

## Nature and Extent of Deviant Behaviour among Secondary Students in Public Schools within Bungoma County, Kenya

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### ABSTRACT

*The prevalence of fire disasters has become a global phenomenon, especially in public and private premises, particularly secondary schools and other learning institutions. Social decadence has been touted as one of the reasons for rebelliousness among secondary school students, which has in many cases led to the torching of schools. Whereas schools are expected to promote and enhance discipline and moral behaviors, in most instances, schools within Bungoma have experienced forms of deviant behavior that have resulted in fire disasters. Therefore, this study sought to examine the nature and extent of deviant behavior among public secondary schools in Bungoma County, Kenya. The study utilized Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. The study adopted a descriptive research design, and a sample of 384 was used. Proportionate and simple random sampling was used. The study found that there was high cases of deviant behaviors among students, led by theft of property (95.6%), followed by drug and substance use (64.8%). The study further found that peer pressure (83.3%) and drug and substance abuse (53.6%) were the main factors leading students to burn schools. The findings of the study revealed that 363 (95.6%) of respondents agreed that there are many theft cases among students and their fellow colleagues. The study concludes that most students abuse bhang, followed by chang'aa, and lastly, busaa. In regards to the effects of riots, the study concludes that riots mostly take the form of destruction of properties, followed by theft cases. In regards to types of theft cases, the study concludes that students have experienced theft of text books due to poverty and parenthood. Also, students steal these items mostly to sell them and get money. The school administration should enhance security measures through the installation of CCTVs and improved fencing to reduce the chances of sneaking out and drugs getting in. Students should be forced to pay for the damages caused during their riots. The governments should ensure schools have adequate and trained counselors in order to help in taming deviant behaviors such as drug and substance abuse, bullying, and theft. The school administration should have open communication with the students in order to avert riots and school fires.*

**Keywords:** Behaviour, Deviance, Fire Disasters, Indiscipline, Students, Unrest

### I. INTRODUCTION

The occurrence of fire disasters has become a widespread global phenomenon, affecting both public and private secondary schools as well as other educational institutions. Fire has been a persistent cause of fatalities, injuries, and extensive property damage on a global scale for a significant period of time (Rubarutuka, 2013). Fire is a phenomenon characterized by the fast oxidation of a substance, which leads to the release of heat, light, and a variety of reactive byproducts (Wahab, 2015).

The prevalence of deviant behavior, often referred to as aberrant behavior, among students in mainstream educational institutions has been seen to consistently rise over the years (Hayden, 2007; Damron-Bell, 2011). Aberrant conduct has the potential to result in various issues within a school environment, including but not limited to peer pressure, bullying, and violence. According to Goode (2016), deviant behavior in the field of psychology is characterized as a departure from established socio-psychological and moral norms. Deviant behavior is distinguished by the infringement of societal standards that result in harm to people and the general welfare, as well as their immediate environment. According to Sherif (2005), aberrant conduct can be conceptualized as a decision-making process that includes the selection between socially acceptable and deviant methods to attain predetermined objectives.

According to Lapinski and Rimal (2005), human behavior may deviate either positively or negatively from socially acceptable norms. Negative deviance refers to deviant behavior defined by unorthodox traits that do not conform to officially established, generally accepted social norms. Deviant behavior by teenagers includes antisocial,

delinquent, wrongful, aggressive, self-destructing, and suicidal acts (Hanimoglu, 2018). These acts may lead to various abnormalities in personal development. Often, these deviations include children’s reactions to difficult life circumstances (Wolfe et al., 2014). The causes of deviant behavior are related to conditions of upbringing, peculiarities of physical development, and one’s social environment (Berdibayeva *et al.*, 2016).

Social decadence has been touted as one of the reasons for rebelliousness among secondary school students, which has in many cases led to the torching of schools. Kenya’s society is one that has skewed attitudes, “a don’t-care attitude”; it is a society that has lost morals among its youth, even adults. The students get supported in their ways by the very members of society; they purchase fuel to burn and get supplied with drugs by the very society (Cooper, 2014). This kind of attitude has made the young generation see rogue behaviors, including the burning of schools, as normal. According to Damron-Bell (2011), there has been a consistent rise in the prevalence of kids exhibiting deviant behavior, often referred to as aberrant behavior, inside general education schools on an annual basis.

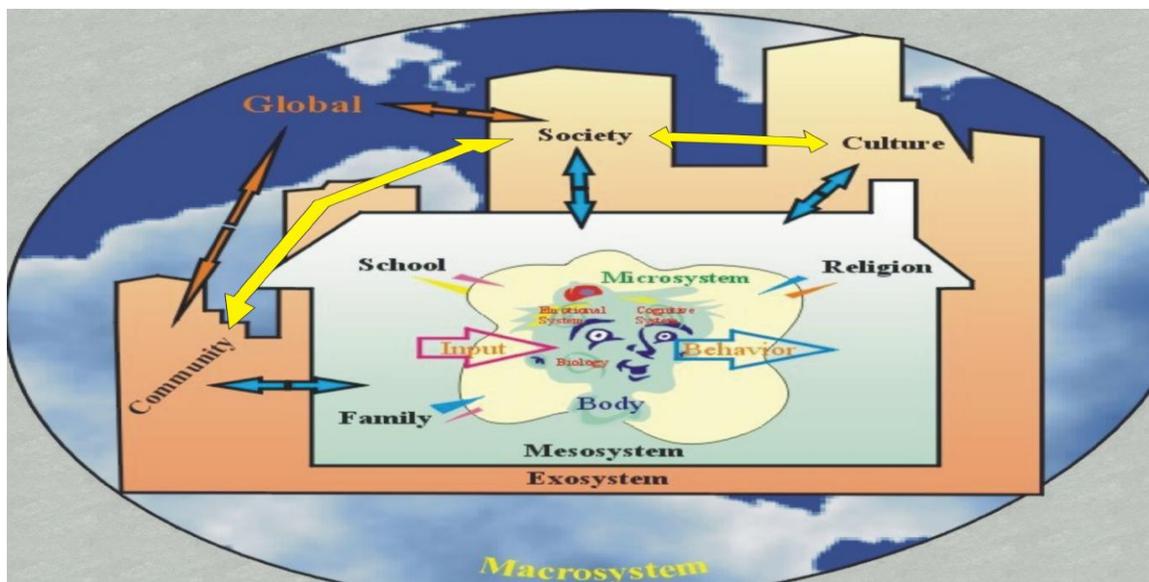
Among the counties that have experienced alarming cases of fire incidences in schools is Bugoma County. These incidences have caused untold suffering and unreparable damage in schools. Whereas schools are expected to promote and enhance discipline and moral behaviors, in most instances, schools within Bungoma have experienced forms of deviant behavior that have resulted in fire disasters. Therefore, the impetus of this study was to interrogate the weaknesses of institutional frameworks and the link between deviance and school fires. It is on this basis that the study focused on examining the nature and extent of deviance among students in public secondary schools within Bungoma County. Therefore, what is the nature and extent of deviant behavior among secondary students in Bungoma County?

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was guided by Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory compounded by Ryan (2001)

### 2.1 Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory

The study was anchored on Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, which views child development as a complex system of relationships affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment, from the immediate settings of family and school to broad cultural values, laws, and customs (Ryan, 2001). Deviance and related behaviors are thus influenced by the surrounding environment. Bronfenbrenner’s theory defines complex “layers” of environment, each having an effect on a child’s development.



**Figure 1**  
*Bronfenbrenner’s Structure of Environment*  
**Source:** (Ryan, 2001).

### 2.1.1 Mesosystem

Schools have a significant influence on students' behavior through their interactions with peers. The school environment can create a situation where students with deviant behaviors can influence others, potentially leading to incidents like school fires or riots.

Religion, on the other hand, can impact students both positively and negatively, depending on various factors and the current global dynamics. In recent times, there has been a concerning trend where some students are drawn to religion for material gain or riches. This pursuit of wealth can result in deviant behavior, such as involvement in cult worship, which has been linked to incidents of school fires. However, it's important to note that religion can also play a positive role by serving as a moral and spiritual guide for students, promoting personal growth and ethical behavior.

The family environment also plays a crucial role in shaping students' behavior. Absentee parents can leave students vulnerable to deviant behavior, potentially leading to school fires and other destructive actions. Many families, as observed in the study, face financial challenges, which may force students to resort to alternative means of coping, such as theft or arson.

### 2.1.2 Exosystem

Society, with its various structural elements, has a significant impact on a child's development by interacting with their microsystem. For instance, the schedules of parents at their workplace or the availability of community-based family resources can exert influences on the child's life. While the child may not be directly engaged at this level, they can still feel the positive or negative effects resulting from these interactions within their own system. Societal demands and pressures imposed on the child can sometimes lead to deviant behaviors as they seek alternative ways to cope with the stress, which can manifest in acts like burning schools.

Culture is another dynamic element that shapes students' behavior. In a world characterized by globalization and civilization, students often adopt elements of different cultures from other schools or communities. This cultural exchange can lead to the spread of negative behaviors, such as school burning, rioting, or boycotting exams, as students may mimic these actions due to their appeal or influence from others.

The local community also plays a crucial role in influencing students' behavior. In some cases, the community may incite students or provide access to drugs and substances that can lead to deviant behavior. Additionally, community tensions, such as opposition to a new principal or teachers, can further exacerbate the likelihood of students engaging in acts like burning schools, participating in riots, or engaging in looting.

### 2.1.3 Macrosystem

The macrosystem layer may be considered the outermost layer in the child's environment. While not being a specific framework, this layer is comprised of cultural values, customs, and laws (Berk, 2000). The effects of larger principles defined by the macrosystem have a cascading influence throughout the interactions of all other layers. For example, if it is the belief of the culture that parents should be solely responsible for raising their children, that culture is less likely to provide resources to help parents. This, in turn, affects the structures in which the parents function. The parents' ability or inability to carry out that responsibility toward their child within the context of the child's microsystem is likewise affected. This in turn leads to deviant behaviors among students, hence school fires and other forms of deviance such as bullying, riots, and drug and substance abuse among students. The changing world influences the behaviors of students based on what they see and watch on social media, thus leading to deviant behaviors that cause school fires.

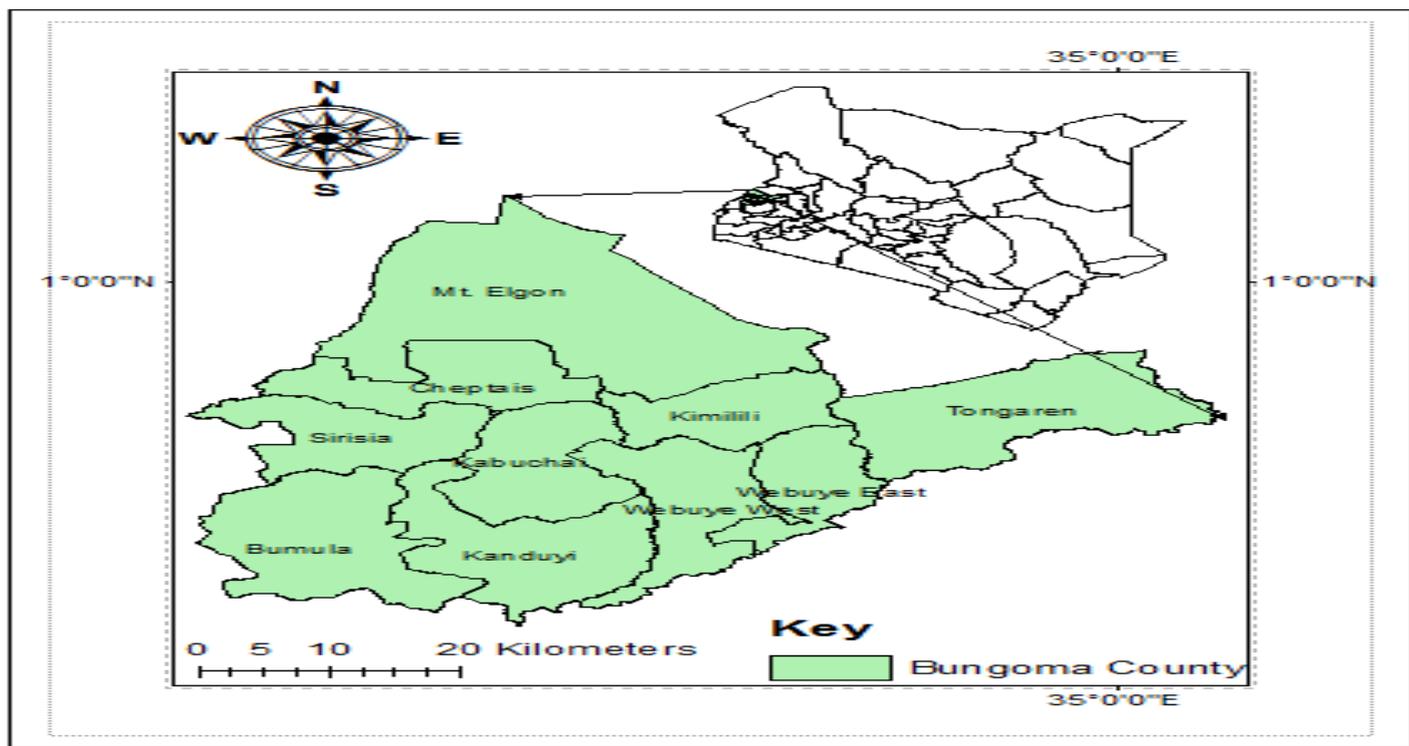
The importance of these tenets for the study of deviant behavior is enormous since deviance exists at the intersection of conflicting beliefs regarding right and wrong, good and bad, societal or community influence, acceptable and reprehensible. In order to understand deviance, the study looked at the relationship between the tenets and school fires. There is a greater relationship between deviant behavior and recurrent school fires. This theory puts into perspective factors that stimulate deviant behaviors among students within Bungoma County, which then leads to recurrent fire disasters in the form of arson attacks.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design. Descriptive research is directed at making careful observations and detailed documentation of a phenomenon of interest (Bhattacharjee, 2019). Descriptive design seeks to uncover the nature of the factors involved in each situation, the degree to which they exist, and the relationship

between them. The study was conducted in Bungoma County. The county lies between latitude 0° 33' 48.60" north of the Equator and longitude 34° 33' 37.98" east of the Greenwich Meridian. Figure 2 shows the study area map.



**Figure 2**  
*Map of Study Area*  
 Source: GIS Expert 2023

### 3.2 Study population and sampling

The study population consisted of the following groups of respondents; Deputy principal administration, guidance and counselling teachers, school prefects, school counselors, students, county quality assurance and standards officer, Sub County director of education; security officers-security guards, County Director Disaster management officer, Kenya Red Cross Bungoma Branch and Bungoma County Fire Brigade. Teachers, students, PTA and BOM secretary respondents were drawn from the schools that have had fire incidences in the recent past.

Bungoma County was purposively sampled due to the numerous incidents of school fires that had been recorded. The study was conducted in public secondary schools in Bungoma County. According to data from the county education offices, there are 369 public secondary schools and the public schools a total student enrolment of 151,438 with a total of 4013 Teachers. This is considered a large population and therefore Cochran’s formula is considered appropriate for the situation.

The Cochran formula is:  

$$((1.96)^2 (0.5) (0.5)) / (0.05)^2$$

$$= 384 \text{ Student respondents.}$$

The sampling of student respondents in the selected schools were done using proportionate sampling method as indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
*Showing Selected Schools and Number of Students*

Sub County	Name of school	No of students	Proportionate sampling
Kimilili	Chesamisi Boys	1,050	21
Bumula	Khasoko Boys	987	20
Sirisia	Bishop Eliud Wabukhala Mixed day	956	19
Bumula	Kimaeti secondary	867	17
Kanduyi	Mabanga Girls	1234	25
Sirisia	Sikusi Secondary	563	11
Sirisia	Namwela Boys	1275	25
Kanduyi	St. Marys Kibabii	2485	50
Webuye West	Chebosi Secondary	694	14
Cheptais	Cheptais Boys	2,143	43
Webuye West	Milo Friends Boys	1659	33
Kanduyi	Kimugui boys	748	15
Sirisia	Malakisi Muslim mixed	423	8
Tongaren	Mitua Girls	1350	27
Kimilili	Kimilili Boys	2786	56
<b>Total</b>		<b>19,220</b>	<b>384</b>

**Source:** Bungoma County Director Education Office, 2023

### 3.3 Instruments

This study utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected using questionnaires, interview guides, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and observation checklist while secondary data were collected from various relevant published materials, minutes of meetings, periodicals, theses and journals.

### 3.4 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

According to Cason et al. (1993), validity refers to the extent to which outcomes obtained from the analysis of data really represent the phenomenon under study. To test the validity of the research tools, the questionnaires were subjected to cross-checking by other scholars and also to evaluate the dependence of the matter.

The pilot study was carried out in Kisumu County among schools that have experienced fire disasters. The study employed split analysis, where the odd and even numbers were used. Coefficients greater than 0.7 were considered suitable for statistical analysis. The Cronbach coefficient was 0.856, translating to 85.6%. This indicates a high coefficient value, thus the tools are reliable.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The analysis conducted in this study adhered to the recommended approach of editing, coding, classification, and tabulation of raw data, as outlined by Kothari (2004). The qualitative data were acquired through focus group discussions (FGDs), and the interviews were processed using theme methodologies to generate a narrative report.

### 3.6 Ethical considerations

The researcher sought permission from the Department of Emergency Management Studies after presenting his proposal. The researcher then waited for the Board of graduate school to give permission to conduct the research by giving the letter. The researcher used the latter to apply for the permit from NACOSTI. Once the permit was given the researcher sought authorization from the County Commissioner and County Director of Education in Bungoma county. In the event that some students were expected to participate in the study and they were minors, a written consent letter was issued to persons in charge of the minors.

## IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

This section provides findings and discussions of the study. It starts with the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The section also provides forms of deviant behaviors experienced in schools, the nature of

indiscipline in schools, causes of deviance among students, types of commonly abused drugs and substances, students with rogue behaviors influencing others, and the extent of rogue students influencing others.

The findings reveal that male respondents were 305 (79.4%), while female respondents were 79 (20.6%). This shows that the majority (79.4%) of the respondents were male, thus indicating that men are the most affected in terms of deviant behavior and school fires. The study focused on schools that have been affected by school fires, and most of the schools affected are boys schools. The study findings show that 13–15-year-old respondents were 65 (16.9%), 16–18-year-olds were 244 (63.5%), and 18–20-year-olds were 75 (19.5%). These findings reveal that the majority of the respondents were aged between 16 and 18 years. This indicates the ideal age for secondary students. According to the NACADA (2012) survey on the rapid situation assessment of the status of drug and substance abuse in Kenya, it is of concern that there is a decline in the age at which respondents revealed their initiation into drugs. The data for those aged 10–14 years old show an increase from 0.3% in 2007 to 1.1% in 2012 for those reporting ever using bhang.

The findings show that respondents from boys boarding were 175 (45.6%), girls boarding were 88 (22.9%), mixed days were 76 (19.8%), and mixed days and boarding were 45 (11.7%). The results indicate boys boarding were the majority of the respondents, followed by girls boarding, and then mixed day. The findings were further supported by Maithya (2009), who stated that there is a significant relationship between drug abuse and the category of school a student attended. Mixed schools have more cases of drug abuse than girls or boys schools.

#### 4.1 Have you experienced any indiscipline case in school?

The study examined the cases of indiscipline in school within Bungoma County. The results are as presented in Fig 2.

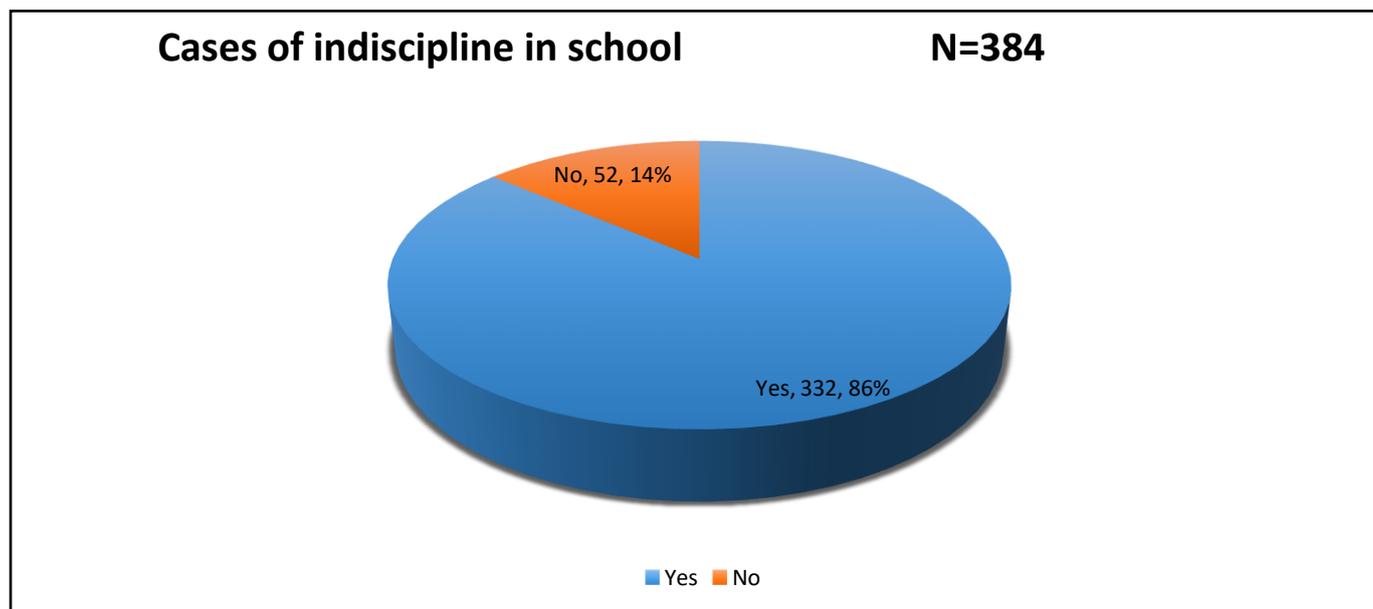


Figure 3  
*Cases of Indiscipline in Schools*

The results in Figure 3 indicate that respondents who agreed that there are cases of indiscipline in school were 332 (86%), while those who said no were 52 (14%). The majority of the respondents (86%) agreed that there are cases of indiscipline in schools.

According to Okumbe (2001), indiscipline among students has its roots in the school, society, and the minds of students. Reports in the media indicate that schoolchildren have taken up violence against their teachers and colleagues (Thinguri & Kiongo, 2015). Schools today have to deal with the problems of weapons, recruitment into criminal groups, rivalry, drugs and substance abuse, trafficking, and youth radicalization. These cases are experienced all over the world, with the USA experiencing a higher rate of school crimes compared to Britain and Canada, where there has been an increase in the use of weapons over the past decade (Kithe, 2014).

#### 4.2 What is the Nature of Deviant Behavior among Students in Bungoma County

The study sought to establish the nature of deviant behavior among secondary school students in Bungoma County, Kenya. The findings were as presented in Table 2.

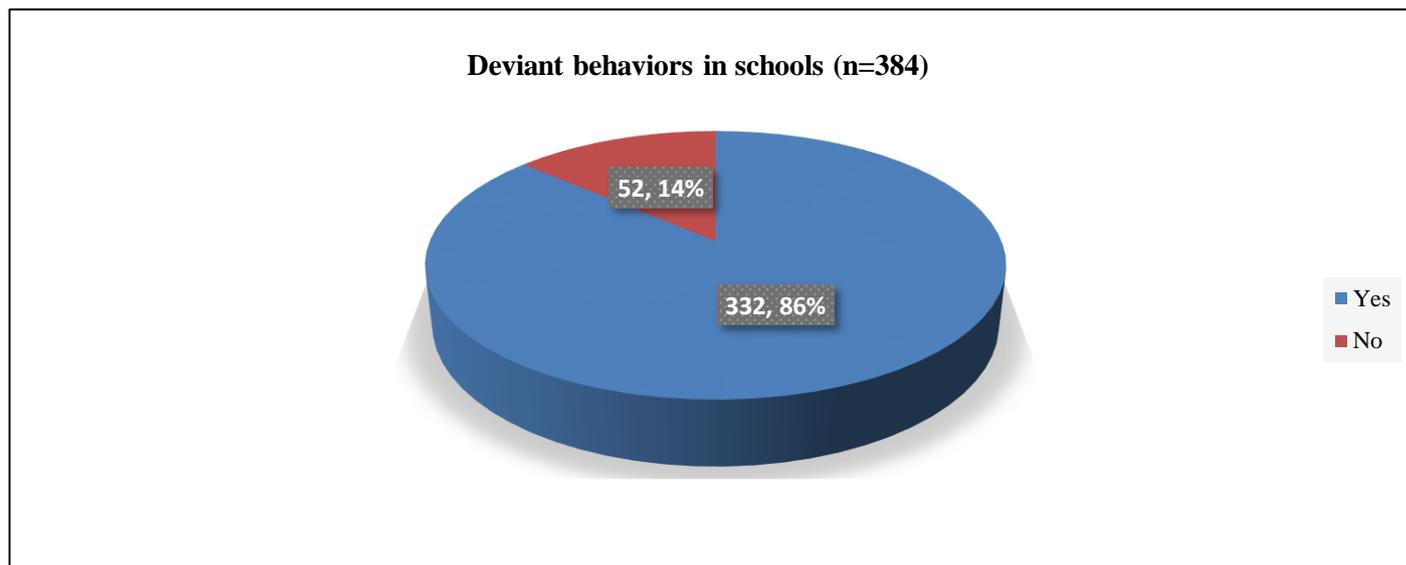
**Table 2**  
*Nature of Deviance Behavior*

Nature of deviant behavior	Frequency	Percentage
Drug and substance abuse	123	32%
Bullying cases	109	28.4%
Riots	23	6.0%
Fire incidences/damages	76	19.8%
Sneaking out	53	13.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100%</b>

The results in Table 2 revealed that out of 384 students, 123 (32%) had been involved in drug and substance abuse, 109 (28.4%) had experienced bullying cases, 23 (6%) had experienced riots, 76 (19.8%) experienced fire incidences or damage, and sneaking out 53 (13.8%) indicated various natures and extents of deviance behaviors. The findings imply that drug and substance abuse were the main causes of deviant behavior among students in Bungoma County.

##### 4.2.1 Has your school being affected by deviant behavior?

The study examined whether schools has been affected by deviant behavior in Bungoma County. The results are as presented in Fig 4. (N=384)



**Figure 4**  
*Cases of Deviant Behaviors in Schools*

The results in Fig. 3 indicate that respondents who agreed that there are cases of deviant behavior in school were 332 (86%), while those who said no were 52 (14%). The majority of the respondents (86%) agreed that there are cases of deviant behavior in schools, while the few who said no can be attributed to those who have not stayed long enough in school to have experienced such cases in school.

These findings were supported by key informant interviews with some of the BOM chairs, who stated that:

*We deal with different students who take bhang, or alcohol. These are the leaders who train their fellows to use drugs. There's a school student who was found with rolls of bhang (chief interview). The community provides bhang to students because they need money. At least 2–3 cases a week are witnessed. Illegal items are found with*

students, such as SIM cards, civilian clothes, and night dresses (BOM Chair). (Interview with key informants, May 13, 2023)

The findings were also in line with FGD discussions.

*Students do communicate with outsiders. Cases of lesbianism in schools are common. Some girls even come with issues of lesbianism that influence others. Theft cases are common among students, e.g., pocket money, shopping. In cases of lesbianism, two girls were suspended for two weeks. Students are used to phones, thus sneaking in phones (FGD, 15.05.2023).*

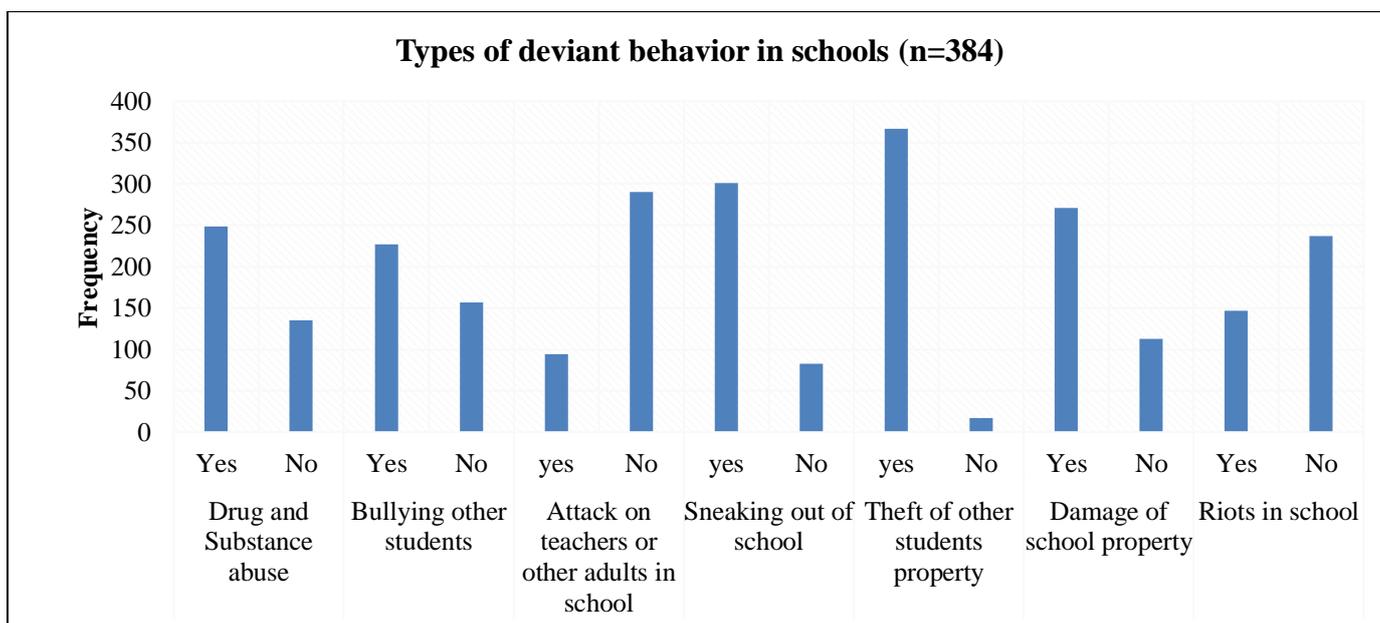
This was further supported by key informant interviews with guidance and counseling teachers in all schools.

*Most students from single parenthood have exhibited some forms of indiscipline; they are easily influenced by others and engage in drug and substance abuse. Teenagers are left alone when a parent goes to Saudi Arabia; they just receive money, which they use to buy drugs. Family backgrounds have also affected the behaviors of students (Interview with guidance and counseling teachers, 13.05.2023).*

Lapinski and Rimal (2005) suggest that human behavior has the potential to diverge from socially acceptable norms, either in a positive or negative manner. Positive deviance refers to a situation in which an individual's behavior does not cause harm to others and is perceived as a departure from established norms. Negative deviance refers to behaviors that deviate from established social norms and often lead to acts of violence and criminal behavior. Positive deviance refers to the manifestation of creativity that leads to beneficial transformations within a given culture. Conversely, negative deviance is characterized by actions that are detrimental and fail to contribute any positive outcomes to the society in question.

### 4.3 What are Some Types of Deviant Behaviors Experienced in School

The study sought to examine the types of deviant behaviors experienced in schools within Bungoma County. The results are as presented in Figure 5.



**Figure 5**  
*Types of Deviant Behaviour Experienced in School (n=384)*

The findings in Fig. 4 reveal that respondents who said drug and substance abuse were 249 (64.8%), bullying other students was 227 (59.1%), attacks on teachers were 94 (24.5), sneaking out of school was 301 (78.4%), theft of other students property was 363 (95.6%), damage to school property was 271 (70.6%), and riots in school were 147 (38.3%). The results indicate that theft of other students property (95.6%) was the most common form of deviant behavior among students, followed by sneaking out of school (78.4%) and damage to school property (70.6%).

The findings presented by Nabiswa et al. (2016) support the existence of deviant behavior as reported by key informants from the county quality assurance officers during interviews. There exists a proclivity to underestimate the

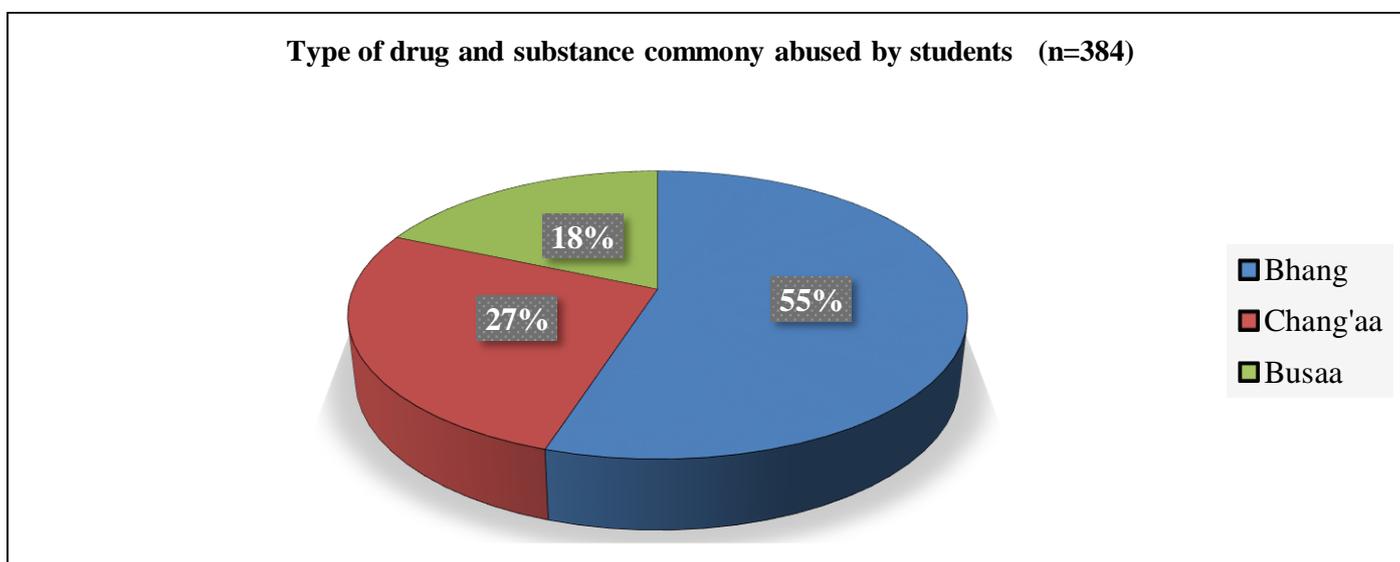
occurrence of this phenomenon, particularly among management, driven by apprehension that acknowledging it may be interpreted as a failure to fulfill their responsibilities.

In view of the dynamism with which deviance occurs together with the diversity in norms governing behavior due to several groups in modern and complex societies to which schools are part (Robison, 2014; Marshall & Robert, 2011), the researcher selected a 4% score as a basis for judging the severe prevalence of selected types of deviant behavior within schools in Kimilili Sub County. During interviews with key informants and FGDs, it was evident that most day schools are affected by drug and substance abuse.

*Because students come from within this community, where there are traditional brews, sometimes some come to school drug Some sneak out to find cheap brews in neighboring Uganda. Bhang and alcohol are common in this area. According to the chief, many students are engaging in drug and substance abuse due to broken families. Single-headed families are more affected. These students go back home to look for food and money. Some even sell drugs to their colleagues in order to get money, etc. (interview and FGD, 15/5/2023)*

#### 4.3.1 What are the Types of Drug and Substance mostly Abused in Secondary Schools in Bungoma County

The study further interrogated the specific type of drug and substance abuse experienced in schools. The results are as shown in Figure 6.



**Figure 6**  
*Type of Drug and Substance Abuse Commonly In Schools*

The findings in Fig. 5 reveal that 211 (55% of students) said bhang, 102 (27% of students) said chang'aa, and 71 (18%) of students said busaa. This implies that most students abuse bhang, followed by chang'aa, and lastly, busaa. This was evident during FGDs and key informant interviews.

*Most students engage in drug and substance abuse, especially alcohol and bhang. They go for the locally made chang'aa, which is cheaper. Some have the notion that bhang helps them focus in school and have some level of confidence. This is a menace to our school. We are closer to Uganda; some just cross over (interview with teachers 14.5.2023).*

During interviews with key informants and FGDs, it was evident that most mixed-day schools are affected by drug and substance abuse.

*Because students come from within this community, where there are traditional brews, sometimes some come to school drug Some sneak out to find cheap brews in neighboring Uganda. Bhang and alcohol are common in this area. According to the chief, many students are engaging in drug and substance abuse due to broken families. Single-headed families are more affected. These students go back home to look for food and money. Some even sell drugs to their colleagues in order to get money, etc. (interview and FGD, 15/5/2023).*

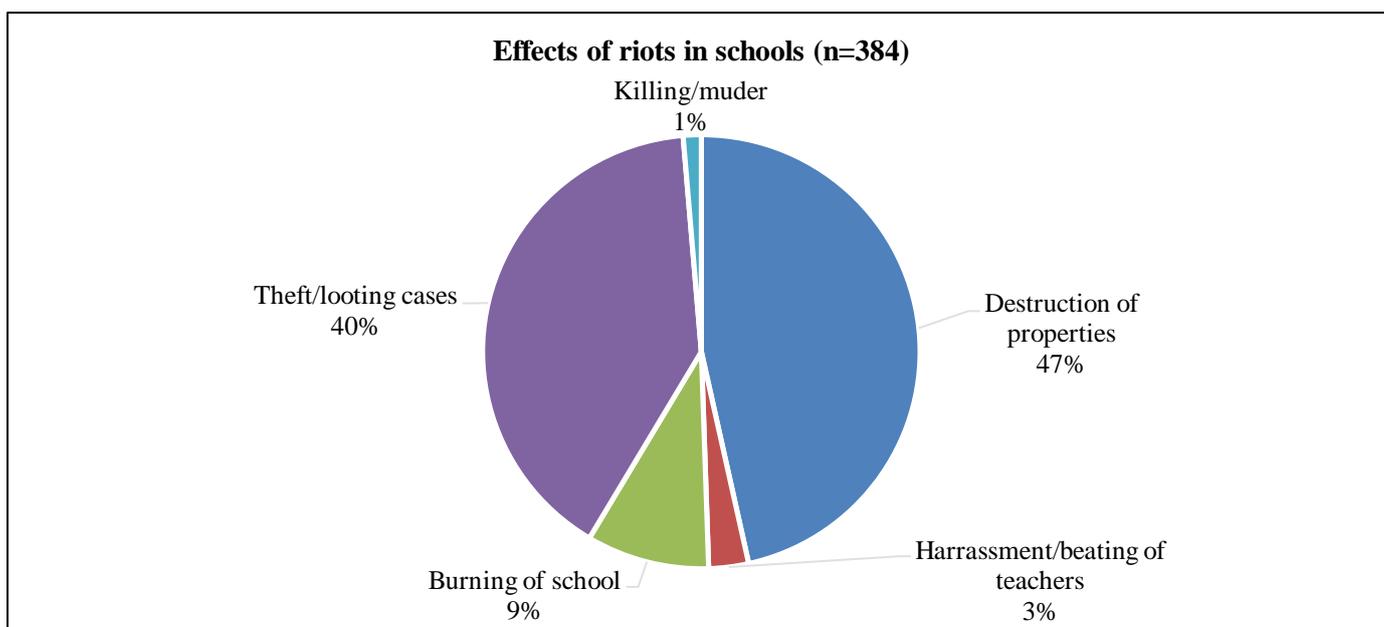
The study results presented a contrasting perspective to the research conducted by the National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) in Nairobi. According to the NACADA report, alcohol emerged as the substance most frequently abused, with 36.3% of students indicating lifetime usage. This was followed by khat/miraa at 31.5%, cigarettes at 20.2%, bhang at 9.8%, heroin at 3.1%, inhalants/glue at 2.7%, and cocaine at 2.2% (NACADA, 2010).

Ndetei *et al.* (2010) and NACADA (2010) have documented comparable results among secondary school students, revealing that alcohol, cigarettes, miraa/khat, and bhang/marijuana were the substances most frequently reported as being abused. NACADA (2012) posits a significant correlation between substance addiction among young individuals and the erosion of familial principles. Within indigenous societies, the act of consuming alcohol to the point of intoxication was generally regarded with disapproval.

According to Aluanga (2008), peer bullying was rampant in girls' only and mixed federal schools where sport activities were rarely administered, compared to boys' only schools where sport activities were frequently administered. According to Gitonga (2009), 57.1% of teachers agreed that the stigmatization of pregnant girls in Nyahururu District made them skip school. According to Ochura (2014), he further observed that bullying among boys happened in dormitories (52.2%), followed by classes (14.04%), play grounds (7.0%), and along corridors (5.2%).

### 4.3.2 Effects of Riots in school

The study further interrogated the effect of the riots in school. The students were asked to state the effects of riots witnessed in secondary schools. The findings are shown in Fig 7.



**Figure 7**

*Nature and Extent of Riots In Schools*

The findings in Figure 6 reveal that 174 (47%) of students agreed that destruction of properties was the most common form of riots, 150 (40%) said theft or looting cases were the second-rank extent of riots, followed by 34 (9%) who said burning of schools, 11 (3%) said harassment of teachers, and 5 (1%) said killing or murder of fellow students or teachers. This implies that riots mostly take the form of the destruction of properties, followed by theft cases.

The findings were in line with interviews with deputy principals.

*We have had cases where students stage riots leading to damage to properties; they mostly target window panes, dinning all; they destroy dormitories and even books in the library (interview with G & C teacher on 17.5.2023).*

According to the Red Cross and fire department officers during an interview, their findings were in line with the study.

*Most often, we are told by deputy principals that students have staged a riot and are almost going rogue. They are seeking our assistance in the availability of fire engines and support. In many schools around, we have witnessed riots that have led to great damage, rape among students and even their teachers, some beaten up. It's always a mess in schools that have gone to riots. (interview with the Red Cross and fire officer, 14.5.2023)*

The assertions made by Aluanga (2008) corroborated the present findings, indicating that a tragic incident occurred at Upper Hill School in Nairobi, resulting in the unfortunate death of a Form 3 student. The incident was attributed to a fire outbreak, which was believed to have been ignited as a consequence of student unrest within the institution. Additional instances of student unrest may be observed in the occurrences at Kinyui Boys Secondary School on October 25, 2003, where classroom fires transpired, and at Mbiuni High School in Machakos on July 19, 2004, where a student lost their life due to the deliberate ignition of dormitories and classrooms by fellow students, accompanied by the looting of the food store. While the government of Kenya has consistently made efforts to address the issue of student discontent in schools, the nature of this unrest has recently worsened. The occurrence of such incidents in secondary schools gives rise to concerns over the safety of children in the educational environment.

#### 4.3.3 What are some of the Forms of Bullying in secondary schools in Bungoma County?

The study went further to establish the nature of deviance by examining the forms of bullying experienced in schools. The students were also asked to rank the forms of bullying from the most common to the least common. The findings are as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**Forms of Bullying Experienced by Students**

Forms of Bullying	Frequency	Percentage	Ranking
Hitting	41	10.7	5
Kicking	23	6	7
Taking or damaging victims' properties	79	20.6	4
Abusive language	36	9.4	6
Forced to frog match	101	26.3	2
Forced to mob latrines/streets	22	5.7	8
Send to buy bread with one coin	118	30.7	1
Others	83	21.6%	3

The study findings in Table 3 reveal that 41 (10.7%) of students said hitting was a common form of bullying, 23 (6%) said kicking, 79 (20.6%) said taking or damaging victims properties, and 23 (9.4%) said abusive language. The findings also reveal that 101 (26.3%) of students said they were forced to frog match, 22 (5.7%) said they were forced to mob latrines, and 118 (30.7%) said they were forced to buy bread with one coin. These findings imply that sending to buy bread with one coin was the most common type of bullying, followed by being forced to frog match, then other forms of bullying, then taking or damaging the victim's property, and lastly kicking.

These findings are in line with the interview with FGDs.

*Previously, there used to be bullying of new students, especially young ones. The leaders take advantage of us and use us. Sometimes we are forced to ferry water, buy breakfast, and buy them shoes. Though it's not as rampant as it used to be, Any items we come with from home are taken by the big boys. If we don't give, then we are punished or forced to wash latrines. (FGD with scouts, May 16, 2023)*

During the interview with G&C teachers, it emerged that:

*Among ourselves, we also bully students and discriminate based on performance and socio-economic background. The worst case, pregnant ladies, is normally bullied by both teachers and students. They are emotionally and socially bullied. Teachers call them names; no fellow student wishes to associate with them. Even the parents disown them. As the GAC teacher, we find it hard to counsel these students. Some even think of committing suicide (interview with GAC teacher, May 17, 2023)*

Ochura (2014) conducted a study that examined the attitudes of instructors and students regarding bullying behavior in public secondary schools within the Kisumu East District. According to Ochura's research, relational bullying, physical bullying, and verbal bullying are the three main types of bullying. Additional analysis indicated that within boys' schools, the prevailing form of bullying was verbal in nature, accounting for 16.6% of reported incidents,

while physical bullying constituted 11.4% of the total occurrences. Within the context of girls' educational institutions, it was observed that verbal bullying accounted for the highest prevalence rate at 11.4%, while relational bullying followed closely behind at 8.2%. The prevalence of verbal bullying in mixed schools was found to be 39.1%, with physical bullying following closely at 27.7%. The prevalence of verbal bullying was found to be highest across the three categories of schools, with a rate of 67.1%. Following this, 45.6% of people reported experiencing physical bullying. Relational bullying was the third most prevalent form, with a rate of 40.5%, while cyberbullying had the lowest prevalence at 18.3%.

#### 4.3.4 Items Stolen by Students in Schools

The study sought to investigate the extent of theft within the school by looking at the type of materials students steal. The students were also asked to rank the type of materials stolen in order of frequency. The findings are as presented in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Type of Theft Cases among the Students*

Items being stolen	Frequency	Percentage	Ranking
Calculators	65	16.9	5
Bibles	79	20.7	4
Shopping	37	9.6	7
Atlas	87	22.6	3
Text books	116	30.2	1
Dictionaries	92	24	2
Others	61	15.9	6

The findings in Table 4 reveal that 363(95.6%) of respondents agreed that there is high theft cases among students to their fellow colleagues. The findings indicate that, theft was the most serious type of deviant behavior experienced in all schools. Further, the study indicated that 116 (30.2%) of students said theft of text books, 92 (24%) said dictionaries, 87 (22.6%) said theft of atlases, 79 (20.7%) said theft of bibles, 65 (16.9%) said theft of calculators, and 37 (9.6%) said theft of shopping. This implies most students have experienced theft of text books due to poverty and parenthood. Also, students steal these items mostly to sell them and get money. They sell text books, calculators, atlases, and dictionaries at a cheaper price. These findings were further supported by all the interviews carried out.

*We have witnessed a high rate of stealing among students. The items stolen range from shopping to clothes and even books. This results from family background. Some, when asked, state that their parents didn't give them anything, so they are forced to find means of survival. Some attribute the blame to single parenthood. Every week, we must solve so many cases of theft among students. Some steal due to peer pressure and the feeling of belonging in a certain class or group (interview with informants on 15.5.2023).*

This was further in line with the interview with the county fire officer, who opined that:

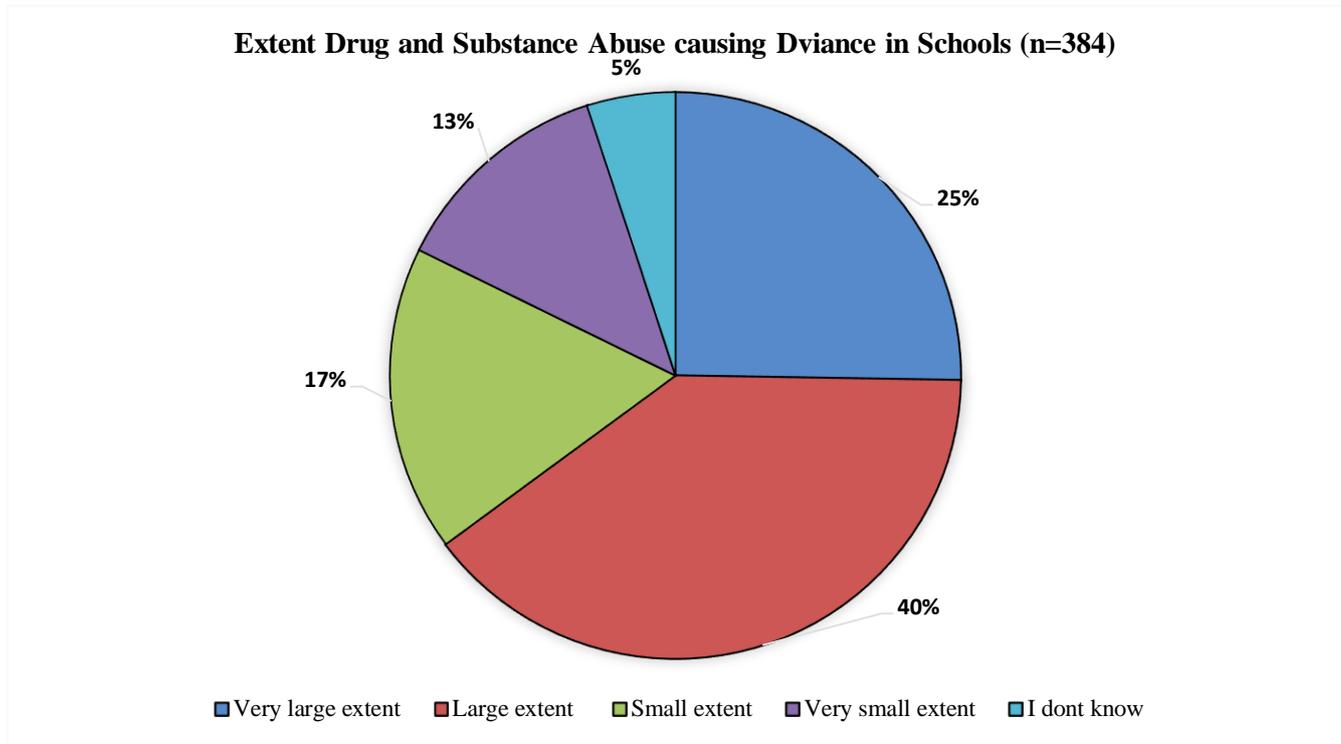
*Most students engage in theft due to the socioeconomic background of their families (Red Cross officer interview). There are high cases of theft, especially at the beginning of the term and midterm. My child has been a victim of theft, whereby his box was made butterfly and all shopping was stolen (PTA Chair interview).*

*Sometimes we students complain during parents' day or when visiting about high theft cases. Mostly, single-headed families are the suspects, as some cannot afford to shop for things like toothpaste and essential items, among others. (Interview with key informants, 17.5.2023)*

This is concurrent with a study done in the USA on the attitudes and conduct of some 29,760 high school students by the Josephson Institute, which found that an average of 30% of students admitted to having stolen from a store within the past year (Josephson Institute of Ethics, 2009). In Kenya, stealing among secondary school students rated very high among the common indiscipline problems as reported by teachers in sampled schools; it accounted for 85% as reported by respondent students and second (81%) in the order of severity.

#### 4.4.1 Drug and Substance Abuse and Deviance in Schools

The study sought to investigate the extent drug and substance abuse causes deviance in schools. The findings are as presented in Figure 8.



**Figure 8**  
*Extent do Drug and Substance Abuse Cause Deviance in Schools*

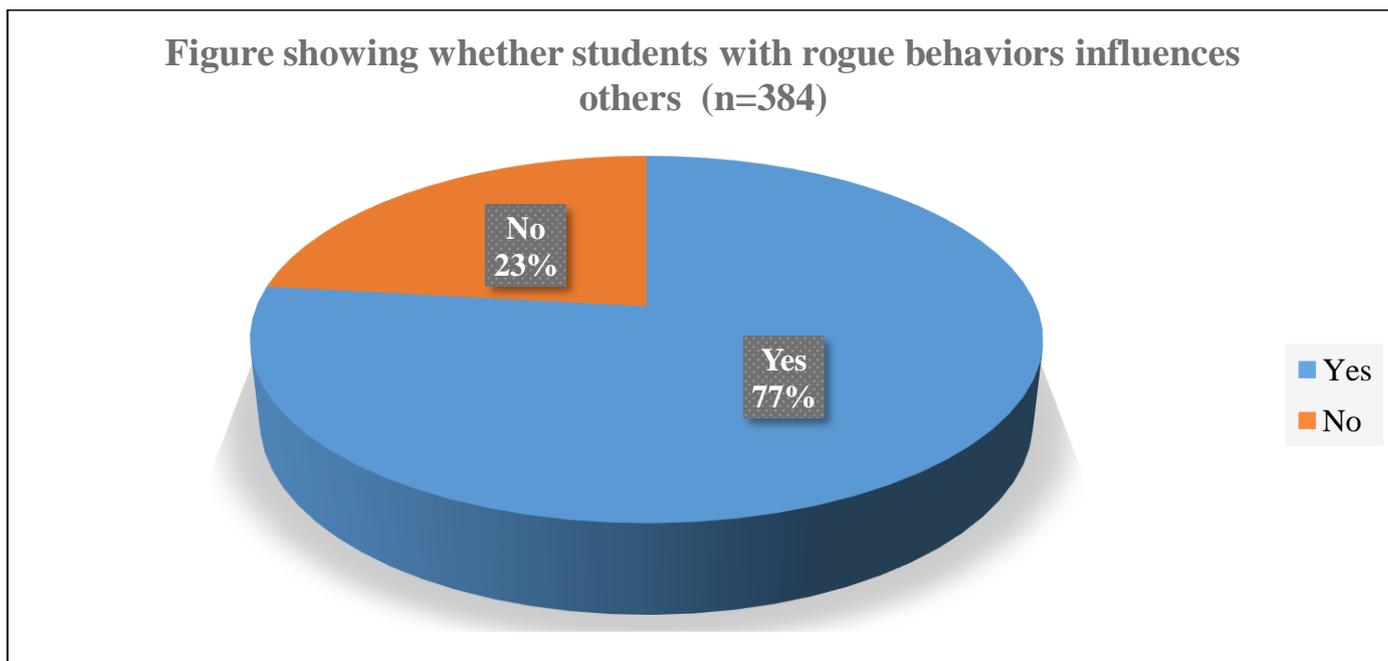
#### 4.4.2 Drug and Substance Abuse and Deviance in Schools

The findings in Fig. 9 reveal that 97 (25%) of students agreed to a very large extent, 152 (40%) said a large extent, 67 (17%) said a small extent, 49 (13%) said a very small extent, and 19 (5%) said I don't know. This implies that cumulatively, 65% of students agreed that drug and substance abuse to a large extent influences the behavior of students, thus leading to deviance.

Kaguthi (2004) established that widely used substances are grown in the country, like Bhang, Khat (miraa), and tobacco. As these substances are grown, manufactured, and distributed, they are openly exposed to youth. Cheap and unclean alcohol like Chang'aa is readily available among students from the poor population.

#### 4.5 Students with Rogue Behaviors and their Influence on Others

The study sought to examine the influence rogue students have towards others in schools. The Findings are presented in Figure 9.



**Figure 9**  
*Students with Rogue Behaviors Influencing other Students*

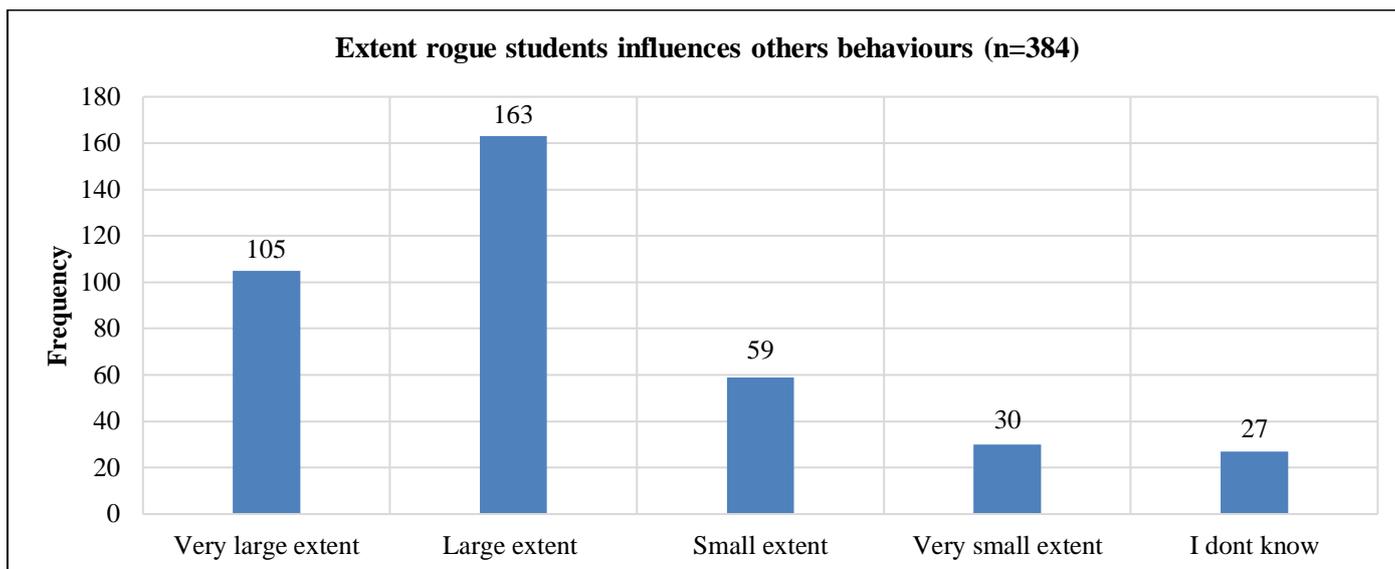
The study findings in Fig 8 indicate that 295(77%) agreed that students with rogue behaviors influences other students while 89(23%) disagreed. This implies that majority of respondents are influenced by their peers who have rogue behaviors thus engaging in deviance act in schools. These findings were supported by interviews with chiefs;

*Most students who use drugs influence their peers. This trend has been witnessed, especially in mixed-day schools. Even in boarding schools, sometimes we are called to go solve the problem of students sneaking in drugs. Whereby students collude with outsiders. Sometimes, especially in rural areas, the local students usually influence their fellows to attend disco matanga... The local brews and cheap alcohol across the Ugandan border have created a great problem. (Interview with chiefs, May 14, 203)*

Muthigani (1995) conducted empirical investigations pertaining to drug use and abuse and concurred that a noteworthy correlation exists between an individual's drug consumption patterns and the influence of their peers engaged in drug-related activities. As per his assertion, when an adolescent forms connections with peers who engage in drug use, the likelihood of their own participation with drugs is further heightened. In a separate study conducted in southern Nigeria, it was shown that drug-using students primarily obtained drugs through their peers within the same or nearby educational institutions. Additionally, it was observed that students who admitted to drug use tended to have a higher proportion of acquaintances who also engaged in drug use, as opposed to those who abstained from such activities (Imbosa, 2002).

#### **4.5.1 Influence of Students with Rogue Behaviors on Others Behaviours**

The study sought to examine the extent students with rogue behaviors influences the behaviors of their fellow students. The findings are as presented in Figure 10.



**Figure 10**  
*Extent Rogue Students Influencing Behaviours of Other Students*

The findings reveal that 163 (42.4%) of students said to a large extent, 105 (27.4%) said very large extent, 59 (15.4%) said small extent, 30 (7.8%) said very small extent, and 27 (7%) said I don't know. This implies that cumulatively, 69.8% of the students agreed that students with rogue behaviors influence other students to join them in their behaviors.

This was in line with the key informant interview with teachers.

*Some students who have formed the habit of inducting their fellows into their behaviors are mostly found in Form 3. We have students who have bad behaviors carried from home, while others are influenced by the community, influencing their fellow colleagues. Some who take drugs and substances normally have the tendency to incite others, especially non-performing students who want to feel like they belong to a certain group. The poor students also easily get trapped in this induction and influence.* (Interview with teachers, May 19, 2023)

The study findings were corroborated by UNESCO (2014): drug users, like other people, seek approval of their behavior from those they attempt to convince to join them in their habits as a way of seeking acceptance.

## V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusions

The studies found that there were high cases of deviant behaviors among students, led by theft of property (95.6%), followed by drug and substance use (64.8%). The study further found that peer pressure (83.3%) and drug and substance abuse (53.6%) were the main factors leading students to burn schools. The findings of the study revealed that 363 (95.6%) of respondents agreed that there are many theft cases among students and their fellow colleagues. The study concludes that most students abuse bhang, followed by chang'aa, and lastly, busaa. In regards to the effects of riots, the study concludes that riots mostly take the form of destruction of properties, followed by theft cases. In regards to types of theft cases, the study concludes that students have experienced theft of text books due to poverty and parenthood. Also, students steal these items mostly to sell them and get money.

### 5.2 Recommendations

The school administration should enhance security measures through the installation of CCTVs and improved fencing to reduce the chances of sneaking out and drugs getting in. Students should be forced to pay for the damages caused during their riots. The governments should ensure schools have adequate and trained counselors in order to help in taming deviant behaviors such as drug and substance abuse, bullying, and theft. The school administration should have open communication with the students in order to avert riots and school fires.

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