence of antisocial behavior. It suggests more research involving other variables that were not included in the current study to determine their impact on the prevalence of antisocial behavior among secondary school students. Additionally, the study was carried out in Kisii County's Nyaribari Masaba Constituency, suggesting that further research in other Kenyan counties and constituencies is necessary to see whether the findings will be consistent or inconsistent.

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